"THE COUNTRY OF NINE-FINGERED PEOPLE": THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN

TRADITION AND THE GOTHIC IN FAULKNER'S *INTRUDER IN THE DUST*

AND DICKEY'S *DELIVERANCE*

by

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in English, Literature

Boise State University

May 2013

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COLLEGE

DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FINAL READING APPROVALS

of the thesis submitted by

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Thesis Title: "The country of nine-fingered people": The Southern Mountain Tradition and the Gothic in Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust* and Dickey's *Deliverance*

Date of Final Oral Examination: 15 March 2013

The following individuals read and discussed the thesis submitted by student Kathleen Peterson, and they evaluated her presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful parents, Mary and Norm Peterson, for their support, love, and eagerness to surround me with bookcases from a very young age.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I offer my most sincere thanks to my advisor, Dr. Tom Hillard. Your guidance, patience, and enthusiasm throughout the project soared above and beyond expectations, and I am consistently amazed by your dedicated mentorship and teaching. I'm sincerely honored to have had the chance to work with you and I hope to have the opportunity to do so again.

Second, I would like to thank my family for their consistent support throughout my academic career, especially over the past two years. Thanks for always being willing to listen and for reminding me to have fun.

I would also like to thank my thesis-writing peers: Katie Garland, Annie Knowles, Erin Lehmann, and Rob Ware. The support we offered each other throughout the process, in its highs and its lows, was a wonderful addition to my thesis experience. In particular, I want to extend a special thank you to Rob; I cannot imagine doing this without your company, perspective, and camaraderie.

Finally, my gratitude to Nate Agenbroad practically deserves a chapter of its own. You're the best, Nate. Thanks for keeping me sane, celebrating the little and big victories, helping me edit at odd hours, and everything in between. I'm so very grateful for all you do.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of the Southern mountain tradition and the Gothic mode in William Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust* and James Dickey's *Deliverance.* Using Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject, it argues that Faulkner and Dickey appropriated already Gothic elements of Appalachian history in order to create the Gothic characters and settings that would allow them to explore major cultural anxieties of their time. Chapter One gives a brief overview of Appalachian history from the Revolutionary War through 1970. It examines both factual material and fictional portrayals, including the miners' union strikes of the early 1900s, Mary Murfree's local color fiction, and the TVA films of the 1930s and 40s, among other highlights. Chapter One argues that Appalachia has historically served as an abject Other for urban America: it has allowed Americans to define themselves as modern by comparison while fascinating them with the allure of the primitive past. Chapter Two examines Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust*, focusing on the Gowrie family as abject characters. Though scholarship traditionally dismisses the Gowries as stereotypical hillbilly characters, this chapter argues that they are crucial to the novel's commentary on desegregation. The townspeople abject their deep-seated, buried shame over the violence of the lynch mob mentality onto the Gowries, defining themselves as not-Gowrie while joying in Gowrie-like behavior. As such, positioning the Gowries as abject allows Faulkner to explore and unsettle a major source of cultural anxiety within his contemporary South as he saw it. Finally, Chapter Three argues that James Dickey's *Deliverance* exhibits a similar pattern: its narrator abjects his insecurities

about his masculinity onto the mountain characters in the novel, exaggerating their physical flaws and defining himself as strong by comparison. Ed's gender insecurities register the anxiety surrounding Southern white masculinity in the 1960s; ultimately, his ability to overcome this anxiety and triumph through tests of physical strength and survival skills is the ideal upheld by the novel. Therefore, much like the function of the Gowries in *Intruder in the Dust, Deliverance*'s abject mountain characters allow Dickey to examine a deep-seated Southern cultural anxiety of his time. The analysis of both texts also includes an examination of the historical elements appropriated by each author from Appalachian history, such as the naming of the Gowrie twins after the politicians who led the "rednecks' revolt" of the early 1900s and the impending damming of the Cahulawassee in *Deliverance*, which mirrors the historical wilderness exploitation of Appalachia. Faulkner and Dickey use these instances of Appalachia's Gothicized history to create many of the Gothic elements of both *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance*, and this study argues that because of this appropriation of Appalachian history and the use of the abject hillbilly characters, each text relies on the Southern mountain tradition in order to use the Gothic mode to reveal major sources of cultural anxiety within each author's contemporary South.

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INTRODUCTION: ESTABLISHING CONTEXT: THE GOTHIC AND THE ABJECT

In a 2011 article titled "On Being a Southerner," Southern writer Barton Swaim asks if Southerners are "Americans in the deepest, most genuine sense" or if they are "some aberration about which we ought to be embarrassed" (13). From Swaim's point of view, these perceived Southern "aberrations" are often associated with racism, incest, violence, and ignorance. He argues that the burden of the rest of America's perceptions of Southern deviance, especially in a historical context, constitutes a heavy weight on the shoulders of contemporary Southerners and creates a constructed shame that is constantly felt by the people of the South. Swaim writes, "Germans, at least, can look back on hundreds of years of German history that had nothing to do with Nazism. But for the Southerner, there was never a time before slavery, and thoughts about the past are always laden with regret. But regret isn't enough. What's demanded of the Southerner by the prevailing culture (he feels) is that he loathe his past" (15). Swaim articulates a clear perceived distinction between the rest of America and the South, which is certainly a feature of popular culture representations of the U.S. South. Often, the characters of fictional Southern settings are made to seem Other—set apart as a "them," instead of part of "us"—in their behavior and physical appearance. The people of the South are frequently depicted as a menagerie of freaks, from the undereducated and uncouth "Beverly Hillbillies" to the myths of regressiveness and danger surrounding depictions of the folk of Appalachia, such as the hyperbolic portrait of an Appalachian family in the 2009 documentary "The Wild and Wonderful Whites of West Virginia."

As in the latter example, this Othering of Southerners is often strongest in depictions of the people of the Southern mountains, which are actually comprised of several different mountain ranges but are often lumped together under the label "Appalachia." These "mountaineer," "hillbilly," or "hill folk" characters are most often found in clannish family units in small mountain villages, a setting that is ideally suited for the manifestation of popular assumptions about Southern mountain culture; its isolation and wildness are natural factors for creating the kind of Othering entailed in these portrayals of Southern people. Often, this Othering involves a physical differentiation that matches the aberrant characteristics we often see in such characters. This aberrance frequently takes the form of exclusivity and hostility toward outsiders, a lack of education, a reliance on an old-fashioned lifestyle that is unaware of or directly shuns urban cultural norms, a fierce family loyalty to the point of vengefulness, an acceptance of incest and other practices condemned by the prevailing culture, and, above all, a tendency toward violence. In short, the Southern mountain literary tradition is founded on distinctness—it is a space that is set apart as different, with differentiated inhabitants to match.

William Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust* (1948) and James Dickey's *Deliverance* (1970) are novels that both draw on this tradition. *Intruder in the Dust* includes a clannish Mississippi mountain family that seeks revenge for the death of one of its members, and *Deliverance* focuses on a group of urban men on a canoe trip in the Georgia wilderness who encounter various forms of danger as a result of contact with the local Appalachian population. In both texts, the hillbilly stereotype is used as an Other. Moreover, both authors have drawn on the Southern mountain tradition in order to create settings,

characters, and events that are representative of the Gothic mode—a literary tradition characterized by haunting, hiddenness, and deep-seated cultural anxiety, as well as stock attributes such as an antiquated setting and supernatural events—and use it to explore cultural issues. These are both novels that are often discussed outside of a Gothic context, but I argue that each should be read as Gothic; moreover, I contend that their Gothic characteristics are dependent on each author's use of the Southern mountains as a setting. The primary focus of this thesis is how these two authors use the historically Gothicized Southern mountains in order to create Gothic elements in their work and use them to address what they saw to be the contemporary burdens of Southernness.

These two texts are useful for this analysis for a number of reasons. First, several striking similarities occur between them. Each work sets precise physical boundaries for its mountain characters to exist in—Faulkner's "Beat Four" and Dickey's mountain hamlet and surrounding wilderness, which Dickey differentiates when his protagonist crosses "the exact point where suburbia ended and the red-neck South began" (Dickey 48). Both works also differentiate their mountain characters with physical abnormalities and deformities, as well as a host of aberrant and deviant behavior patterns. Namely, the mountain characters in each text exhibit a tendency toward lawlessness and violence that looms so large that the "hillbilly" figure becomes distinctly *dangerous*. In addition, through the contrast created by differentiating the mountain characters, each text is able to achieve its thematic power: the contrast presented by the mountain characters in *Intruder in the Dust* makes for an initially disjointed community, which can parallel and explore the struggle for desegregation in the South; and in *Deliverance,* it creates an Other by which the narrator can work out his own 1960s-era gender insecurities. I argue

that this embodies Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject. Specifically, each author creates

an abject space and a close reading reveals that the urban characters in each text abject

these contemporary problems of Southernness onto the mountain characters, which

allows for the novel's commentary on these cultural burdens to surface; this makes the

role of the Southern mountain characters in each text's exploration of contemporary

Southern issues pivotal and clearly Gothic.

Because American consciousness has historically interacted with Appalachia in a

way that is not only fundamentally Gothic but also strangely similar to the circumstances

surrounding the Gothic mode's origin, a relationship I will detail in Chapter One, I will

begin by briefly addressing the origins of the Gothic before describing some of its key

characteristics. The term "Gothic" was, in the earliest usage pertinent to this discussion,

used in the eighteenth century as a way to describe that which was old-fashioned,

barbaric, and outdated. Jerrold Hogle explains:

> It was first used by early Renaissance art historians in Italy to describe pointed-arch and castellated styles of medieval architecture, as well as medieval ways of life in general—but to do so in a pejorative way so as to establish the superiority of more recent neoclassical alternatives, because of which the designs of the immediate past were associated with supposedly barbaric Goths who had little to do with the actual buildings in question. Consequently, *Gothic* has long been a term used to project modern concerns into a deliberately vague, even fictionalized past. (16)

Hogle's use of the term "pejorative" is especially striking. It emphasizes the derogatory

nature of the term; because it was so disparaging, it was used to "establish the

superiority" of that which was not "Gothic." Similarly, E.J. Clery characterizes the term's

early connotations as "anything obsolete, old-fashioned, or outlandish" (21). This

definition, and its earliest associations with the "supposedly barbaric Goths," is important

for my analysis of the way America has historically interacted with Appalachia. As I will

detail in Chapter One, the use of the "pejorative" term "Gothic" to emphasize the supremacy of more recent developments is much like the way modern portrayals of Appalachia use it as a primitive Other to reinforce the advantages of the progressive present.

A particularly striking instance of the resemblance between the origins of the Gothic and urban America's interactions with Appalachia occurs in the circumstances surrounding the first application of the term "Gothic" to literature. Horace Walpole's 1764 *The Castle of Otranto* is generally characterized as the first Gothic novel. The story of *Otranto* includes many attributes we now recognize as stock elements of the Gothic tale: it is set in a castle; it relies on the "Sins of the Father" trope, in which the threat of the sins of the previous generation looms over its successors; it includes a chase scene in which a terrified maiden flees from the threat of rape by a male aggressor, which, of course, takes place in a subterranean vault; and it also includes several supernatural events, including a portrait that comes to life and a giant helmet that tragically and inexplicably crushes the story's sickly prince. It is a tale meant to delight and terrify readers; of its emphasis on emotion instead of instruction, Clery goes so far as to say, "By no stretch of the imagination could the tale offer a useful lesson for real life" (23).

However, the first edition of *Otranto* was presented in a completely counterfeit manner. Instead of announcing his authorship, Walpole claimed to have discovered the story. He described it as an Italian text printed in 1529, which he believed to have been written between 1095 and 1243. This was a strategic move on Walpole's part. Clery explains:

> For Walpole's contemporaries the Gothic age was a long period of barbarism,
> superstition, and anarchy dimly stretching from the fifth century AD, when

Visigoth invaders precipitated the fall of the Roman Empire, to the Renaissance and the revival of classical learning. In a British context it was even considered to extend to the Reformation in the sixteenth century and the definitive break with the Catholic past. (21)

Walpole originally did not use the word "Gothic" to describe the story—he did not add the subtitle "A Gothic Story" until the second edition—but he certainly meant to capitalize on what he saw as the allure of the "barbarism, superstition, and anarchy" of this past. In the preface to the second edition, Walpole writes that "the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life" (320). He presented it as a long-lost text because his contemporaries would have seen it as "obsolete, old-fashioned or outlandish" if he had described it as modern. As such, the novel's counterfeit presentation allowed him to win their acceptance; *The Castle of Otranto* was so successful because Walpole correctly identified the buried longing for the more uncivilized past from which his contemporaries so vehemently differentiated themselves. As I will explain at the close of Chapter One, I argue that the same fascination with the uncivilized past—or what is perceived to be representative of the uncivilized past—used by Walpole is at the root of modern portrayals of Appalachia.

Today, the literary Gothic has appeared in so many different forms that scholars hesitate to even define it as a "genre," using the term "mode" instead. In *Gothic,* Fred Botting characterizes the Gothic mode as "a writing of excess" and highlights its ability to "shadow the progress of modernity with counter-narratives" (1, 2). Jerrold Hogle writes that the Gothic addresses "some of the most important desires, quandaries, and sources of anxiety, from the most internal and mental to the widely social and cultural" (4). These scholars each give insight into approaches to Gothic literature, but they do not provide any concise definition of the Gothic. This speaks to a central mystery

surrounding the Gothic—the elusiveness of its definition. In fact, the Gothic continues to do to its own definition precisely what it accomplishes on a broader scale: it questions. It is founded on a willingness to shift, elude, question and problematize, which is precisely what Gothic texts have done to the way we think about the mode as it has evolved over time. Teresa Goddu perhaps puts it best when she writes, "Cobbled together of many different forms and obsessed with transgressing boundaries, [the Gothic] represents itself not as stable but as generically impure" (5). On the other hand, Botting quips, "Gothic can perhaps be called the only true literary tradition. Or its stain" (16).

Of course, despite this incongruity, there are certain tropes that makes the Gothic recognizable in texts, films, and other forms of art. Hogle writes, "A Gothic tale usually takes place (at least some of the time) in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space. . . Within this space, or a combination of such spaces, are hidden some secrets from the past (sometimes the recent past) that haunt the characters, psychologically, physically, or otherwise at the main time of the story" (2). The antiquated setting—including the castle, the haunted house, and such sites of fallen glory as the former plantation, among others— is the beginning of a long list of Gothic tropes that also includes hidden identities, curses and prophesies, family secrets, trapped female characters fleeing from the threat of rape, and so on. *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance* each feature several stock Gothic characteristics. *Intruder* includes a graveyard setting at night, hidden identities, family secrets, and a murder mystery; *Deliverance* exhibits the use of decay to create a Gothic setting, as well as the threat—and realization—of rape. In addition, both texts include at least two murders, the use of horror, and the burying and unburying of corpses.

After this list of tropes, the second half of Hogle's quotation emphasizes two essential elements of the Gothic—hiddenness and haunting. The Gothic deals in bringing that which is hidden—often, that which has been long buried as something shocking and shameful—to light. These hidden or buried elements often manifest in an Other that forces the characters to confront a secret from the past, and this Other often acts as a negative against which characters may define themselves. Hogle characterizes this negative definition by writing, "Social and ideological tensions about all these 'deviations' at different times thus find expression in the Gothic mode, which offers hyperbolic temptations toward these possibilities disguised in aberrant and regressive forms but also fashions means of othering them all so that standard, adult, middle-class identities can seem to stand out clearly against them" (12). It is therefore through this Othering that normative identities become further defined. However, it is important to note that the Other remains at a distance, but not forgotten entirely. Hogle explains, "The Gothic clearly exists, in part, to raise the possibility that all 'abnormalities' we would divorce from ourselves are a part of ourselves, deeply and pervasively (hence frighteningly), even while it provides quasi-antiquated methods to help us place such 'deviations' at a definite, though haunting, distance from us" (12). As I will describe in Chapters Two and Three, both *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance* include haunting and hiddenness; for example, Chick is haunted by the image of Nub Gowrie grieving over his dead son's corpse—which was hidden in quicksand before it was unburied—in *Intruder in the Dust,* and the waters of the dam in *Deliverance* are haunted by the multiple dead bodies buried under them at the end of the text.

This juxtaposing of self and Other is but one way the Gothic questions traditional dichotomies and boundaries. Literature opens up a forum for the examination of human life—it creates a space in which culture, history, politics, epistemology, and a multitude of other aspects of human society can be examined. Though its precise nature resists definition, the Gothic is that space at sunrise and sundown: it provides the long shadow of what Fred Botting calls "counter-narrative" (2), a forum in which cultural dichotomies can be darkened beyond conventional understanding and traditional boundaries are thrown into obscurity. It challenges traditional cultural narratives of power, desire, identity, and goodness. Botting argues that these Gothic counter-narratives achieve their power through excess. However, he maintains that "Gothic fiction is less an unrestrained celebration of unsanctioned excesses and more an examination of the limits produced in the eighteenth century to distinguish good from evil, reason from passion, virtue from vice and self from other" (8). Though he identifies its roots as beginning in the eighteenth century, Botting traces this influence through the twentieth, arguing:

> In the twentieth century, in diverse and ambiguous ways, Gothic figures have continued to shadow the progress of modernity with counter-narratives displaying the underside of enlightenment and humanist values. Gothic condenses the many perceived threats to these values, threats associated with supernatural and natural forces, imaginative excesses and delusions, religious and human evil, social transgression, mental disintegration and spiritual corruption. (1-2)

In this way, the Gothic provides a counter-narrative to the conventional, prevailing understanding of good and evil, progress and tradition, and myriad other cultural values. In the same way that classic Gothic works like *The Castle of Otranto* are successful manifestations of the Gothic because they allow us to put aside our standard assessments of what is real and legitimate and worthwhile, the Gothic itself is fascinating in part because its own boundaries are blurred.

One of the most important boundaries blurred by the Gothic is that of self and not-self; this is a dichotomy that is problematized by "the abject," a concept that is central to my analysis of both the Southern mountain tradition and Faulkner's and Dickey's texts. In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Julia Kristeva uses the term "abjection" to explain how that which is threatening to conventional order is cast off while remaining a fundamental part of that same order and identity. She writes, "It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (4). Kristeva identifies the corpse as the ultimate representation of abjection, as "death infecting life" (4), because it both repulses us and attracts our attention as a manifestation of an inevitable but frightening and mysterious part of our own experience. We are disgusted by the sight of it because it "infect[s]" our own aliveness with death, but it fascinates us all the same. The corpse is the ultimate example of how the abject "beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire" (1) and represents "a burden both repellent and repelled, a deep well of memory that is unapproachable and intimate" (6). For Kristeva, the abject "confronts us, on the one hand, with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of *animal*" (12) and "is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them" (15). Through these characteristics—its relationship with desire, its quality as "repellent and repelled," its threat of animality and its perverseness—and more, the abject "disturbs identity, system, order." It is that which would reveal uncomfortable or even horrifying aspects of our own experience if we were to acknowledge it fully. Instead of acknowledging it, we

resist. We abject, and in doing so, we choose to preserve our own identities, systems, and order.

This problematization of the boundary between self and not-self leads Kristeva to characterize the self as heterogenous, writing, "Necessarily dichotomous, somewhat Manichaean, he [the abjector] divides, excludes, and without, properly speaking, wishing to know his abjections is not at all unaware of them. Often, moreover, he includes himself among them, thus casting within himself the scalpel that carries out his separations" (8). Here, Kristeva defines the distance between the abjector and the abject; the abject is pushed away, but the abjector remains aware of it. It is excluded but remains close enough to worry and trouble. In addition, the second part of the above quotation notes that aspects of the self are often included in abjections. For Kristeva, the abjection of self is the ultimate example of the unrealized attraction to that which is abjected: "There is nothing like the abjection of self to show that all abjection is in fact recognition of the want on which any being, meaning, language or desire is founded" (5). Moreover, the heterogenous self is also crucial to the ways we define ourselves through an Other. Kristeva describes this relationship by writing, "Thus braided, woven, ambivalent, a heterogenous flux marks out a territory that I can call my own because the Other, having dwelt in me as *alter ego,* points it out to me through loathing" (10). In other words, the Other is the alter ego that resides in the identity of the abjector. The territory the Other marks out through abjection is defined by what the abjector identifies as *not* being. The presence of the Other reinforces that space by eliciting loathing against which the abjector can define him- or herself. However, while it is "loath[ed]," the abject remains a fundamental part of the abjector's identity.

As such, the abject is not completely detached from the abjector; it is still accessible through what Kristeva calls *jouissance.* According to Kristeva, *jouissance* is the only way the abjector can access the abject—"One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it [*on en jouit*]. Violently and painfully. A passion" (9). She characterizes the relationship between the abject and *jouissance* by writing, "It [the abject] is simply a frontier, a repulsive gift that the Other, having become *alter ego,* drops so that 'I' does not disappear in it but finds, in that sublime alienation, a forfeited existence. Hence a jouissance in which the subject is swallowed up but in which the Other, in return, keeps the subject from foundering by making it repugnant" (9). The abjector, then, is able to remain stable by casting off the abject as "repugnant." In this way, the abjector retains the identity of "I" but can also "joy in" in the abject; and the opportunity to enjoy this "forfeited existence" constitutes *jouissance,* a "sublime" experience for the abjector. This concept will be particularly important in Chapter Two for my discussion of the mob in *Intruder in the Dust.*

Kristeva also addresses the relationship of the abject and literature. The process by which literature uses the abject rests on "primal repression," which Kristeva defines as "the ability of the speaking being, always already haunted by the Other, to divide, reject, repeat" (12). Kristeva writes that, through primal repression, "'subject' and 'object' push each other away, confront each other, collapse, and start again—inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject. Great modern literature unfolds over that terrain: Dostoyevsky, Lautréamont, Proust, Artaud, Kafka, Céline" (18). She further explains:

> The writer, fascinated by the abject, imagines its logic, projects himself into it, interjects it, and as a consequence perverts language—style and content. But on

the other hand, as the sense of abjection is both the abject's judge and accomplice, this is also true of the literature that confronts it. One might thus say that with such a literature there takes place a crossing over of the dichotomous categories of Pure and Impure, Prohibition and Sin, Morality and Immorality. (16)

For Kristeva, then, the ability of literature to transgress the boundaries of these dichotomies rests in its confrontation of the abject. Primal repression—the process of "divide, reject, repeat"—takes place at the borders of what can and cannot be confronted, and this border is examined in the literature of great authors like Dostoyevsky and Kafka. As such, for Kristeva, the abject defines the "terrain" explored by great literature. I agree with Kristeva's assessment of the connection between the abject and great literature— much of what this thesis does is to explore that connection. The central characters of *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance* go through this process of primal repression; they abject major cultural anxieties and eventually confront them in a Gothic setting.

Ultimately, I argue that the abject, the Gothic, and cultural anxiety are dependent on one another. In *Gothic America*, Teresa Goddu writes, "The gothic, like all discourses, needs to be historicized; to read it out of cultural context is to misread it . . . If the gothic is informed by its historical context, the horrors of history are also articulated through gothic discourse" (2). This argument is important for understanding the Gothic as more than escapist, and one of the most crucial keys to this understanding is the concept of the abject. It is often through the abject that the Gothic is able to unearth its most striking cultural anxieties. Hogle sums this up by writing:

> The process of abjection, then, is as thoroughly social and cultural as it is personal. It encourages middle-class people in the west, as we see in many of the lead characters in Gothic fictions, to deal with the tangled contradictions fundamental to their existence by throwing them off onto ghostly or monstrous counterparts that then seem 'uncanny' in their unfamiliar familiarity while also conveying overtones of the archaic and the alien in their grotesque mixture of elements viewed as incompatible by established standards of normality. (7)

Goddu and Hogle both offer important insight into the ways in which the Gothic mode is bound up in culture and, as Hogle's quotation above suggests, the abject is another crucial player in that relationship.

This relationship between the abject, the Gothic, and cultural anxiety is a key concept that provides the foundation for my thesis. Chapter One will explore this relationship in the context of the Southern mountain tradition. It offers a brief history of the tradition in fact and fiction, using pieces from the critical conversation on Appalachian history as well as primary source material. Ultimately, I argue that America's long tradition of Othering Appalachia has situated it as abject—as a symbolic representation of the deeply familiar, alluring past which the prevailing culture has, to use Kristeva's and Swaim's terminology, "loathed" in the interest of characterizing itself as modern and progressive. Next, Chapter Two focuses on Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust* and the ways in which Faulkner appropriates Gothic elements of the Southern mountain tradition and the hillbilly stereotype in order to explore the problem of desegregation; the mountain characters in *Intruder in the Dust* act as an Other onto which the townspeople can abject their own tendency toward violence and the barbarism of the lynch mob mentality. Chapter Three explores Dickey's *Deliverance* and its Gothicized characters and landscape. Like Faulkner, Dickey uses the Southern mountain tradition and the hillbilly stereotype in order to explore a problem of his contemporary South: the 1960s-era threats to Southern, white masculinity. The narrator of *Deliverance* abjects his own gender insecurities onto the characters he meets in the mountains, situating the narrator as a product of this 1960s gender anxiety and the mountain characters as abject Other. Finally, the conclusion offers a synthesis of the previous chapters and emphasizes key

takeaway concepts about the way these authors have combined the Southern mountain tradition with the Gothic mode in order to examine cultural anxiety in their contemporary South.

When read in light of this ability to bring cultural anxiety to the surface, *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance* are excellent examples of the power of the Gothic mode. I argue that while the Gothic is difficult to define, its strength lies in its ability to bring to light what has been hidden; and the most powerful burying occurs through the process of abjection. This is one of the most powerful reasons why the Gothic remains so important in contemporary culture. It allows us to examine the most taboo recesses of our cultures, thereby working out some of the most troubling parts of our past, the most powerful anxieties of the present, and even the doubts we have concerning our future. In juxtaposing the dichotomies problematized by the Gothic, we find out to lesser or greater degrees which side of each dichotomy we believe is right—and this occurs most directly through a confrontation of the abject. This confrontation is precisely what happens in *Intruder in the Dust* and in *Deliverance.* Through their use of the Southern mountain tradition, Faulkner and Dickey each create a space in which their characters, upon entering, encounter an Other through which they experience their abjected selves. Those abjected selves are representative of some of the most deeply troubling problems faced by each writer's contemporary South, and because of this, I argue that these novels must be read as Gothic—to do so is to fully understand the ways each writer was able to portray the reality of his contemporary South as he saw it, using the Southern mountains as a setting. This space, I argue, is a haunted space in American consciousness—a

haunting based on its differentiation as Other, which dates back as far as the

Revolutionary War.

CHAPTER ONE: TOWARD A GOTHIC SETTING: THE EVOLUTION OF THE

SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN TRADITION IN FACT AND FICTION

In June 2012, *USA Today* released an article covering the fortieth anniversary of the film version of *Deliverance.* The article mostly features two interviews—one with a raft guide involved in the making of the film, and another with Georgia's first film commissioner. What is striking about the article is the comments it generated, left by internet users from all over the country. Forty years after its release, the movie—which has become more widely known than the original novel—is still sparking debates. On a thread concerning the current whereabouts of the actor who played the banjo-playing child in the famous "Dueling Banjos" scene, Sarah Gillespie of Rabun County High School comments: "Billy Redden, who acted in the dueling banjos scene with Ronny Cox's character Drew is alive and well. He still lives in the mountains of NE Georgia" (qtd. in Long). The comment immediately following this one reads, "and happily married to his cousin," from user Jerry Suttles of California (qtd. in Long), with both comments attracting "likes" from other users. In another thread, user Patricia Finger advises, "Have made it a point never to travel off the interstates in the south. Do not go into rural south what ever you do" (qtd. in Long).

As insignificant as this comment forum is in the bigger picture, it is representative of the mystery and controversy surrounding the Southern mountain people in the eyes of the prevailing American culture, as well as the role of popular culture portrayals within

those perceptions. Modern Americans have a long, complex history of fact and fiction

from which to draw conclusions about Southern mountain people—often lumped together

as one group, though the mountainous regions are actually made up of a few different

mountain chains and their inhabitants are more diverse than popular perception usually

acknowledges—and the film *Deliverance* is one of the most widely popular

contemporary representations.

In a wave of scholarship beginning in the 1970s, the history of prevailing

perceptions of the Southern mountains has been the subject of a number of significant

studies. Henry Shapiro's 1978 *Appalachia on Our Mind* and Allen Batteau's 1990 *The*

Invention of Appalachia are representative of this new era of scholarship, focused on our

continued fascination with Appalachia and the formation of contemporary popular

perceptions of the region. Batteau argues:

> Appalachia is a creature of the urban imagination. The folk culture, the depressed
> area, the romantic wilderness, the Appalachia of fiction, journalism, and public
> policy, have for more than a century been created, forgotten, and rediscovered,
> primarily by the economic opportunism, political creativity, or passing fancy of
> urban elites. The contemporary appearance of Appalachia, whether in movies
> about a coal miner's daughter or in the use of rural themes in merchandising,
> draws on the imagery and motivations that a generation ago transfixed an affluent
> society and sent legions of poverty warriors into the hills. (1)

Indeed, upon examination of the role of journalism, fiction, and other forms of rhetoric in

conveying to the public the real events on which Appalachia's reputation is based,

Batteau's argument that "Appalachia is a creature of the urban imagination" is a

compelling one. I agree with Batteau's assessment that urban America has constructed

Appalachia, and I contend that this construction has made Appalachia into a Gothic

Other—an Other that has historically represented some of America's most deep-seated,

buried anxieties. Building on the work of Batteau and others, this chapter explores the

history of the Southern mountains in fact and fiction in order to ultimately illustrate how Appalachia has been Gothicized—how it is a haunted landscape for the prevailing culture, an Othered space that is symbolic of a past urban Americans can, in Kristeva's terminology, "loathe." This chapter examines Appalachia as an abject space before the subsequent chapters explore how Faulkner and Dickey have appropriated this history in order to create abject characters and spaces in *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance* and use them to examine cultural anxiety.

The history of the differentiation of Southern mountain people goes back at least two centuries. In fact, perceptions of difference between the mountaineers and the lowlanders had already begun as early as the Revolutionary War. David Hsiung notes that the writing of British generals differentiates the mountain men in both private and official correspondence, describing them as "barbarians" (35) and even going so far as to spell out "Back Water Men" in code (34). He also argues that the lagging postwar mountain economy caused a disparity that, when "coupled with increasing soil exhaustion and relatively few internal improvements, fostered in upper East Tennessee the belief that the region was indeed a different sort of place and a poorer one" (75).

These early perceptions of difference became even stronger as a result of the Franklin statehood movement. In what is now eastern Tennessee, the autonomous territory of "Franklin" was created in 1784 and existed for less than four years, never being admitted into the union. During this period, this region was marked by turbulence, violence, and discontent. Two men, John Sevier and John Tipton, led rivaling factions— the "Franklinites" and the "Tiptonites"—that intensified the already tense conditions in the region. Kevin T. Barksdale writes that "the dire economic and political situation of

both the national and the North Carolina governments created a geopolitical climate in

the upper Tennessee Valley that was clouded by uncertainty and fostered widespread

citizen discontent" (29). In this volatile political atmosphere, violence between the two

factions began over bureaucratic differences and ultimately created a climactic clash that

led to several deaths and arrests, as well as at least one infamous bar brawl. In fact,

Barksdale argues that the perception of Appalachians as inherently violent finds its

earliest roots in the Franklin statehood movement:

> The separatist movement was engulfed in near-perpetual violence during its less
> than four-year existence. Racked by political instability and internal factionalism
> fostered by economic and political competition, North Carolina's divide-and-
> conquer diplomatic strategy, and a determined and well-supported antistatehood
> faction, the communities of the upper Tennessee Valley constantly faced the
> threat of civil strife and bloodshed. . . . Despite efforts to offer ethnic, cultural,
> and geographic explanations for the persistence of backcountry violence in the
> region, these are the primary factors that underlie the 'effusions of blood' in the
> upper Tennessee valley following the American Revolution. (46)

These four years of violence represent the first major event in the formation of

Appalachian stereotypes. In addition to the region's new reputation for violence, the

Franklin statehood movement also helped to solidify the early perception of difference

between the mountain inhabitants and the lowlanders. The statehood movement itself was

an effort to establish distinction—its goal was to distinguish this territory as separate

from its neighbors.

This reputation for violence and aggression would soon be publicized and applied

much more broadly than the Franklin statehood movement. In the 1830s, travel accounts

about Appalachia began to be widely popular. These accounts often described

Appalachian people as violent and animalistic. One travel writer, Henry Tudor, had heard

that the residents of Kentucky were "half-horses and half-alligators" (qtd. in Ledford

127). While describing a disagreement taking place between a local Kentucky resident and a fellow traveler, Tudor writes, "I verily believed . . . that he was literally going to bite his nose off; for certainly the demonstration of such an intent was, in the first onset, particularly strong, and it is said to be a delicate little custom in high favour among the epicures and gourmands of that state [Kentucky]" (qtd. in Ledford 127).

One reason behind these negative portrayals can be traced to the geography of the early road system. Often, in the eyes of the prevailing culture, Appalachian inhabitants have been perceived as isolated since their earliest settlements; however, historians have debunked this myth of isolation, pointing to a network of roads and the existence of both local and far-reaching economic ties. Hsiung writes that "by 1800 [settlers] were connected geographically and emotionally, albeit tenuously in places, to points scattered across the map. These ties suggest that no basis exists in the area's early history for modern depictions of Appalachian residents as a people isolated from the time of first settlement" (56). In *Two Worlds in the Tennessee Mountains,* Hsiung advocates an understanding of early Tennessee as made up of both locally-oriented individuals and those with a broader worldview. He cites the geography of the area's roads as the catalyst for this division:

> A network of roads linked the more accessible sites along rivers and in the broad valleys to the major transportation routes that crossed the area. A more extreme physiographic setting rendered some settlements less accessible. Individuals linked to the road network developed an outward-looking view, but others who had more difficulty moving about the region were less geographically and emotionally connected and therefore developed a more inward-turning perspective. (187)

Hsiung contends that these differing perspectives led to the earliest portrayals of Southern mountain people as backward, primitive, and resistant to change. He argues that the

writers who published the first widely popular portrayals of Appalachia, beginning in the

1830s, gathered information from those with the broader perspective, as they were

naturally easier to reach by road, and that those individuals described their less-connected

counterparts "in terms that imply backwardness" (19). Hsiung's case is especially

compelling when considered in light of the railroad construction that began in the 1830s:

> Town residents living in upper East Tennessee's more accessible valleys held broader worldviews. Such perspectives led them to promote the construction of a railroad and to describe nonsupporters living in the more remote coves with a more locally oriented perspective, in terms that imply backwardness. Popular magazine writers who would eventually contribute to the local color movement did not actually visit the most remote mountain areas but instead talked with the more accessible town residents, tapped into these local perceptions, and publicized an image of Appalachia that has persisted ever since. (19)

In this way, the early image of a behind-the-times backwoods Appalachia was passed on

and eventually publicized. Hsiung's argument also points to an important development

for my analysis: the early use of backwoods Appalachia as an Other, which is a pattern

that returns again and again. As I will explain throughout the chapter, this Othering

primarily takes place on a widely cultural level, with urban Americans defining

Appalachia as an Other. However, this early example occurs within Appalachian

communities themselves: by describing their less connected counterparts as behind-the-

times and against innovations like the railroad, the Appalachian inhabitants who lived

closer to the roads could self-identify as progressive and willing to interact with

outsiders.

While backwoods Appalachians acted as an Other for their local neighbors who

supported the railroad in the 1830s, this Othering occurred on a national level as a result

of the Civil War. The war and its aftermath were disastrous for the mountain inhabitants:

the region saw its infrastructure partially eliminated and its social institutions devastated,

and it faced a major economic collapse in former slave states and a lack of the economic

and human resources necessary for rebuilding the region. Appalachia also soon saw rapid

industrialization, which was accompanied by an increase in crime (McKinney). The Civil

War was one of the most important events to set the Southern mountains apart. The

people living in Appalachia were mainly subsistence farmers, whose lifestyle lay in stark

contrast to that of the plantocracy; and the decadent plantation economy which had

caused this disparity was under attack. Because Appalachia was indicative of the

problems of the South's economy and social structure, the Civil War set up some of the

most crucial distinct boundaries in the Othering of the Southern mountains, illustrating an

early example of the abject Southern mountains that Faulkner and Dickey appropriate in

their work. Batteau writes:

> The war, and the issues of black and white that were caught up in it, supplied a
> necessary element for the making of Appalachia. An important element of
> Appalachia has been its double otherness, from both the South and the nation as a
> whole. Facing the South, Appalachia supplied an indictment of the plantocracy
> and the decadent economy it constructed; facing the nation, it set a critique of
> contemporary conditions in the context of some important national symbols. . . .
> With the Civil War making history out of a political breach between sections, it
> became possible to identify Appalachia as southern and anti-progressive on the
> one hand, and as a critique of the South on the other. (37)

In this era of turbulent national and regional identity, with the beginnings of Appalachia's

reputation for the violence and animality of its people in place, Appalachia provided an

Other against which Northerners and lowland Southerners could define themselves. For

the Civil War-era South, Appalachia was a reminder of the negative effects of its own

economy and lifestyle; Batteau's use of the word "*indictment* of the plantocracy"

[emphasis mine] suggests that Appalachia served as an example of why the plantocracy

should be condemned, and therefore connotes a sense of shame. For the North,

Appalachia was a symbol of the conditions it was fighting against. Therefore, for both sides, Appalachia represented a past whose values were currently being challenged. It was juxtaposed against changing conditions and increasingly Othered through this contrast; Appalachia as Other allowed urban Americans on both sides to mark out a territory for themselves through comparison.[1] During this era, Appalachia became a deeply familiar reminder of American antebellum history and a separate, distinct territory that came to symbolize Civil War problems for both sides; it was a place symbolically haunted by the antebellum past. This new "double otherness" is one of the most profound early manifestations of Appalachia as abject—an important first step toward the Gothicizing of Appalachia.

In the 1870s, interest in Appalachia boomed as a result of the "discovery" of Appalachia by journalists. The first big boom of journalistic interest in Appalachia came from the Hatfield-McCoy feud, which lasted between 1861 and 1893; in the early 1870s, the conflict began to draw the attention of the media. As Hsiung argues, journalists interviewed the inhabitants of the Southern mountains' more accessible settlements, inhabitants who had already developed a perception of their more locally-oriented counterparts as backward and stuck in the past. The sensationalized version of this information resulted in a collection of newspaper and magazine articles describing the

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[1] The Civil War-era use of Appalachia as Other is reflected in literature of the times as well. George Washington Harris's 1867 *Sut Lovingood: Yarns Spun By a Nat'ral Born Durn'd Fool* was created as anti-Northern satire. Batteau describes its protagonist, a young Tennessee mountaineer, as "pure savage; there are no restraints on his viciousness or his cruelty. . . [Sut's] orthography is calculated to communicate outrageous illiteracy. The overall effect is to present a character so vicious, ornery, and uncivilized that one would hesitate to admit him to the barnyard, let alone the drawing room" (35). In each of his adventures, Sut acts with brutishness and stupidity while appearing smarter than Northern political and religious figures.

region as a "lost world" and the "retarded frontier" (Otto 7). In a story in an 1873 issue of *Lippincott's Magazine*, writer Will Wallace Harney described Appalachia and its inhabitants as "A Strange Land and Peculiar People." The image stuck immediately, and Americans began to be truly curious about this "strange land" and its inhabitants.

It was this interest that created the market for the new trend of "local color" writing and made fictional writing about the South especially popular. The local color movement began in the 1870s and became widely popular through the last decades of the century. Barbara C. Ewell and Pamela Glenn Menke characterize the circumstances that led to the local color movement, writing, "A burgeoning new magazine market encouraged a stream of short fiction portraying unfamiliar customs and ordinary folk and affirming a renewed sense of unity in the nation's rich diversity" (xi). Because of the curiosity to which it catered, local color fiction often emphasized the oddities of the places it depicted. This emphasis on difference and the postbellum climate's heightened awareness of region made the South one of the most popular settings for local color writing.

The most popular early local color writer to feature the Southern mountains as a setting was Mary Murfree, whose version of life in the Southern mountains was instrumental in, as Batteau put it, "inventing" Appalachia. Murfree was a well-to-do female writer who initially wrote under the pen name of Charles Egbert Craddock. She spent her childhood summers at the Beersheba Springs mountain resort, located 100 miles east of her family's home in Murfreesboro, and constructed her stories based on those memories. As such, Murfree is a perfect example of Hsiung's theory; he writes, "[Murfree] never visited the most extreme mountain areas of southern Appalachia that

provided the setting for her stories. Instead, she learned about the mountaineers by talking with the residents of the main towns in the larger valleys, like the railroad promoters in Jonesborough who described the 'backward' nonsupporters living in the outlying areas" (162). However, her stories were widely believed to be accurate descriptions. Murfree herself often expressed this conviction, and her most popular collection of stories, the 1884 work *In the Tennessee Mountains,* was distributed to home missionaries of Northern churches to use as an educational text for "understanding conditions in the region" (Hsiung 177).

Mary Murfree's writings are particularly important for understanding contemporary portrayals of Appalachia because of her depiction of the relationship between Appalachia and nature. Batteau writes that by the 1830s, Americans firmly associated Appalachia with nature. He explains that events like the early, rapid industrialization of Appalachia constituted a "sacrifice of nature" that distinguished "Nature" from civilization, and ultimately argues that because Appalachian people were associated with "Nature," this attitude of sacrifice might shed light on negative attitudes toward those people: "First of all is the root event, the sacrifice of nature that created a Nature set apart from and consecrated by civilization. Although the cultural production of Nature is by now well-recognized, the importance of nature's agonistic destruction may well explain some features of our attitude toward those people and places that today are defined as part of Nature" (195). As I will detail in Chapter Three, the connection between the sacrifice of nature and negative attitudes toward Appalachians is a crucial part of *Deliverance.* In order to understand the roots of this major element of Dickey's

work, which lie within the early link between Appalachia and nature, there is perhaps no better source than Mary Murfree's writing.

In her story "A Star in the Valley," an urban gentlemen, Reginald Chevis, meets mountaineer Celia Shaw while on a sporting trip in the mountains. The nature found in the pages of "A Star in the Valley" is soft, feminine, and green. The mists are "softly clinging white wreaths" (106), and the scenery is filled with "sweet-scented fern" (107) and "soft verdure" (108). Moreover, this soft, feminized nature is continually applied to Celia Shaw, who "was hardly more human to Chevis than certain lissome little woodland flowers" (110). In fact, Chevis himself is described in feminized language while in the mountains; his "dainty and delicate musings" (105) and the "romantic zest" (104) added to the landscape by his cigar while in the mountains lie in stark contrast to his lowland occupation as a wartime general. This association of Appalachia with a feminized nature was surely part of Murfree's popularity, as it catered to the contemporary tastes of her urban audience. Moreover, Murfree's soft, feminized Appalachia lies in stark contrast to the masculinized mountain people found in *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance.*

During the decades that saw the local color movement take place and produce the relatively innocent popular portrayal of Appalachia published by Murfree, the national media covered two major events that furthered the Southern mountain's reputation for violence. The first of these was the Moonshine Wars of the 1870s. Illegal stills continued to thrive in other parts of the South and in several Northern cities, but the conflict between the moonshiners of Appalachia and the federal representatives who oversaw the tax on liquor drew national media attention. Bruce E. Stewart explains, "Wartime Unionism was often a prerequisite for southerners hired by the Bureau of Internal

Revenue. Former mountain Confederates quickly developed a deep hatred for these

revenue agents, whom they also viewed as the purveyors of radical change in the post-

Civil War South" ("These big-boned" 186). When combined with the potential for

sensationalization provided by the region's burgeoning reputation for violence and

lawlessness, the Moonshine Wars in Appalachia provided exciting material for

journalists.[2] Stewart writes that this sensationalized media coverage "helped to convince

many outsiders that mountain residents were inherently more ignorant and violent than

other Americans" (184). The second event to further this reputation of mountain residents

in this era was the increasingly sensationalized media coverage of the Hatfield-McCoy

feud, which journalists continued to dramatize as a quest for vengeance instead of

examining it as a consequence of very real problems like rapid over-industrialization. The

region's sudden industrialization, beginning with the Reconstruction-era effort to increase

production in textiles and other industries, created competition for natural resources; and

this tension was one of the central causes of family violence between the Hatfields and

the McCoys (McKinney 11). While urban newspaper readers read coverage of the feud

and became further convinced of the perceived inherently primitive, backward, violent,

and lawless nature of the Southern mountaineers, the other factors that created the

catalysts for the Hatfield-McCoy feud were ignored in favor of the drama provided by the

aspect of vengeance connected with the connotation of the word "feud."[3]

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[2] Stewart notes that an average of six revenue agents were killed per year between 1876 and 1880, compared to the twenty deaths per year average among deputy marshals in the "Wild West." However, the Moonshine Wars received national coverage that blew these killings out of proportion.

[3] T. R. C. Hutton has explored the application of the label "feud" to situations that should not normally qualify as such. Hutton explains that even some political assassinations

As with the Civil War, the media coverage of feuding and moonshine violence again reinforced Appalachia as an Other against which urban Americans could define themselves. Stewart explains, "For them [urban Americans], the apparent prevalence of moonshining and feuding demonstrated that highlanders were unwanted remnants of America's pioneer past: staunch individualists who relied on violence to maintain order and preserve their 'primitive' way of life" (4). He later notes that historians "have demonstrated conclusively that negative stereotypes about the region often reflected middle-class America's desire to stress the benefits of industrialization and 'progress'" (181). Postbellum America longed for progress, and Appalachia represented a past that many Americans recognized as familiar but also saw as deeply flawed. By defining Appalachia as a primitive Other, the rest of America could define itself as not-primitive, emphasizing its own progressiveness. At the same time, the excitement of the dramatized "feuds" and Moonshine Wars captured urban Americans' fascination, creating the simultaneously repellent and alluring quality Kristeva assigns to the abject.

This desire to prove urban American progressiveness by defining Appalachian primitiveness is reflected in the subsequent efforts to apply social science to understanding Appalachians. Using new scientific movements—such as scientific racism and Social Darwinism, which sought to trace characteristics of current populations back to their genetic roots—these studies classify Appalachia as officially, factually backward and primitive, once again reinforcing the prevailing urban culture as progressive and

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were described as part of a "feud" in order to capitalize on the drama accompanying the contemporary connotation of the word and avoid the potential political backlash from examining the real problems beyond such crimes, like over-industrialization.

modern.[4] However, other participants in these movements contended that the biological

purity of its people could save America from current fears of degeneration. Batteau

writes, "Among the most prominent elements of the Appalachia image in the early

twentieth century were the ideas that the moral fiber of American civilization was

founded upon the dominant position of the Anglo-Saxon race, that America was in

danger of degenerating, and that the uncorrupted Anglo-Saxon stock of the mountains

could redeem America" (94). Because Appalachian settlements were perceived to be

relatively isolated, some believed that they were genetically more purely Anglo-Saxon

than the urban populations, which had incorporated immigrants.

Despite the positiveness of the new perception that Appalachia could potentially

"redeem" America, a new era of negative perceptions was soon ushered in by the arrival

of the coal industry, which would change Appalachia forever. The railroad finally

reached the most inaccessible areas of Kentucky in 1914, and shortly thereafter, coal

mines began offering employment to mountaineers. The rapid industrialization that began

with Reconstruction was quickly taken to an extreme by the coal industry; it and the

unrest resulting from coal worker strikes are of key importance to understanding

Appalachia's reputation for violence. The coal industry in Appalachia expanded rapidly,

and its barons aimed at complete control of state government in order to avoid regulation.

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[4] Many of these studies were focused on moonshining and violence. Kevin Barksdale writes, "The fallacious notion that nearly all southern Appalachians descended from Scotch-Irish immigrants gave birth to the idea of the 'Appalachian Highlander,' who carried a cultural and historical propensity to act 'clannish'; live outside the law; and, most important, repeatedly and unabashedly engage in acts of violence" (26). One study claimed that "the prime cause [of feuding] is that 'the Kentuckian inherits a virulent form of the fighting spirit of the pioneers, and that the environment of the mountain people has made possible the persistence of Blood revenge here, when it has disappeared elsewhere'" (Batteau 83).

The largely unregulated coal industry created dire conditions for mountaineer miners, who were soon "living in a state of virtual peonage because of their indebtedness to the company store, tyrannized by gun-carrying private guards" (Batteau 104). Low wages, long hours, and unsafe working conditions led to the popularity of the United Mine Workers, which in turn sparked the hiring of "detectives," many of whom had criminal records, on the part of the coal barons. These "detectives" acted as private guards for the coal industry—they harassed and assaulted union organizers and drove them out of town, evicted union sympathizers from their homes, and menaced mine employees who expressed complaints about the mines or the company stores. Combined with the resulting union strikes in the 1920s, which sometimes caused federal troops to be sent in and left many casualties on both sides, this era of coal-related unrest was instrumental in reinforcing the Southern mountain region's reputation for violence. The coal industry also reinforced this reputation in its own rhetoric. In 1922, the US Coal Commission wrote, "Local traditions [still] exert a dominating influence and account very largely for the outbreaks of violence. Much of the violence had nothing to do with the coal industry but had to do with the nature and racial characteristics of the people. . . .The primitive conditions of life of this people can scarcely be paralleled anywhere" (qtd. in Stewart 4). Coal also reinforced Appalachia's reputation for being behind the times. Batteau writes, "In the twentieth century . . . the coal-mining industry became a symbol of all that was not progress. . . . Coal mining came to be seen not as industry par excellence, but as an inversion of industry: irrational, unprogressive, violence-prone. Seen as such, it could fit into the state-of-nature Appalachia" (125).

It was in this era—the 1930s—that the portrayal of the Southern mountain people began to reflect their negative reputation in a much more widespread fashion, mostly through the formation of the cartoonish stereotype of the "hillbilly." The very real changes the region was going through at the time—rapid industrialization and the accompanying transformation of Nature into a commodity—were downplayed, and the existing negative assumptions about Appalachia were exaggerated to a cartoonish degree. Describing the attitudes of contemporary lowlanders, John Solomon Otto writes, "Hillbillies were poor, because they were lazy and not because they were the victims of extractive industries which had invaded Appalachia and Ozarkia" (10). The term "hillbilly" first appeared in print in 1900, described by a New York Journal reporter as "a free and untrammeled white citizen who lives in the hills. . . has no means to speak of, dresses as he can, talks as he pleases, drinks whiskey when he can get it, and fires off his revolver as the fancy takes him" (Otto 8). This is the portrayal that took shape as a recognizable, uniform stereotype in the 1930s.

This stereotype became widely popular through the publication of several cartoons featuring hillbilly characters. In 1934, the hugely popular cartoon strips *Li'l Abner* and *Barney Google* were launched, both of which featured hillbilly characters of the classic stereotype we now know so well. The hillbilly character in *Barney Google,* named Snuffy Smith, was so popular by the late 1930s that he took over as the star of the comic strip. In 1935, Paul Webb began publishing cartoons featuring the "Mountain Boys." The cartoons ran in *Esquire* until 1948 and combined "in riotous profusion themes of ignorance, squalor, poverty, animality, and sloth" (Batteau 127). Webb's cartoons rely on contrast for humor. They exhibit an inversion of the prevailing understanding of things

that belong inside and outside, as well as nighttime and daytime activities; the cartoons show mules and chickens inside Appalachian homes, and Appalachian men dozing for most of the day and drinking all night. Another inversion occurs when Webb continually portrays the infant of the family carrying a gun, which of course reinforces the Appalachian reputation for violence. In using these inversions for humor, the cartoons continued to heighten perceptions of Appalachian life as different.

It was also in this era that the hillbilly stereotype became consistently portrayed as not merely ignorant of progress, but actively resistant to it. Begun by President Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s, the Tennessee Valley Authority was formed to manage industrial development and natural resource use while modernizing rural areas. In order to promote the acceptance of its ideology, TVA films and articles showed Appalachian mountaineers overcoming their initial resistance toward new technology and other innovations. One TVA film, *Valley of the Tennessee*, begins with shots of airplanes, bridges, and other feats of engineering, and gradually moves to scenes showing one-room schoolhouses and ruined crops in Tennessee, where "something went wrong" (qtd. in Batteau 141). The narrator of the film then talks about the obstacle of winning over the local ignorant, backward population while the camera focuses on an unshaven mountain man looking skeptical as a TVA official attempts to explain new farming technology. Similarly, in Walter Davenport's article "The Promised Land," a supposedly typical fictional hillbilly named Merce Johnson is featured trying to make decisions for his farm and his family. The article describes Merce hearing about the TVA, saying "what he does understand of it, he doesn't believe" (qtd. in Batteau 142). The narrative is filled with resistant questioning as it describes Merce's thoughts, such as "As he gets it they are going to take

part of his land, maybe all of it, and turn it into timber land, which is all that it's good for.

Is that so? Well, how do they know what it's good for? Did they ever see it?" (qtd. in

Batteau 142).

By the 1930s, therefore, the "hillbilly" had become a stereotype whose symbolic

association with the past was used in cartoons for humor and in political rhetoric as a

symbol of resistance to progress. Once again, Appalachia stood as a representation of

America's unwanted past; only this time, it was as an even more cartoonish and

caricatured Other. Batteau writes:

> Previously the mountaineer, Child of Nature, had existed as a critique, and
> possibly for the redemption, of what was seen as a decadent civilization. Yet in
> the mid-1930s, with America not yet out of the worst depression in its history, the
> animality and rural cacophony of Appalachia came to stand for the irrational and
> stubbornly individualistic traits of an earlier America. As serious writers and
> planners of the 1930s attempted to understand the troubles of America and their
> possible solutions, they drew on the hillbilly as a cartoon character standing for
> the degeneration and disorder that had resulted from the earlier era of
> individualism. (132)

Facing these portrayals of the now-recognizable stereotype of the mountaineer as

resistant to progress, lowland Americans could again use the hillbilly as a negative

against their own self-definition; they could recognize and reinforce their own identity by

positively identifying with progress. They could read Paul Webb's "Mountain Boys"

cartoons in *Esquire* and recognize the modern cleanliness of their own homes in

comparison with the mules inside Webb's mountain shacks; they could choose to side

with bridges and planes instead of run-down schoolhouses, thereby siding with

progress—and the TVA.

The reputation of the "hillbilly" was only worsened by World War II. This era,

which immediately preceded the publication of *Intruder in the Dust* in 1948, was marked

by even worse conditions of poverty in the Southern mountains. Conditions grew so dire that the mountain inhabitants began migrating to cities to look for work. Over two million mountaineers left the Appalachian mountains in search of jobs in Northeastern and Midwestern cities between 1940 and 1960 (Otto 8). Unfortunately, the welcome these mountain migrants received in the city was anything but warm; Otto writes, "Urban Northerners, expecting an influx of 'Snuffy Smiths,' shunned the mountain migrants, who settled in slum neighborhoods, which were predictably called 'hillbilly ghettos.' Living in an impersonal urban world, where one rarely knew one's neighbors, the mountaineers turned to store front churches and to the 'hillbilly bars' for solace" (12). As a result, a wave of anti-hillbilly journalism was published in the late 1950s, warning urban citizens about the influx of poor Southern whites coming into Northern cities and the perceived dangers they brought with them.

This anti-hillbilly journalism was epitomized by Albert Votaw's 1958 article "The Hillbillies Invade Chicago," published in *Harper's.* Votaw paints a scathing image of the mountain migrants, which he calls "a pathetic though bumptious minority of 70,000 newcomers" (64). Here, the hillbillies are not simply portrayed as lazy and ignorant, but rather as a group of degenerates who represent a very real threat to safety and quality of life in Chicago. Votaw writes, "Clannish, proud, disorderly, untamed to urban ways, these country cousins confound all notions of racial, religious, and cultural purity" (64). One of the most serious threats looming throughout the article is that of filth. The image Votaw portrays is one of the unclean hillbillies enjoying their unsanitary lifestyle. Votaw even extends this argument to the threat of disease; he suggests that the hillbillies are inherently more prone to catch illnesses like tuberculosis and polio than other groups of

Americans and are unwilling to seek medical help from local authorities. He also

describes them as criminal; the article's tagline describes the influx of hillbillies as a

"small army" who are generally "proud, poor, primitive, and fast with a knife" (64).

Votaw consistently mentions this threat of violence and supports this claim with remarks

from local law enforcement, quoting, "'In my opinion they are worse than the colored,'

said a police captain. 'They are vicious and knife-happy. They are involved in 75 per cent

of our arrests in this district'" (64). Among other accusations of lawlessness, such as

stories of rent-skipping, Votaw writes, "when it comes to sex training, their habits—with

respect to such matters as incest and statutory rape—are clearly at variance with urban

legal requirements" (65). The message was clear: the hillbilly was unwelcome in the

city.[5] After the solidifying of the hillbilly image into a popular, recognizable stereotype in

the 1930s, tough financial times and a new, unwelcoming environment gave the image of

the hillbilly a distinctly immoral edge. As John Solomon Otto puts it, "The popular image

of mountain people had devolved from that of romantic, lost frontiersmen to that of poor

but lazy hillbilly farmers, and, ultimately, to that of poor and immoral hillbilly migrants

who were unfit for urban life" (13).

However, immediately following this period was the era of social and political

reform that took place in the 1960s, part of which—surprisingly, given the negativity of

[5] Votaw's article was not the only piece of anti-Appalachian journalism in this era. Even
within the pages of "The Hillbillies Invade Chicago," Votaw quotes the *Chicago Tribune*
as saying, "Skid row dives, opium parlors, and assorted other dens of iniquity collectively
are as safe as Sunday school picnics compared with the joints taken over by clans of
fightin', feudin', Southern hillbillies and their shootin' cousins" (65-66), and "The
Southern hillbilly migrants, who have descended like a plague of locusts in the last few
years, have the lowest standard of living and moral code (if any), the biggest capacity for
liquor, and the most savage tactics when drunk, which is most of the time" (66).

the sentiments behind Votaw's article and others—was directed at Appalachia. Much of this new era of reform stemmed from John F. Kennedy. While campaigning in West Virginia and other areas of the Southern mountains, Kennedy was deeply moved by the poor conditions he saw; and once in office, Kennedy focused much of his reform effort on Appalachia. In 1963, he established PARC, the President's Appalachian Regional Commission, to address the region's poverty and infrastructural issues. After Kennedy's assassination, Lyndon Johnson continued this work. This ultimately led to the formation of the ARC (Appalachian Regional Commission). Batteau writes that the ARC "established an exclusive franchise on Appalachian development," and writes, "If one's measure of success is based on millions of dollars spent or cubic yards of concrete poured, then the most successful Appalachia ever was constructed in the 1960s and 1970s by the Appalachian Regional Commission" (176). Despite some contention over its successfulness, the ARC did help to refocus positive public attention on the Southern mountains.

Simultaneously, a wave of widely read writing painted a sympathetic new view of conditions in the Southern mountains in the eyes of the American public. One of the most consistent trends in this flood of sympathetic writing, which included Harry Caudill's famous *Night Comes to the Cumberlands,* was the dramatization of the history of industrial struggle in the Southern mountains. This dramatization showed a struggle between powerless mountaineers and unfeeling corporations, and they portray industrial exploitation as a form of rape in a way that comes across as Gothic. Batteau writes, "Instead of the pristine beauty and quietude associated with Appalachia, the tone of these accounts was one of Gothic horror. The corporations and the union are pictured as huge,

powerful, wealthy, uncaring, corrupt . . . 'Murder' and 'rape' are the two terms most frequently used to describe the effects of strip mining on the mountains" (184). The threat of rape is one of the stock tropes of Gothic literature, and in these sympathetic pieces of writing, authors used that threat to symbolize the changes being made to the Appalachian landscape. Moreover, when connected with the vilified corporations, the tone becomes even more Gothic: the corporation represents the classic Gothic villain and the landscape becomes the maiden facing the threat of rape. In response to this exploitation of the landscape, some Appalachian individuals took action; and their protests are also recorded in the journalism of this era and portrayed in a sympathetic light. In 1965, "The Widow Combs" laid down in front of a tractor in order to protest strip mining on her land, and the attention the incident received resulted in a newspaper article portraying the elderly widow spending Thanksgiving in jail—a sympathetic portrayal that emphasizes helplessness instead of lawlessness and crime.

The 1960s-era wave of sympathy for Appalachia is epitomized by a CBS documentary titled *Christmas in Appalachia*, aired in the holiday season of 1964. The documentary, which was seen by millions of Americans, relied on pathos to capture viewers' attention. Americans were shown a father discussing how he could not afford to give his family a Christmas, and another scene of Appalachian inhabitants getting by on surplus food and saying, "You can't make Christmas cookies out of commodities" (qtd. in Batteau 162). The documentary ends with Charles Kuralt reminding Americans that the promise that "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" is all the people of the Southern mountains have. The public response was immediate. Charity donations of food, toys, and other supplies were called in at once, and these donations

were sent by the airplaneful to the Southern mountains. After writing like *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* had set the stage, *Christmas in Appalachia* played to America's holiday spirit and sudden surge of interest in helping Appalachia. The reforms of the ARC were at work, symbolized by the memory of American hero John F. Kennedy, and a new era of sympathetic Appalachian writing was fresh in the American consciousness; the 1960s became an era of patriotic Appalachian sympathy. This was the era immediately preceding the writing of *Deliverance,* which was published in 1970.

This highly condensed history, beginning with the Revolutionary War and ending in 1970, teaches a lesson quite clearly: it shows that, for two centuries, Appalachia has been thought of as different. From Revolutionary War generals going so far as to differentiate Southern mountain men in code to Mary Murfree's "peculiar and primitive state of society," and onward into the charity of the 1960s, which characterized Appalachia as a region in need of help from the prevailing urban culture, Appalachia and its people have long been differentiated. To much of modern America, this is no surprise. Even the comment forum discussed at the opening of this chapter is evidence of this differentiation.

However, "differentiation" is a neutral term that cannot capture the troubled history of the relationship between urban America and the Southern mountains. What I argue—and what is crucial to understanding what Faulkner and Dickey have done in their works—is that Appalachia has long been an abject space for urban Americans. The Southern mountains have continually served as a haunted space for America, symbolic of America's unwanted past and the "loathing" Kristeva identifies with the abject. Urban America's continued fascination with Appalachia, represented by everything from the

popularity of archetypal cartoon strips to the vehemence of Votaw's article to the

outpouring of charity following the *Christmas in Appalachia* documentary, illustrates this

abjection all the more—it "beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire" (Kristeva 1).

Kristeva characterizes the abject as that which "disturbs identity, system, order," and for

many Americans, perceptions of Appalachia have historically done precisely that—they

have haunted American identity with the unwanted past, with the threat of the

uncivilized, backward, and violent.

Each era described in this chapter illustrates Appalachia as abject. Early events

like the violence surrounding the Franklin statehood movement began to set the region's

reputation for violence in place, and the publication of this reputation for violence in

newspapers and travel accounts labeled it as an anomaly—as "the retarded frontier." This

phrase, used to describe the region in the 1870s, indicates the abject. It suggests that

Appalachia is behind the times, but not completely alien; it presents Appalachia as stuck

in a past the rest of America has already been through while simultaneously pushing it

aside as an anomaly. This combination of commonality and exclusion is a crucial

characteristic of the abject and represents how the idea of Appalachia has served as a

fundamental but cast off Other for urban America throughout history. It has served as

"the retarded frontier" in the eyes of the public throughout time: during the Civil War,

when it represented the problems of the antebellum past for both the North and the South;

during the Moonshine Wars and the feuding of the 1870s, allowing American newspaper

readers to self-identify as modern and progressive; during the 1930s in TVA rhetoric,

which showed viewers that they could move away from the past by supporting the

innovations of the TVA; and even during the charity movements of the 1960s, which

characterized Appalachia as a region in need of help and allowed donors to self-identify with progress and prosperity.

Because of this haunting by the uncivilized past, symbolized by "the retarded frontier," I argue that urban America's relationship with Appalachia is reminiscent of the very origins of the term "Gothic." As detailed in the introduction, the term "Gothic" meant "anything obsolete, old-fashioned, or outlandish" for Horace Walpole's contemporaries (Clery 21). *The Castle of Otranto* was so popular because its author realized the appeal of the uncivilized past, the past that his contemporaries sought to bury. The abject past, thrown off in the determined drive for progress, remains attractive. While commenting on Kristeva's work on abjection, Jerrold Hogle writes, "Whatever threatens us with anything like this betwixt-and-between . . . condition . . . is what we throw off or 'abject' into defamiliarized manifestations, which we henceforth fear and desire because they both threaten to reengulf us and promise to return us to our primal origins" (7). I argue that this is the way in which America interacts with Appalachia— that it has continually acted as a "betwixt-and-between" state, a present-day reminder of a "primal" past from which many Americans want to move away. Yet it is that connection with the past that keeps Americans fascinated with Appalachia. Whether that past was antebellum America or pre-TVA lack of progress, Appalachia is an abject space that has historically allowed urban Americans to mark out a territory for themselves through what Kristeva calls "loathing." That is where the roots of the Gothic lie—within the buried longing for the primitive past, unwanted but so very appealing. This long history of Appalachia, its natural resource destruction and cartoonish stereotype, its long-standing reputation for violence and the trying conditions that actually created it, has led to the

Southern mountains of *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance*: a haunted landscape, and a

Gothic setting.

CHAPTER TWO: THE GOWRIES AND THE GOTHIC IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S

INTRUDER IN THE DUST

In *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction,* Allen Lloyd-Smith writes that

Faulkner's writing "show[s] how nothing less than the Gothic mode is fully able to

express the reality of the South" (61). By 1948, when *Intruder in the Dust* was published,

"express[ing] the reality of the South" was Faulkner's primary focus; as such, critics have

mostly analyzed the novel for its commentary on desegregation, but have largely

discussed the novel outside of its Gothic context. Instead, critics seem to agree that

Intruder in the Dust does not rank among Faulkner's best works, and scholarship on the

novel usually focuses on the characters Lucas Beauchamp and Gavin Stevens. The

Gowries, the novel's vengeful hill family, are mostly absent from this critical

conversation—as is the Gothicness of this novel.

I want to refocus scholarly attention on both the Gothicness of the novel and the

role of the Gowries within it. I argue that the novel's commentary on desegregation can

only be fully understood when *Intruder in the Dust* is read as a Gothic novel and with an

understanding of the role of the Gowries as abject for two main reasons. First, Faulkner's

belief in the inadequacy of the lynch mob mentality as a solution to the problem of

desegregation can be seen in the townspeople, who abject this mentality onto the Gowries

and use them as an Other against which to define themselves. This Othering of the

Gowries as abject makes the eventual unity of the community much more meaningful,

and helps establish the novel's theme of community agency over federal imposition.
Second, the townspeople's abjection onto the Gowries offers a parallel of white-black
relations, and the familiarization of the Gowries by degrees toward the end of the novel
mirrors and offers a model for Faulkner's emphasis on a gradual, community-based
approach to desegregation. Therefore, though the Gowries have largely been dismissed as
stock characters, I believe they are crucial to *Intruder in the Dust*'s presentation of
desegregation-era Southernness and white-black relations. In creating the Gowries,
Faulkner did appropriate the hillbilly stereotype described in Chapter One, as well as
several actual historical details from Appalachian history; however, the stereotypical
nature of the Gowries does not mean they should be dismissed. Rather, an understanding
of how and why Faulkner uses these stock characters and how central they are to the
novel's theme shifts them from their traditional place on the periphery of the novel to its
core. In this chapter, I draw attention to the ways in which Faulkner has appropriated the
Southern mountain tradition to create a Gothic setting in the hills and Gothic Others in
the Gowries. Through the abject Gowries, Faulkner uses the Gothic mode to present an
image of desegregation-era Southernness as he saw it: rooted in complex questions of
identity and in the process of dealing with a deeply shameful past.

 In order to examine the Gowries as abject in *Intruder in the Dust*, some
background information on the plot, historical context, and scholarly conversation
surrounding the novel is necessary. Faulkner says the story began with the idea of a
prisoner who was "just about to be hung" and had "to be his own detective" because "he
couldn't get anybody to help him. Then the next thought was, the man for that would be a
Negro" (qtd. in Kerr 162). The novel's length and importance surprised Faulkner, who

wrote, "It started out to be a simple quick 150 page whodunit but jumped the traces, strikes me as being a pretty good study of a 16 year old boy who overnight became a man" (qtd. in Blotner 493). The plot centers on the murder of Vinson Gowrie, a member of a local mountain family with a reputation for clannishness and violence. Immediately after the murder, Lucas Beauchamp—a local black man with a reputation for defying race norms—is jailed for the murder and the entire town is certain he will be lynched by the Gowrie clan. However, the townspeople often say throughout the novel that the Gowries demand simply death—any death—in repayment for the loss of one of their own: that they "would have to kill Lucas or someone or anyone, it would not really matter who, so that they could lie down and breathe quiet and even grieve quiet and so rest" (115). The outcome of the story ultimately rewards cooperation between the Gowries and the local valley community, including the sixteen year-old narrator, Chick Mallison, who Lucas asks to dig up the body in the middle of the night in order to prove Lucas's innocence. Years after its publication, Faulkner felt that this novel was significant; during a series of 1955 interviews in Nagano, Japan, he "recommended that his Japanese audience read *Intruder in the Dust* first of all his novels, 'because that deals with the problem which is most important not only in my country, but . . . important to all people'" (Fujihira 37).

However, contemporary critics seem to agree that *Intruder in the Dust* is inferior in quality to Faulkner's earlier masterpieces. In 1997, Daniel Singal wrote in *William Faulkner: The Making of a Modernist*:

> If the dedicated Faulknerian can find occasional flashes of the old splendor in *Intruder in the Dust, A Fable, Requiem for a Nun,* or *The Town,* these efforts of the late 1940s and 1950s seem minor achievements when set beside *Light in August* or *Absalom, Absalom!*. Had someone other than William Faulkner written them, they would probably be entirely forgotten today, and deservedly so. (256)

Many scholars concede that the novel suffers in overall quality but defend it because of its social impact, such as Charles Aiken: "*Intruder in the Dust* may not rank among Faulkner's best works, but it had greater public impact than *The Sound and the Fury, Light in August,* or any other of his pre-Second World War novels, including the famous *Sanctuary*" (188). Overall, scholars seem to agree that *Intruder in the Dust* is inferior in quality but continue to study it because of its social significance. Because of this attitude, the vast majority of the scholarship published on *Intruder* analyzes the novel's presentation of race relations and the problem of desegregation without examining the Gowries.[6] The Gowries have largely been set aside as stock characters; many scholars borrow the phrase "brawlers and fox-hunters and whiskeymakers" from the novel's narrative voice to characterize the Gowries as a hillbilly-stereotype backdrop to the central plot concerning Chick and Lucas (Faulkner 35). A few, such as Patrick Samway and Donald M. Kartiganer, devote some attention to Nub in order to argue for a parallel between his grief over the dead body of Vinson to Lucas's grieving over his wife Molly.

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[6] Within the theme of race relations, the two most popular subjects for criticism are the characters Lucas and Gavin Stevens. Gavin is Chick's uncle and a lawyer whose long speeches on North-South and white-black relations deliver the novel's message of emphasizing the South's ability to resolve the issue of desegregation without the help of the North. Faulkner insists that Stevens's voice in the novel is not his own, but rather that of "the best type of liberal Southerners" (qtd. in Blotner 499). It has also been suggested that Faulkner's Uncle John was the model for the character, to which Uncle John famously replied, "Me, that nigger lovin' Stevens? Naw, I don't read Billy's books much. But he can write them if he wants to. I guess he makes money at it—writing those dirty books for Yankees" (Williamson 270). As for scholarship on Lucas Beauchamp, some critics applaud Faulkner's willingness to create a well-rounded, three-dimensional black character. Joel Williamson insists, "Somehow [Faulkner] refused to stereotype all black people as Sambos" (271). Others are not as pleased. Keith Clark writes, "Only when Lucas is both marginalized and silenced can he achieve what Faulkner considers a fundamental trait of black manhood—the ability to *endure*" (18).

However, even this argument is ultimately tied to Chick's development, which once again places significance elsewhere than the Gowries themselves.

The scholarly focus on desegregation in *Intruder* comes in part from the fact that the novel marked a newly political and social change-oriented focus for Faulkner. Joe Karaganis writes: "Being too old to realize his dreams of aerial combat and with no indication that his novels would ever return to print (much less be celebrated as a major achievement), Faulkner reconceived the task of authorship in order that he might 'leave [a] better mark on this our pointless chronicle than I seem to be about to leave'" (98). Similarly, Carl J. Dimitri offers an extensive comparison between Faulkner's earlier stories and his later work with regard to his willingness to engage in social issues. He writes, "The mature Faulkner's emphasis on principled action, and on social and moral development, stands in contrast to the earlier motifs of retreat and ineffectuality" (24). Dimitri borrows Isaiah Berlin's "Two Concepts of Liberty" to characterize the resulting shift in his writing as one that moves from negative liberty to positive liberty. He sees this shift taking place dramatically between *Go Down Moses* and *Intruder in the Dust* and writes that characters in the former exhibit negative liberty—a freedom from external interferences—whereas Chick in *Intruder in the Dust* realizes his positive liberty, or his own ability to act and enact change. Ultimately, Dimitri argues that the notion of positive liberty also reflects Faulkner's own increasing willingness to advocate for social reform through writing. Karaganis goes on to write, "By the time Faulkner published *Intruder*, his transition away from the core logic of his earlier work was essentially complete; the complex negotiation of form and content that epitomized Faulkner's modernism was

subordinated to his programmatic exposition of the ethical and political dilemmas of the

contemporary South" (99).

Intruder does address "the ethical and political dilemmas of the contemporary

South," and the social reform it advocates is a community-based approach to

desegregation that would come from within the South instead of from Northern influence.

Ticien Marie Sassoubre has explored Faulkner's beliefs in detail. In "Avoiding

Adjudication in William Faulkner's Go Down, Moses and Intruder in the Dust,"

Sassoubre argues that Faulkner believed that federally mandated desegregation would be

as disastrous as emancipation and Reconstruction, and would likely lead to a second civil

war. Instead, he believed that the answer to the problem of desegregation had to come

from within the South. To support this claim, Sassoubre turns to New Deal era history,

writing:

> Changing economic and social conditions accelerated by the New Deal and a
> subsequent trend toward federally imposed desegregation struck Faulkner as not
> merely a threat to the South as he knew it. . . but also a transformation of law
> itself. . . .For Faulkner, [these developments] represented the imposition of
> exogamous law, indifferently and artificially generated by a bureaucratic state, on
> historically specific and distinct communities—with potentially disastrous
> consequences for those communities. Faulkner registers this new threat in Go
> Down, Moses (1942) and Intruder in the Dust (1948), and in both novels the
> preservation of something Southerners recognize as justice involves resisting
> federally imposed law by employing extralegal norms and practices in the place
> of official adjudication. (185)

This reading is supported by several details in Intruder: for example, the initially

disjointed nature of the community in the world of the novel and the way it comes

together to solve the problem at hand, as well as the long speeches given by Gavin

Stevens that argue in favor of resisting Northern influence. These details and more show

that Intruder in the Dust presents what Faulkner believed to be the best approach to the

issue of desegregation—a belief in the community and its power to unite and effect change without the intervention of governmental force.

However, I disagree with Sassoubre's assessment of the Northern influences in *Intruder in the Dust* because it places too much blame on the North within the world of the novel. Sassoubre argues that the motive behind Vinson's murder is representative of the North's federal economic strategies. According to Sassoubre, New Deal legislation forced the South to restructure its sharecropping economy toward a wage-earning system, whose focus was naturally much more centered on individual profit. The murder takes place because of a lumber deal in which Crawford Gowrie cheated his brother in order to gain more profit for himself, and therefore, Sassoubre argues, the new market emphasis brought by federal change is at the root of the violence in the novel: "The murder is thus the result of the market logic of the North—the promise of a profit worth killing for" (203). Ultimately, Sassoubre's reading places the blame for this violence not within the South, but within the depersonalizing effects of the Northern government's changes to the market. Sassoubre makes the same argument for the root cause of lynch mob violence in the novel. Of the members of the mob, Sassoubre writes, "These men, wage laborers and petty criminals, are creatures of the federally willed transformation of the South. They are not, in Faulkner's mind, indigenous. In contrast, the Gowries, who represent the old South, ultimately—and unexpectedly—participate in Lucas's vindication while the mob still waits in the square" (201).

This reading is problematic, as Sassoubre herself points out that lynching has long been a Southern practice. The positioning of the lynch mob as a monster born of Northern influence raises inconsistencies in the novel's exploration of Southernness and fails to

take into account the fact that the practice of lynching was long a Southern response to internal conflict within the region. This inconsistency calls into question the boundaries and relationships between the townspeople, the Gowries, Southernness, and the practice of lynching in Sassoubre's reading of the novel.

I argue that these relationships are best understood through the concept of abjection. To characterize the lynch mob as representative of the North's influence and the Gowries as representative of the Old South is to oversimplify the novel's complex representations of Southernness in this era as it relates to the practice of lynching—such a reading would interpret the South in the world of the novel as simply suffering from external influence. Instead, a close reading of the novel's presentation of the mob and the Gowries demonstrates that the townspeople abject onto the Gowries their own tendencies toward violence as a solution to race problems. The townspeople regard the Gowries with both contempt and fear of their violent ways; however, the townspeople also represent "the men who [Chick's] uncle said were in every little Southern town, who never really led mobs nor even instigated them but were always the nucleus of them because of their mass availability" (Faulkner 42). The Gowries embody the negative qualities the valley characters see in themselves and their own culture, which only intensifies their contempt for the mountain family. This understanding of the townspeople's abjection onto the Gowries positions the lynch mob as symbolic not of the North's influence, but rather of a mentality that is deeply shameful to the Southern white members of the mob in the novel; and this connection becomes apparent from a close reading of the passages in the novel that connect the word "shame" with the mob and Southern identity. In order to make sense of these passages and correctly interpret them as representative of the shame

Faulkner saw as bound up in Southern identity in this era—not as evidence of external

influence from the North—the Gowries must be understood as the abject.

Though there is much more to the Gowries than merely a stereotype, they are

clearly drawn from the stock characters of the Southern mountain tradition. They clearly

take after the classic hillbilly stereotype described in the previous chapter, from the

Snuffy Smith cartoons to Albert Votaw's portrait of the "knife-happy" mountain migrants

in Chicago. The Gowries are hillbillies and exhibit several hallmarks of the stereotype:

they ride on mules and own a pack of hounds, which Nub—the patriarch of the family—

kicks in the ribs; they "love brawling" (146); they have "integrated and interlocked and

intermarried" again and again with the other mountain families in the area (35); they

make their own alcohol; they resist the law and are thought of as being beyond its reach,

having "made their hill stronghold good against the county and the federal government

too" (35); and they exhibit a pistol-wielding attitude, as illustrated by Crawford trading a

pair of hounds for the incriminating gun he uses to kill Vinson and Nub taking out a

pistol at the gravesite while talking with the Sheriff. Toward the close of the novel, the

narrative voice describes the poverty in which the family lives, "among the crusted

sugarbowls and molasses jugs and ketchup and salt and pepper in the same labeled

containers they had come off the store shelf in" (214). Their economic state is, of course,

another hallmark of the hillbilly character.

However, the Gowries' most important hillbilly trait is their reputation for

vengefulness and violence. In the dialogue in the first half of the novel, the townspeople

repeatedly relate their certainty that the Gowries will lynch Lucas for Vinson's murder.

Even Lucas himself comments, "You might leave me some tobacco, if them Gowries

leaves me time to smoke it," while speaking to Chick and Gavin in his jail cell (64). The townspeople's comments make clear their perception that the Gowries are a *different* sort of people from themselves, often lamenting Lucas's supposed choice to shoot a Gowrie, of all people. While describing Chick's thoughts, the narrative voice comments, "If Yoknapatawpha County was the wrong place for a nigger to shoot a white man in the back then Beat Four was the last place even in Yoknapatawpha County a nigger with any judgment—or any other stranger of any color—would have chosen to shoot anybody least of all one named Gowrie" (27). This quotation establishes the Gowries' clannishness by setting anyone named Gowrie apart from everyone else in Yoknapatawpha County. The oppositional relationship between the Gowries and anyone who wrongs them also draws on the region's reputation for feuding; though the Gowries have no grudge against any other specific family, their perceived vengefulness and clannishness is much like that of the early feuds that made the region so infamous. The fact that the motive for Vinson's murder is profit from a lumber deal is directly reminiscent of the competition for natural resources that was a part of the Hatfield-McCoy feud.

Faulkner furthers the Gowries' reputation for violence by using the characters' first names to tie them to the real history of unrest in the South and its hill country. Nub Gowrie and his first son are named after famed Confederate lieutenant general Nathan Bedford Forrest (Kartiganer 135), which symbolically associates the Gowries with the Old South. The Gowrie twins also owe their names, Vardaman and Bilbo, to famous Southern figures; James K. Vardaman and Theodore Bilbo were the famous politicians who led the "rednecks' revolt," a populist political movement in the early 1900s that

sought to gain power for poor Southern whites by demonizing the white planter

aristocracy and blacks. Don Harrison Doyle writes, "The 'revolt of the rednecks' would

seize the power of the state from the Bourbons and use it to elevate the poor whites

through better schools, free textbooks, good country roads, and public health. White folks

would get a larger share of the public resources, and that would come at the expense of

blacks" (293). By the time Vardaman was campaigning for governor in 1903, Faulkner's

grandfather had anticipated his success and had situated himself as the head of the local

Vardaman Democrats (Doyle 291). Faulkner was thirteen at the time of Vardaman's

campaign, and his continual fascination with the movement is evidenced by its

appearance in his novels. Because "country people all over the white hill counties named

their children after [Vardaman] and his disciple, Theodore Bilbo" (Doyle 291), these

names appear in both *Intruder in the Dust* and *As I Lay Dying.* Doyle argues:

> The rise of Vardaman and his successors was part of a larger social movement
> that fascinated William Faulkner. . . . These poor white county [sic] people were
> the first subjects he explored when he began writing about Yoknapatawpha
> County, and he returned to them again and again. He explored their inner
> psychology of class and racial resentment and the social and historical context
> that gave rise to their 'impotent rage.' Faulkner seemed most interested in the
> alternative responses to poor white resentment, some choosing violent acts of
> revenge, others a dogged ambition to escape the plight of their class, to rise and
> emulate their social superiors. (293)

Of Faulkner's many poor white characters, the reputation of the Gowries represents this

tendency toward "violent acts of revenge" perhaps best of all. By naming the two eldest

males after a Confederate general, Faulkner associates the Gowrie family with the Old

South; and because Nub has named his two sons after politicians who advocated unrest

among poor Southern whites, Faulkner ties the Gowries to the long tradition of unrest in

the Southern hills.

In creating these vengeful, violent mountain characters, Faulkner is clearly drawing on the long history of violence in the Southern hills; and ultimately, he does so in order to create the Gothic and use it to unsettle cultural anxiety. First, he draws on the hillbilly stereotype in order to create the *threat* of violence, a threat that runs throughout the text and unsettles safety and stability in the world of the novel. This threat is much bigger than the Gowries' possible lynching of Lucas; they never actually do so, nor do they even participate in the mob, and the threat of the Gowries against Lucas would only involve one family, a black man, and the spectators. Instead, the threat is constantly discussed by the members of the community—including one important scene in which the mob uses their speculations about what the Gowries will do to two black convicts in order to threaten the convicts, which I will discuss later—and, because of this constant discussion and its role in continually unsettling safety in the world of the novel, it becomes a threat in which the community figuratively participates. As such, the Gowries come to symbolize the much larger threat of racial violence at the community level. In contrast to the Gowries by themselves, the danger of community-wide racial violence is a very real threat; it is the opposite of Faulkner's solution of community cooperation, and could completely destabilize life within the world of the novel if carried out. Symbolized by the Gowries, this threat of community violence is the chief threat against the ideal presented by the text, and a major source of anxiety for the South as Faulkner saw it. As such, the hillbilly is used here to symbolize a threat that represents a deep-seated cultural anxiety, an anxiety that is founded on such an intense shame in the world of the novel that its characters cannot face it. This anxiety is kept at a haunting distance—symbolized by the Gowries, it is removed from the prevailing town culture in the world of the novel

but close enough to worry, threaten, and unsettle. Because the strength of the Gothic lies in its ability to unearth such anxiety, the surfacing of that buried cultural anxiety is part of what makes *Intruder in the Dust* a Gothic novel and is one of the most important intersections between the Gothic and the Southern mountain tradition.

A second intersection occurs in the Gowrie twins, as they are the primary manifestation of the grotesque in the novel. Elizabeth Kerr calls the twins "the only genuine grotesques in the novel" (168) because of the narrative voice's insistence on their sameness; Vardaman and Bilbo are described as "identical as two clothing store dummies and as immobile" (159) and as "like a trained vaudeville team" (Faulkner 160). Doreen Fowler argues that this sameness symbolizes the ways in which the Gowries represent the homogeneity Gavin Stevens insists is the best solution to the South's problems—"only from homogeneity comes anything of a people or for a people of durable and lasting value" (151). Stevens means to apply this to the South as a whole, but the Gowrie twins represent it to an extreme degree. Fowler writes, "The Gowries epitomize a homogeneous identity produced by separation, and within the clan the Gowrie twins exist as a subset— an even more striking exemplar of the attribute. No two human beings could be more alike than the identical Gowrie twins" (811). The homogeneity represented by the Gowries—and epitomized by the twins—is reminiscent of the efforts to apply the theories of Social Darwinism and scientific racism to Appalachia. In creating identical twins among his hill characters, Faulkner shows us the ultimate in the homogenous, as in the scientific racism movements that sought to redeem America with the pure, Anglo-Saxon stock represented by the supposedly isolated, biologically pure hill people. As such, this use of the grotesque also has connections to Appalachian history.

In addition to appropriating Southern mountain history in order to Gothicize his characters, Faulkner has also done so in order to Gothicize his setting. Much of Yoknapatawpha, including the setting for *Intruder in the Dust,* is based on real Southern history and geography. Doyle explains that the name "Yoknapatawpha" comes from the Chickasaw name for the river flowing through Lafayette County, and that it meant "land divided" or "split land" in Chickasaw (24). He goes on to write, "The doom implied in the name Yoknapatawpha is also evident in its social meaning, for the land would soon see its new inhabitants divided and torn by war and racial conflict, all in ways their Chickasaw predecessors could not have imagined. The name Yoknapatawpha became a prophecy and a curse that would loom over the land and its new proprietors" (25). The areas of Yoknapatawpha county are called "Beats," which Faulkner has appropriated from Mississippi history. In *William Faulkner and the Southern Landscape,* Charles Aiken describes the Pine Hills—the eastern part of which is "Beat Four," where the Gowries live—as being across the central part of Yoknapatawpha. Aiken also suggests that Beat Four is intended to represent the Appalachian portion of the Upland South (40).

In the novel, Beat Four is continually differentiated from the other beats in the county; it is the only beat to ever be referred to on its own and is consistently Othered as a discrete space. The narrative voice calls it "a synonym for independence and violence: an idea with physical boundaries like a quarantine for a plague so that solitary unique and alone out of all the county it was known to the rest of the county by the number of its survey co-ordinate—Beat Four" (35). While traveling at night to meet Miss Habersham and Aleck at the gravesite, Chick crosses "the invisible surveyor's line which was the boundary of Beat Four: the notorious, the fabulous" (92). The fact that Beat Four has

such distinct physical boundaries creates a discrete space for the townspeople's

abjections.

This discrete, Othered space is made into a Gothic setting by the addition of

several stock elements of classic Gothic literature that should not be overlooked while

analyzing *Intruder in the Dust* as a Gothic text. One classically Gothic characteristic of

Intruder is that of hidden identities, as the reader does not know that Vinson Gowrie is

the murderer until close to the end of the text; this also represents a family secret, which

is yet another stock Gothic trope. However, the most obvious stock Gothic trait of

Intruder is the gravesite setting in Beat Four and the multiple dead bodies that are buried

and unburied in the text. The graveyard is perhaps the epitome of the Gothic setting, as it

has the potential to hold so many hidden secrets from the past as well as literal dead

bodies—Kristeva's ultimate example of the abject. The graveyard—especially a

graveyard with unburied bodies that are seen by those who are living, as in *Intruder*—is

the site of "death infecting life," as Kristeva puts it. In the text, "death infect[s] life"

when Chick is haunted by the image of Nub Gowrie digging his son's corpse out of

quicksand, "looking down at the body, his face wrenched and his upper lip wrenched

upward from the lifeless porcelain glare and the pink bloodless gums of his false teeth"

before he takes out a handkerchief and carefully wipes the quicksand from the body's

face (174). Later in the text, Chick has a flashback to this moment and the "the lifeless

porcelain glare" of the corpse. This is one of the most classically Gothic images in the

text, as Chick is confronted with the abject corpse and haunted by the sight. Moreover,

one scene takes place at the gravesite at night, and the darkness creates a hiddenness that

makes it even more Gothic. Thus, by creating a discrete, Othered space, haunted by the

secrets of a murder mystery and containing multiple bodies hidden in dirt and quicksand, Faulkner uses Beat Four as a Gothic setting. The Gothicness of this setting matters because it is the Gowries' home that is Gothicized. Beat Four is where the Gowries live, and the Gowries are abject characters; by Gothicizing their home landscape, Faulkner creates a Gothic setting for the abject self and for Chick to confront the abject corpses of the novel.

In characterizing both the characters and the space they inhabit as Gothic Others, these descriptions all set aside the Gowries as a separate category of people in a separate space—as "those" people "over there." They are even referred to as a separate "race" and "species" (35). This category of "Gowrie" becomes a tool that many characters in the novel use for self-definition. Despite the fact that the mob embodies the characteristics assigned to the Gowries—violence, vengefulness, stubbornness, and old-fashioned lifestyle that is resistant toward change—the valley characters, even those who are a part of the mob, define themselves by their status as *not*-Gowrie. This is a manifestation of the "loathing" described by Kristeva. By defining themselves as not-Gowrie, characters categorically exclude from their own identities the negative qualities the Gowries have come to embody. For example, when Lucas asks Gavin Stevens, "What you going to do with me?" while speaking from his jail cell, Gavin replies, "Nothing. My name aint Gowrie. It aint even Beat Four" (58). By establishing that he is not a Gowrie, Gavin self-identifies as a non-lyncher, pushing the characteristics embodied by the Gowries away from his own identity.

Perhaps the best example of self-definition through "not-Gowrie" status occurs in one of the mob scenes, and this makes it a scene that is crucial to understanding the abject

in *Intruder*. In the scene, which I will briefly summarize, the sheriff arrives in the square in a car with two black convicts in the back seat to find a mob has gathered outside the jail. As the sheriff pulls up, white members of the mob begin to surround the car. One member gets particularly close, with "his brown farmer's hands grasping the edge of the open window, his brown weathered face thrust into the car curious divinant and abashless while behind him his massed duplicates in their felt hats and sweatstained panamas listened" (137). This man is described as both a farmer—which goes against Sassoubre's reading that the mob is made up of non-native representatives of the North's influence— and as brown, which suggests a sort of unity with the convicts in the backseat. Next, the members of the mob begin threatening the sheriff and the convicts by joking about what the Gowries are going to do to Lucas. After the first one jokes with the sheriff, the second says, "Maybe he's taking them shovels out there for Nub Gowrie and them boys of his to practice with," after which the third, referring to the convicts, replies, "Then it's a good thing Hope's taking shovel hands too. If he's depending on anybody named Gowrie to dig a hole or do anything else that might bring up a sweat, he'll sure need them." The fourth mob member then says, "Or maybe they aint shovel hands. Maybe it's them the Gowries are going to practice on." The narrative voice then says, "Yet even though one guffawed they were not laughing, more than a dozen now crowded around the car to take one quick allcomprehensive glance into the back of it where the two Negroes sat immobile as carved wood" (137). At this point, the sheriff takes charge to disband the mob, and the marshal "herd[s] them back across the street like a woman driving a flock of hens across a pen" (138).

In this scene, the members of the mob clearly abject their own violent behavior onto the Gowries. The mob has gathered as a threat to Lucas and ends up threatening the two black convicts in the sheriff's backseat instead, which is reminiscent of the townspeople's own description of the Gowries demanding any death without discerning among its victims. The mob's physical presence presents a menace—they surround the car and even go so far as to grasp the edge of the window—and they verbally threaten the two convicts. However, they create these threats by *using the Gowries*—by talking about what the Gowries are going to do in order to make the convicts feel unsafe. In doing so, they self-identify as "not-Gowrie" while engaging in precisely the behavior the Gowries represent. The Gowries are not even present at the scene, but the mob's hypothetical description of what *those* people over *there* are going to do allows them to make threats while maintaining a safe distance from those actions themselves.

This behavior is representative of what Kristeva calls *jouissance.* By placing the blame for these would-be acts on the Gowries, the members of the mob can preserve their self-identification as not-Gowrie and remain blameless while engaging in the Gowrie-like behavior they seem to "joy in" (Kristeva 9). Continually drawn to this behavior without knowing it or desiring it, the members of the mob joy in the abject behavior they characterize as belonging to the "Gowrie" category. To use Kristeva's phrasing, the members of the mob are able to cast off their own violent tendencies by talking about the Gowries' supposed violence, and enjoy the "forfeited existence" through the *jouissance* they experience in doing so—and the Gowries as Other keep the members of the mob "from foundering" by making that behavior "repugnant" (9).

However, by the end of the novel, this *jouissance* is overtaken by its underlying remorse; and this remorse is a crucial piece of Faulkner's presentation of Southernness in the desegregation era, a piece that is missed without an understanding of the abjected lynch mob mentality in *Intruder in the Dust*. A close reading shows that the word "shame" is repeatedly connected with lynch mob violence in the text. Just before the above mob scene takes place, Chick arrives on the scene, and the narrative voice describes his thoughts on seeing the mob:

> It seemed to him now that he was responsible for having brought into the light and glare of day something shocking and shameful out of the whole white foundation of the county which he himself must partake of too since he was bred of it, which otherwise might have flared and blazed merely out of Beat Four and then vanished back into its darkness or at least invisibility with the fading embers of Lucas' crucifixion. (135)

Here, mob violence is identified as "something shocking and shameful" and is located in "the whole white foundation of the county." In this passage, the violence does not belong solely to Beat Four. It belongs to all white people, including Chick. He feels personally responsible for "having brought into the light and glare of day something shocking and shameful"; he feels he has unearthed that which is representative of the "loathing" Kristeva describes.

Toward the close of the novel, this shame permeates all the way through to the mob itself. When Crawford Gowrie is revealed to be the murderer, the mob does not simply disperse: rather, it leaves at "a frantic stumbling run," described as "that frantic pell mell not of flight then if any liked that better so just call it evacuation" (182). Chick is initially upset by this reaction, but he eventually arrives at the conclusion that, "They were not running from Crawford Gowrie or Lucas Beauchamp either. They were running from themselves. They ran home to hide their heads under the bedclothes from their own

shame" (198). That "they were running from themselves" makes it especially clear that the townspeople have been abjecting their own lynch mob tendencies onto the Gowries. By this point, the members of the mob have realized their status as part of "something shocking and shameful" and flee from the threat of facing that shameful aspect of their own identities.

This sense of shame is again explicitly connected with lynch mob violence when Gavin discusses the relationship between the North and the South:

> Soon now this sort of thing [lynch mob violence] wont even threaten anymore. It shouldn't now. It should never have. Yet it did last Saturday and it probably will again, perhaps once more, perhaps twice more. But then no more, it will be finished; the shame will still be there of course but then the whole chronicle of man's immortality is in the suffering he has endured, his struggle toward the stars in the stepping-stones of his expiations. (151)

This passage implies that even after this violence is no longer a part of Southern practice, the shame that stems from it is a part of Southern identity and will remain as such into the future. The violence that is embedded in Southern race relations in the novel and abjected onto the Gowries by its valley characters is characterized again and again as something deeply shameful once "brought out into the light and glare of day," and this passage characterizes that shame as an enduring one.

While describing this Southern shame, the novel also paints a clear portrait of Northern scorn. Chick describes the North as "the massed uncountable faces looking down at him and his in fading amazement and outrage and frustration and most curious of all, gullibility: a volitionless, almost helpless capacity and eagerness to believe anything about the South not even provided it be derogatory but merely bizarre enough and strange enough" (150). This sentiment is taken even further in a later imagined conversation between the South and the North, which says, "*Come down here and look at us before*

you make up your mind and you reply No thanks the smell is bad enough from here and we say Surely you will at least look at the dog you plan to housebreak" (212). These passages clearly suggest that, in the world of the novel, the North looks down on the South. However, both quotations come from the narrative voice of the Southern characters—Chick and Gavin—which illustrates a new and much larger-scale level of abjection than that of the townspeople's abjection onto the Gowries. Imagining Northerners looking down on their own Southern history and culture allows Chick and Gavin to place blame on the North's scorn, abjecting their own shame onto these imagined opinions of the North. By imagining the North as "the massed unaccountable faces looking down on him and his" and using the imagined voice of the North to characterize the South as a dog in need of housebreaking, Chick and Gavin abject onto the North their own doubts and worries about their homeland. Much like the novel's positioning of the abject lynch mob mentality as a shameful aspect of Southern identity, this imagined relationship between the North and South adds another level of abjected shame into *Intruder in the Dust*'s presentation of Southernness in the desegregation era.

However, *Intruder in the Dust* also presents what Faulkner believed to be the best solution to these issues—the ability of the South to unite, resist the North's intervention, and engage in problem-solving at the community level. This has been argued by Sassoubre and others, but a more in-depth study of the Gowries reveals their important role in making Faulkner's thematic emphasis on community agency possible. The differentiation of the mountain characters and the space they inhabit sets up a crucial contrast. This distinction functions to establish a lack of community among the townspeople, the Gowries, and Lucas in the beginning of the novel and a significant

coming-together at its end, when the Gowries work with local law enforcement and

Chick and company to get back the body of Vinson and clear Lucas's name. The reader

also has the chance to see the Gowries as both humanized and individualized by the end

of the novel. This occurs through the eventual characterization of individual members of

the family outside of their reputation as merely "a Gowrie" toward the close of the novel,

as well as two important, humanizing scenes. The first is the previously mentioned scene

of Nub unearthing his son's corpse from the quicksand. This image haunts Chick, and he

later remembers, with "a flash, something like shame," the image of "the blue shirt

squatting and the stiff awkward single hand trying to brush the wet sand from the dead

face and he knew that whatever the furious old man might begin to think tomorrow he

held nothing against Lucas then because there was no room for anything but his son"

(214). In addition to Chick remembering the abject corpse itself, this image and its

recurrence humanizes Nub, and Chick realizes that the man is grieving for his dead son;

for Nub, in this moment, "there was no room for anything but his son." The second

important humanizing scene is the previously mentioned passage describing the level of

poverty the family experiences in their home, with its "crusted sugarbowls" (214). This

passage is the only glimpse inside the Gowrie home, a home Chick would not have dared

to imagine at the beginning of the novel. Similarly, Beat Four itself is eventually

familiarized; Chick refers to it as "home" (148). Because the once-distinct geography and

its people have been brought into familiarity, and because the mob—which embodied the

Gowries' characteristics and therefore unknowingly took part in creating this contrast—

has dispersed, the community triumphs and resists federal imposition.

This gradual familiarization of the Gowries, beginning with their abject status and moving toward individualization, humanization, and community integration points to another key role for the Gowries in the text: their relationship with the townspeople parallels Faulkner's solution for race relations. Faulkner believed in the gradual integration of blacks into the white community, a change he felt would have to come from within the Southern community itself; and this is precisely what happens to the Gowries within the world of the novel. At its start, they are abject, described as their own "race" and "species" (35) and living in a distinct area with discrete boundaries away from the rest of the community in a manner that resembles segregation. However, by the end of the novel, Chick sees Nub grieving for his dead son and realizes Nub's humanity. He begins to see the Gowries as real people, and understands and sympathizes with the poverty in which they live. Though the murderer turns out to be a Gowrie, the crime is solved when Chick, Gavin, Nub Gowrie and the twins, and the local sheriff all work together—when the Gowries are integrated into the community in order to solve the problem at hand. They still live in Beat Four, which will likely remain separated from the rest of the community as it was in the beginning of the novel, but they have been brought into the community to solve this problem, and the community has demonstrated that it can work together to achieve positive ends. Hence, the Gowries demonstrate a gradual integration. This gradual community integration is exactly what Faulkner wished to see as a solution to race problems within his time. As such, Faulkner uses the Gowries as a model for how he hoped to eventually see whites treat blacks.

Having shifted the Gowries from the periphery of the text to its center, this reading of *Intruder in the Dust* has three major implications. First, it creates a much

richer understanding of the novel's presentation of Southernness. It is clear that *Intruder in the Dust* advocates a community-based approach that would let the South arrive at desegregation on its own terms, as argued by Sassoubre. However, as a close reading of the passages that depict the mob and the subsequent shame surrounding it demonstrates, the mob is not merely symbolic of Northern influence. Rather, the novel positions the mob as a native aspect of the South, a deeply shameful aspect that even the members of the mob cannot abide. This shame runs so deep that its abjection is manifested in both the townspeople's relationship with the Gowries and their imagined thoughts about the North. To read the mob as nonnative is therefore to downplay the novel's complex presentation of what it means to be Southern in the desegregation era.

Second, this reading helps us understand how Faulkner uses the Gothic mode to reveal what he saw as the anxieties of his contemporary South. In addition to including Beat Four as a Gothic setting, its reliance on the abject, the hiddenness and haunting of the murder mystery, and the multiple dead bodies buried and unburied in the text, *Intruder in the Dust* is a Gothic novel because it unearths deeply troubling, shameful, buried cultural anxiety for the South in the world of the novel, and this anxiety is central to the novel's message. In the Introduction, I quoted Jerrold Hogle's statement that the Gothic addresses "some of the most important desires, quandaries, and sources of anxiety, from the most internal and mental to the widely social and cultural" (4). An understanding of the two levels of abjection in the text—from the townspeople onto the Gowries and from Chick and Gavin onto the imagined opinions of the North—shows that the struggle for desegregation in the world of the novel becomes far more than a fight against the North. It becomes a deep-seated source of anxiety of the "the widely social

and cultural" variety Hogle describes. The Gothic mode allows for some of the most buried and hidden aspects of a culture to rise to the surface, and *Intruder in the Dust* uses the Gothic to evoke the deeply shameful aspects of Southernness in this era. This is what Lloyd-Smith means when he writes that Faulkner's writing "show[s] how nothing less than the Gothic mode is fully able to express the reality of the South" (61). *Intruder in the Dust* portrays the reality of the South as Faulkner saw it, and he uses the Gothic to let the buried anxieties and desires he saw as bound up in that reality come to light.

Third, this reading is also important for understanding the Gowries' role in the text. It is true that the Gowries are representative of the stock characters of the mountain South, but it is less important to recognize them as stock characters than it is to understand *how* Faulkner uses these stock characters. Drawing on the long Southern mountain tradition, combining fact with fiction, Faulkner uses the hillbilly characters to both create the Gothic elements of the text and provide the contrast that enables his message of social reform. In order for the community to come together by the close of the novel, the story needed an Other at its start. The Gowries, based on the long tradition of a stereotype we recognize as Other, provide that contrast. They provide a threat that unsettles and threatens safety, making the Gowries a Gothic Other at the heart of the novel's exploration of anxiety in the South as Faulkner saw it. Finally, Faulkner's use of the hillbilly stereotype allows him to offer a model of his answer to the race issues of his time. The solution to the problem in the world of the novel is only reached when the Gowries, initially abject and separated from the rest of the community, have been gradually integrated into it. As such, the Gowries give Faulkner another way to advocate for his solution. This is only visible when we understand why and how Faulkner uses this

stock character. Because of the long history of abjection and differentiation in the Southern mountain tradition, the stock character of the hillbilly was a perfect fit for this model.

In *Intruder in the Dust*, Faulkner has created what Kristeva describes as that which "disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite." To present his solution to the enormous issue of desegregation faced by the South in his time, he creates an Other in the "loathe[d]" mountain characters in the text in order to show the South its own "in-between" state. He unearths aspects of regional identity and explores that which is hidden in its social structure by using the Gothic mode. As such, our understanding of this novel should be grounded on a reading of it as Gothic, and the critical conversation needs to include the Gowries. Its focus on the novel's presentation of the problem of desegregation must also include the traditionally neglected aspects of that presentation: the Gothic mode, the abject, and the Southern mountain tradition.

CHAPTER THREE: APPALACHIAN HISTORY, ABJECT MASCULINITY, AND

THE GOTHIC HILLBILLIES OF JAMES DICKEY'S *DELIVERANCE*

In *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon,* Anthony Harkins writes that

James Dickey's *Deliverance* "did for North Georgians what *Jaws* did for sharks" (3). The

Handbook to Appalachia calls it "perhaps the most damning portrayal [of Appalachia],"

reminding its audience that the author was "outsider James Dickey" and classifying it as

"one of the worst pictures of the mountain people as inbred, suspicious, violent, and

bestial" (Edwards 203). Indeed, the negative portrayal of the mountain men in

Deliverance is continually a hot topic for discussion. Scholars have joined in the debate,

often blaming Dickey for what Denise Shaw calls a lack of "respect" for "the 'hillbilly'

characters," from which she concludes that "Dickey renders these men as disposable as

the landscape they inhabit" (38). When author Terry Kay suggested that the portrayal of

Georgia mountain men as perverts in *Deliverance* was false, Dickey retorted, "Well, just

let him bend over and I'll show him" (qtd. in Pair 36). Other times, his response was

more serious. Dickey's family had roots in rural Georgia, and he once said in an

interview about the film, "I'm afraid somebody is going to shoot me because they said I

portrayed all mountain people as degenerate sodomists. . . . What about the people at the

inn who try to help Jon Voigt and Ned Beatty, who try to get them to eat something?

Those are hill people, too. Hill people are not subject to anything less than the rest of us

are. There are good ones and bad ones" (qtd. in Clabough 3). Despite Dickey's defense of

this portrayal, the image of the mountain men in *Deliverance* continues to be lambasted as one-sided and unfair.

Though this portrayal is certainly problematic on a surface level, a small body of scholars such as Steven Knepper and Don Johnson have stressed that a close reading of the novel reveals a much more complex image of the way urban America interacts with Appalachia, and I agree with this trend of scholarship. I argue that a careful consideration of the ways in which Dickey appropriated the Southern mountain literary tradition in order to write in the Gothic mode and use it for cultural analysis clarifies the role of the mountain characters in the novel and explains much of his negative portrayal of them. In particular, a close reading of Ed's descriptions reveals that he abjects his gender insecurities onto the novel's mountain characters, and this negative portrayal must therefore be read as Ed's abjection. Dickey appropriates the long history of Southern mountaineers as abject and places these characters in a Gothic setting where they must engage in a struggle for survival in order to explore the insecurities surrounding Southern white masculinity in the 1960s. This survivalist scenario is crucial to the ideal upheld by the novel: that of masculinity demonstrated through individual struggle for survival. I argue that this thematic emphasis would not be possible without the contrast provided by the mountain characters and that positioning them as abject is crucial to understanding their negative portrayal. In this chapter, I will approach first the landscape and then the characters, contextualizing each portrayal within its historical milieu and exploring the ways in which Dickey appropriates that history to create the Gothic and use it to unearth cultural anxiety.

Deliverance tells the story of four urban men who leave their homes in suburban Atlanta for a weekend canoe trip on the Cahulawassee River in northern Georgia. They decide to do so at the urging of Lewis, the group's hypermasculine sportsman and outdoor enthusiast, because the river is about to be dammed—it is their last chance to take such a trip. Other members in the group include: Ed, the novel's narrator, a graphic design consultant with a wife and one son; Drew, a soda company executive, guitar player, and family man; and Bobby, a salesman and bachelor. Partway through the canoe trip, Bobby and Ed pull their canoe over to the shore and two mountain men step out from the trees. They tie Ed to a tree with his belt and one of the men brutally rapes Bobby before Lewis kills the rapist with an arrow. The other man escapes, and the group buries the corpse of the rapist in the woods. As they continue down the river, Drew is killed by what was almost certainly a bullet that grazed his head and Lewis is badly injured when their canoes tip in a set of rapids. When night falls, Ed climbs the cliff with the intention of killing the second of the two mountain men, who he believes to have shot Drew from the top of the cliff. He kills the man, but second-guesses the man's identity after he has done so. Ed and Bobby bury the body in the river. After finding Drew's body, they sink it, too, and make their way down the river and back to civilization. The group decides to keep the real story a secret, and Ed tells Drew's wife that he drowned in a canoeing accident. At the end of the novel, the river is dammed and Ed, Lewis, and Bobby are left to carry their secrets.

The setting for this adventure is made up of many aspects of real Appalachian history. Traces of industry are visible in the hills throughout the novel—a logging road is mentioned (61), and the poultry processing plant nearby leaves feathers and a "chicken

head with its glazed eye half-open" (77) floating in the water. This is a small instance where Dickey Gothicizes Appalachian history—in this case, it manifests in the grotesque. Dickey also includes both indirect and direct references to the TVA. While driving to Oree, Ed describes "turn[ing] off onto a blacktop state road, and from that onto a badly cracked and weedy concrete highway of the old days—the thirties as nearly as I could tell—with the old splattered tar centerline wavering onward. From that we turned into another concrete road that sagged and slewed and holed-out and bumped ahead, not worth maintaining at all" (53). The TVA's roadwork occurred during the thirties, and Ed's analysis is that lack of maintenance has left the road "badly cracked" and "weedy" resonates with popular resentment of the organization and its practices. Later, Lewis specifically mentions the TVA, saying, "There's a lot of resentment in these hill counties about the dam. There are going to have to be some cemeteries moved, like in the old TVA days. Things like that" (124). By dating the unmaintained road back to the thirties and including this statement about the TVA garnering local resentment for having moved cemeteries, and so on, the novel upholds the popular negative views of the TVA. It also hints that the mountain setting is both isolated and neglected, deserted by the urban influences that once worked to modernize it. These details are small, but they represent little ways in which Dickey creates a haunted landscape, whether it was forgotten or purposefully neglected.

Furthermore, the dam itself is based on the historical exploitation of Appalachian wilderness. During a panel discussion on Georgia's mountain history in 1984, Dickey said, "The besetting enemy of Appalachia is the outlander's belief that it is, one, quaint and picturesque, and two, exploitable in some way. I think the weevil of death is in that

for Appalachia" (qtd. in Pair 36). This "weevil of death" is registered in *Deliverance.* As

John Solomon Otto notes:

> Despite its extremely negative portrayal of mountain folk, the novel *Deliverance* contained an element of truth: outsiders were steadily transforming the mountain landscape to suit their own needs. This process began in the late nineteenth century with the intrusion of railroads and extractive industries, but it greatly accelerated after World War Two. Mountain streams were dammed to generate electricity for urban areas; valleys were flooded to create lakes for suburban vacationers; abandoned hillside farms were strip-mined for coal. (15)

This is what Allen Batteau means in describing the association of Appalachia with

sacrifice, as I mentioned in Chapter One. Dickey's fictional damming of the

Cahulawassee mirrors the real wilderness exploitation that has historically plagued

Appalachia. In his analysis of *Deliverance,* Steven Knepper describes the implications of

this mirroring, saying, "As the dam project comes to fruition, families are moving out and

cemeteries are being dug up. The reader can only speculate about the fate of more remote

homesteads and family graveyards. This patch of the North Georgia Appalachians is

quickly becoming a ghost land of communities exchanged for supposedly just monetary

compensation" (26). This area of the wilderness is to be sacrificed in favor of profitable

real estate and recreation for affluent buyers. This will mean the displacement of homes

and family cemeteries along the Cahulawassee, just as real dams and other forms of

wilderness exploitation and industry displaced many Appalachian people and traditions.

More specifically, the exploitation of Dickey's fictional landscape and

Appalachia's real natural resources is symbolized by the sexual violence that takes place

within the novel; in fact, it ironically reverses it. Denise Shaw maintains that the rape

seems like "an act of pure malice" without an understanding of the rapists as abject

characters, and points out: "As the rural men come to terms with what they see as the

rape of their land—the flooding of the Cahulawassee River to create a dam, a violation that makes the men insignificant, unknown—they react indistinguishably toward the 'representative' figures that are responsible for the obliteration they are witnessing firsthand" (33). Shaw explains the ways in which the disenfranchisement of the rural men leaves them feeling powerless and—much like Ed, as I will describe later in the chapter—doubting their masculinity. This doubting leads them to seize power back for themselves by acting out against those who they see as representative of the forces that took away their power: "Clearly, the rural men act out because they are rendered insignificant by the citified men, and violence becomes the vehicle through which they can make themselves known" (Shaw 37). Ultimately, Shaw argues:

> Dickey uses sodomy as a trope to represent the complex and dysfunctional nature of the rural men who resort to violent acts as a reaction against the forces that have oppressed, denigrated and rendered them powerless—forces that seem to be complicated by class stratification more than racial and gender differences in this novel. These social forces (loss of the land as a result of 'progress,' poverty, poor health and lack of adequate medical care as well as of acknowledgement) leave the rural characters feeling disenfranchised, betrayed and powerless. As a result of this, they act out violently against those more vulnerable than they, specifically the citified men who have no idea where they are on the river. (33)

As Shaw explains, rape is an empowering act for these two men, who abject their own feelings of powerlessness onto the city characters—who they see as representative of the forces that have rendered them powerless—in order to confirm their own masculinity.

Shaw is correct—the dam represents a kind of rape of the landscape, which Dickey reverses when the rural men rape the urban men in the woods that will be flooded. In Chapter One, I quoted Allen Batteau's statement about the wave of writing published in the 1960s about the exploitation of Appalachia's nature: "Instead of the pristine beauty and quietude associated with Appalachia, the tone of these accounts [of

corporate greed] was one of Gothic horror. The corporations and the union are pictured as huge, powerful, wealthy, uncaring, corrupt . . . 'Murder' and 'rape' are the two terms most frequently used to describe the effects of strip mining on the mountains" (184). *Deliverance,* written in 1970, plays with that language through the rape of an urban man by a mountain man, a sexual violence metaphor that cleverly reverses the traditional power dynamic. This dynamic and the history behind it have not always been recognized by scholarship on the novel. In 2004, scholar Thorne Compton writes, "The river, flowing wild and treacherous, carries Ed and his friends away to death or deliverance. The lake is the river domesticated, suburbanized, the site of reconciliation and acceptance" (31). When read in light of Appalachian history and the symbolic rape scene that occurs in the novel, it becomes clear that the lake is anything but "the site of reconciliation and acceptance." Rather, the dam is a representation of what many of Dickey's contemporaries called the "raping" of Appalachian wilderness, and Dickey's inclusion of a rape scene forwards this language and figuratively gives power to the displaced and disenfranchised mountain people.

This is the historical background out of which Dickey creates his Gothic setting, and one way he does so is by using decay imagery. In some places, it is subtle; on the banks of the river, Ed notices that the bank has "tin sheds backed down to the water; the mud was covered with rusted pieces of metal, engine parts and the blue and green blinks of broken bottles" (76). When the men carry the body of the man Lewis shot into the woods to bury it, Ed uses language that describes their surroundings in terms of rottenness: "We were by a sump of some kind, a blue-black seepage of rotten water that had either crawled in from some other place or came up from the ground where it was"

(134). In the spot they choose to bury the body, Ed remarks, "There was no earth; it was all leaves and rotten stuff. It had the smell of generations of mold. They might as well let the water in on it, I thought; this stuff is no good to anybody" (135). Lewis even suggests that human remains are already rotting all over the woods, saying, "These woods are full of more human bones than anybody'll ever know; people disappear up here all the time, and nobody ever hears about it" (129). By identifying the woods as a space of decay and buried corpses, Dickey is able to use them in a way reminiscent of the traditional antiquated spaces used as Gothic settings.

However, the most important way Dickey turns the Southern mountain tradition into a Gothic setting lies in the threat of the dam itself. By setting the fictional canoe trip on a river that is about to be dammed, Dickey not only mirrors the traditional exploitation of Appalachia, but also sets in motion the perfect scenario to create a haunted landscape. This scenario is dependent on the three dead bodies that must be buried in order for the ordeal to be kept secret. When faced with the dead body of the first rapist, Lewis argues that they should simply bury the body and not report it. He says:

> And in a month or six weeks the valley'll be flooded, and the whole area will be hundreds of feet under water. Do you think the state is going to hold up this project just to look for some hillbilly? Especially if they don't know where he is, or even if he's in the woods at all? It's not likely. And in six weeks . . . well, did you ever look out over a lake? There's plenty of water. Something buried under it—*under* it—is as buried as it can get. (129)

Lewis is right; because of the impending dam, the bodies will be protected by a *double* burial. By burying the three bodies that accumulate by the end of the story—the bodies of the two murdered mountaineers and Drew—under the land that will eventually be covered by water, they will be buried by land *and* by hundreds of feet of water. Knepper points out that the mountain people's rights are also being buried by the dam, writing, "it

becomes eerily apparent that the rising flood waters are complicit in Lewis's schemes in deeper ways than even the would-be *ubermensch* ever expected. They work together to efface not just the mountain people's citizenship, property rights, and political agency, but, indeed, their basic humanity" (26-27). Hogle's statement that within the spaces used as Gothic settings are "hidden some secrets from the past (sometimes the recent past) that haunt the characters, psychologically, physically, or otherwise at the main time of the story" is especially applicable in this context. By setting this story on a river about to be dammed, Dickey creates an ultimate Gothic setting with the potential for multiple levels of "hidden secrets from the past," about which Ed will have "all nightmares and night sweats to come" (220). He creates a setting that already is Gothic and is about to become *more* Gothic. On one level, the woods have already been Gothicized by the inclusion of rotting material and the burial of an unknown number of bodies; and on a second level, they will soon be even more Gothic when they are covered with hundreds of feet of water, burying the secrets they hold even further.

The Gothicness of this setting—Othered and *doubly* Gothicized, in fact—matters because of its connection with abjection. Part of what a Gothic setting does is to become a site for abjection, and Dickey has created an ideal space in which his characters can encounter their abject selves. Abjection requires an Other that can exist as an "alter ego" to the "I"; Dickey created a differentiated, haunted, Othered space in which Othered characters can exist and confront his protagonist with the abject. It is a differentiated space in many ways: it is special because it is about to disappear because of the dam; it is identified as a place of decay; it contains buried, hidden secrets from the past; and further, those secrets are about to become even more hidden, when the dam is completed.

This creates a setting far removed from the normal suburban world of the four urban men, a sort of alien world that takes them out of their usual context and forces them to rely on merely their own bodies and brains in order to survive: an Othered space. This Othered space of hidden, haunting secrets is the ideal place to encounter the Other and confront the abject.

The abject in *Deliverance* is the protagonist's anxieties about his own gender insecurities. Throughout the narrative, Ed continually questions his masculinity. This questioning begins before he and his companions leave on their fated trip into the wilderness and is often associated with city life and the routine normalcy of domestic and professional life, a normalcy Ed calls "the old mortal, helpless, time-terrified human feeling" (18). While at work, he comments, "It [the feeling] had me for sure, and I knew that if I managed to get up, through the enormous weight of lassitude, I would still move to the water cooler, or speak to Jack Waskow or Thad [his coworkers], with a sense of being someone else, some poor fool who lives as unobserved and impotent as a ghost, going through the only motions it has" (18). This sense of *impotence* is crucial, as it suggests that Ed directly associates his gender anxiety with the "helpless" feeling he links to his day-to-day life. "Impotence" connotes a passivity that indicates that Ed feels he is not man enough to actively fight against this "helpless" feeling.

This questioning of masculinity was a widespread phenomenon in the 1960s, felt particularly strongly by Southern white males. This history has been explained by Pamela E. Barnett, who writes, "Ed suspects his masculine inadequacy at a time when many white men in America felt besieged by the empowerment of others long suppressed. During the sixties era, white men were lambasted as 'faggots' by some celebrated black

nationalist writers and, according to some anxious accounts, 'castrated' by feminists"

(145). Moreover, it is also important to note that this insecurity was compounded and

reinforced by destabilizing contemporary issues that were most deeply felt in the South,

such as the civil rights movement. This means that Ed's gender insecurities are bound up

in his Southernness. Barnett explains:

> While Ed's crisis is contemporaneous with a host of national challenges to white
> male power, these challenges were felt most deeply in the Southern states. The
> stakes of the civil rights movement were more clearly defined in the segregated
> South, and Southern states are disproportionately responsible for the scuttling of
> the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). As one of the nation's more conservative
> regions, the South was a microcosm of the nation's most anxious responses to
> civil rights, black nationalism and feminism. While the entire nation's social
> structure was in upheaval, white Southerners perceived an attack to 'their way of
> life', and the rest of the country willingly located the problem below the Mason-
> Dixon line. (146)

Barnett's points in this passage are important for understanding Ed's preoccupation with

his gender identity, as well as Lewis's hypermasculine fixations on strength and

conditioning. This was a time when the power traditionally held by white males was

being questioned and unsettled across the United States; however, the South felt this

threat most deeply because, as Barnett argues, the rest of America associated the events

that set this threat in motion with the South. Barnett goes on to say, "If the Southern

white male was particularly beleaguered, in public perception as much as material

circumstance, it follows that Ed explicitly associates his sense of emasculation with his

Southernness" (147). This was the historical context in which James Dickey wrote

Deliverance, a novel that, according to Dickey, "started with the image of a man standing

on top of a cliff. Had he come to the edge of the cliff staring inland, or had he come up

the cliff? And if so, why?" (qtd. in Thesing 42). This image of a man standing on a cliff

represents an intriguing combination of themes that appear in *Deliverance*—power,

physical strength, and human domination of nature, to name a few. In a cultural

environment that deeply questioned and challenged masculinity, this novel presents that

image of a man standing on top of a cliff as an ultimate image of masculinity, represented

by individual, physical struggle.

However, in order to reach that position of triumph on top of the cliff, Ed has to

overcome the gender insecurities that stem from his cultural environment. These

insecurities come through in even the earliest pages of the novel. In a scene before the

river trip which reveals his self-doubts, Ed finds himself surrounded by women:

> I was halfway up the hill when I noticed how many women there were around me.
> . . . I kept looking for a decent ass and spotted one in a beige skirt, but when the
> girl turned her barren, gum-chewing face toward me, it was all over. I suddenly
> felt like George Holly [a former employee], my old Braque man, must have felt
> when he worked for us, saying to himself in any way he could, day after day, I am
> with you but not of you. But I knew better. I was of them, sure enough, as they
> stretched out of sight before me up the hill and in to the building. (15-16)

Though Ed initially objectifies the women around him, "looking for a decent ass," he is

keenly aware of being surrounded by women. One could even read his statement "I was

of them" to refer to the women all around him instead of, or possibly in addition to,

referring to the day-to-day office workers George Holly felt he was "with" but not "of";

Ed does not specify to whom the word "them" refers, but he has just said that the hill is

covered with women, and women could therefore be the "they" who "stretched out of

sight before me up the hill and into the building." Either way this passage is read, Ed

clearly associates his day-to-day life with femininity, and identifies with that femininity

by extension. His comparison with George Holly suggests that "day after day" Ed must

search for ways to tell himself that he is a man—but that he ultimately "knew better," that

he cannot fully convince himself. Barnett writes, "In the end, all of the men in the novel

are performing masculinity, but Ed thinks he is the only one doing it. Whereas he self-consciously struck a pose in the office, he self-consciously dons a costume for the wilderness trip" (148-149). Ed feels he must convince himself that he is a man, and does not seem to suspect that Lewis is doing precisely the same thing—that Lewis's hypermasculinity is just as performative as Ed's continual efforts to convince himself of his own masculinity.

While he fails to realize the similarly performative nature of the men around him, Ed continually compares himself to these other men. This is especially true of Lewis and Bobby, who Ed sees as opposite ends of the spectrum of masculinity. Lewis stands as the pinnacle of masculinity in Ed's mind, and he comments that he feels "a great deal lighter and more muscular" when he is around Lewis (34). Ed goes with Lewis on his sporting adventures, comparing their archery scores—Ed's are in the 160s, and Lewis "had gone as high as 250" (29). Above all, Ed's admiration of Lewis is epitomized by his reaction when Lewis strips down to go swimming:

> Everything he [Lewis] had done for himself for years paid off as he stood there in his tracks, in the water. I could tell by the way he glanced at me; the payoff was in my eyes. I had never seen such a male body in my life, even in the pictures in the weight-lifting magazines, for most of those fellows are short, and Lewis was about an even six feet. I'd say he weighed about 190. . . . He seemed made out of well-matched red-brown chunks wrapped in blue wire. You could even see the veins in his gut, and I knew I could not even begin to conceive how many sit-ups and leg-raises—and how much dieting—had gone into bringing them into view. (102-103)

Ed holds Lewis on a pedestal even higher than "the pictures in the weight-lifting magazines," and knows Lewis must enjoy this high status—he knows Lewis can see the "payoff" in Ed's eyes as he looks at Lewis's body. Indeed, this is a passage that suggests homoeroticism, as Ed's admiration of Lewis's body could certainly be read as attraction.

This explains Ed's abjection all the more, as it provides the unrealized desire underlying the abject. If Ed experiences feelings of homoerotic desire—desire that he would certainly identify as feminine—these feelings would provoke his insecurities and lead him to doubt his masculinity.

In contrast to Lewis, Ed's narration continually describes Bobby as weak. Even before the rape scene, Ed describes Bobby as having a "high pink complexion" (5) and, while he always refers to Lewis as a "man," Bobby is described merely as a "human being" (8). In one of his earliest descriptions of Bobby, he comments, "I had heard him blow up at a party once and hadn't forgotten it. I still don't know what the cause was, but his face changed in a dreadful way, like the rage of a weak king," suggesting that Bobby is not in control of his temper and that this temper manifests in a "weak" way (9). However, though he wants to be like Lewis, the novel likens Ed to Bobby. This occurs most directly through their weight. Bobby describes himself and Ed as "me and the other Fatso," and while Ed describes Bobby as "plump" during the rape scene (113), the rapists call Bobby "fat-ass" (114) and ask Ed, "You're kind of bald-headed and fat, ain't you?" (115).

This comparison between Ed and Bobby is even stronger in light of the rape scene, as Ed's language suggests that he identifies with Bobby's experience during and after the rape scene. When the rapist tells Bobby to drop his pants, Ed's own "rectum and intestines contracted" (113); and during the rape, he mistakes Bobby's scream as his own, saying, "A scream hit me, and I would have thought it was mine except for the lack of breath" (114). And after the rape, Ed describes two events that happen to him using language that connotes male rape: first, when he falls on his arrow, he says, "Something

went through me from behind, and I heard a rip like tearing a bedsheet" (192); and second, when he falls down from the cliff he describes feeling "the current thread through me, first through my head from one ear and out the other and then complicatedly through my body, up my rectum and out my mouth and also in at the side where I was hurt" (208). Having nearly been raped himself, Ed is all too aware of the threat of rape and is aware of the capacity of his body to receive such a threat—a threat that, if enacted, would feminize him and resonate with his deepest fears concerning his own masculinity.

To avoid this threat, he continues to admire Lewis and classify Bobby as weak, especially after the rape. Thorne Compton writes, "From the moment of the rape, Ed sees Bobby as less than human and he hates him. Perhaps because of his own sexual terror, his homophobia or subconscious desires and fears, Ed suddenly sees Bobby transformed, attributing to him all of the stereotyped weakness of the 'queer' and at one point contemplates shooting him" (32). Indeed, Ed sees Bobby as increasingly weak after the rape scene—he calls him a "soft city country-club man" (201). At the other end of this spectrum is Lewis, and this juxtaposition between Lewis and Bobby is made startlingly clear in a scene immediately following the rape. Ed begins by observing Lewis:

> The assurance with which he had killed a man was desperately frightening to me, but the same quality was also calming, and I moved, without being completely aware of movement, nearer to him. I would have liked nothing better than to touch that big relaxed forearm as he stood there, one hip raised until the leg made longer by the position bent gracefully at the knee. I would have followed him anywhere, and I realized that I was going to have to do just that. (128)

Again, Ed's admiration of Lewis continues to suggest homoerotic attraction, especially in longing to touch Lewis's arm. Immediately after this passage, Ed comments, "Bobby got off the log and stood with us, all facing Lewis over the corpse. I moved away from Bobby's red face. None of this was his fault, but he felt tainted to me. I remembered how

he had looked over the log, how willing to let anything be done to him, and how high his voice was when he screamed" (128). In this scene, Ed first physically moves closer to Lewis and then moves away from Bobby, symbolically illustrating his desire to move closer to his ideal masculinity epitomized by Lewis and away from his association with Bobby's weakness. He is embarrassed by Bobby, and mentions the idea that talking about the rape would be "humiliating" (119) but does not specify that the humiliation would be Bobby's alone; he later describes Bobby's hands as "embarrassing" in the aftermath of the first set of rapids (147). Moreover, as Pamela Barnett points out, Ed continually refers to Bobby's "ass" after the rape scene, telling him to "get [his] ass down as low as [he] can" (223) while going through the rapids and calling him an "incompetent asshole" (201). An instance that seems particularly cruel occurs when they find Drew's body and Ed tells Bobby he will kill him if Bobby continues to "sit there on [his] useless ass" instead of helping Ed (216). Because Ed thinks of Bobby as a "soft city country-club man," he represents the threat to masculinity Ed fears most; as Barnett writes, "To concede his utter passivity would be to admit the possibility of male lack itself. And yet, his complicity haunts Ed, and he settles on other mechanisms for denying his weakness, including a dramatic repudiation of Bobby as feminine" (151).

As revealed through Ed's identification with women and his continued self-comparison with Lewis and Bobby, Ed registers the gender anxiety surrounding the Southern white male in the 1960s. These gender anxieties, I argue, Ed abjects into the rural space they enter—the Gothic setting Dickey creates out of the Southern mountain tradition—and onto its inhabitants. This Othered space, like Beat Four in *Intruder in the*

Dust, is described as having distinct boundaries. While traveling out of Atlanta toward the country, Ed comments:

> The change was not gradual; you could have stopped the car and got out at the exact point where suburbia ended and the red-neck South began. I would like to have done that, to see what the sense of it would be. There was a hotel, then a weed field, and then on both sides Clabber Girl came out of hiding, leaping onto the sides of barns, 666 and Black Draught began to swirl, and Jesus began to save. We hummed along, borne with the inverted canoe on a long tide of patent medicines and religious billboards. From such a trip you would think that the South did nothing but dose itself and sing gospel songs; you would think that the bowels of the southerner were forever clamped shut; that he could not open and let natural process flow through him, but needed one purgative after another in order to make it to church. (38)

From the moment they cross "the exact point where suburbia ended and the red-neck South began," it is clear that Ed sees the rural people as Other. His description of the Clabber Girl "leaping" onto barns and the way 666 and Black Draught "began" to swirl and Jesus "began" to save indicates an exaggerated suddenness to this change; and from this contrast, when Ed says "you would think that the South did nothing but dose itself and sing gospel songs" and refers to the "bowels of the southerner," the reader understands him to be talking about the *rural* South.

Continuing their journey towards Oree, Lewis and Ed discuss the way of life in the hills in a manner that clearly establishes the mountain people as Other. Lewis begins the exchange:

> "Funny thing about up yonder," he said. "The whole thing's different. I mean the whole way of taking life and the terms you take it on."

> "What should I know about that?" I said.

> "The trouble is," he said, "that you not only don't know anything about it, you don't *want* to know anything about it."

"Why should I?"

"Because, for the Lord's sake, there may be something important in the hills. Do you know what?"

"No; I don't know anything. I don't mind going down a few rapids with you, and drinking a little whiskey by a campfire. But I don't give a fiddler's fuck about those hills." (40)

Though the two men differ in their feelings about "those hills," both clearly differentiate them from their normal life; Lewis says "the whole thing's different." Ed continues to not "give a fiddler's fuck" about the hills when they arrive in Oree, commenting, "I wondered where the excitement was that intrigued Lewis so much; everything in Oree was sleepy and hookwormy and ugly, and most of all, inconsequential. Nobody worth a damn could ever come from such a place. It was nothing, like most places and most people are nothing" (55). By applying these negative descriptors to "everything" about Oree, Ed differentiates the whole space as a lesser and highly different Other.

Indeed, Lewis and Ed see Appalachia very differently, and these different approaches both have their roots in the Southern mountain literary tradition. In his analysis of Ed's and Lewis's relationship with the mountain characters, Steven Knepper writes:

> Lewis's and Ed's opposing typological imaginations correspond to the southern literary tradition's two main tropes in depicting rural folk. Lewis views the mountain culture as a pastoral ideal. In doing so, he follows in the footsteps of *I'll Take My Stand* and its agrarianism. . . . Ed, on the other hand, follows in the tradition of the southern grotesque. His hillbillies rival the degenerate, poor whites found in the novels of Faulkner, O'Connor, and Caldwell. His is a gothic imagination that exaggerates the macabre. (23)

Knepper's compelling analysis presents a very useful way to approach the differing

perspectives of the two urban men. My analysis builds on Knepper's by first offering

more historical context for Lewis's and Ed's perspectives and then by explaining that

Ed's impression of the mountain folk as grotesque is representative of his abjected gender

insecurity.

Both Ed and Lewis have an impression of Appalachia that is firmly rooted in the

stereotypical image of the "hillbilly." When Ed asks Lewis about life in the hills, Lewis

describes it as:

> Some hunting and a lot of screwing and a little farming. Some whiskey-making.
> There's lots of music, it's practically coming out of the trees. Everybody plays
> something: the guitar, the banjo, the autoharp, the spoons, the dulcimer—or the
> dulcimore, as they call it. . . . These are good people, Ed. But they're awfully
> clannish, they're set in their ways. They'll do what they want to do, no matter
> what. Every family I've ever met up here has at least one relative in the
> penitentiary. Some of them are in for making liquor or running it, but most of
> them are in for murder. They don't think a whole lot about killing people up here.
> They really don't. But they'll generally leave you alone if you do the same thing,
> and if one of them likes you he'll do anything in the world for you. So will his
> family. (45)

Nearly all the items on the checklist for the hillbilly stereotype are here: Lewis describes

the hill people as engaging in illegal whiskey production, proficient in folk arts,

"clannish," old-fashioned, independent, criminal, murderous, and desensitized to killing.

He goes on to comment that two mountain men who once saved his friend's life in the

wilderness are "ignorant and full of superstition and bloodshed and murder and liquor

and hookworm and ghosts and early deaths" (49), which adds disease, superstitiousness,

and drunkenness to the already stereotypical image. It is clear that Lewis in fact knows

very little of substance about life in the hills—that his knowledge is based more on what

he has heard than what he has experienced himself. As Thorne Compton puts it,

"[Lewis's] earnest posturing about the virtues and terrors of people who live in the country seems reminiscent of nothing so much as the resident of Long Island who has just returned from a drive down I-95 south on the way to Miami" (29).

However, Lewis retains a relatively positive impression of life in Appalachia, and designates it as his destination in case of an apocalypse-type disaster. Lewis is obsessed with training his body in order to be able to survive in the face of disastrous circumstances because he is convinced that "the whole thing is going to be reduced to the human body" (42); he comments to Ed, "it's what you can make it do" and "it's that conditioning and reconditioning that's going to save you" (29). He believes that "the machines are going to fail, the political systems are going to fail, and a few men are going to take to the hills and start over" (42), and as such, he had an air-raid shelter built. This provides yet more 1960s-era context—Lewis's "survival craze" (43) represents American Cold War anxiety, as suggested by Knepper.

Moreover, the fact that Lewis chooses Appalachia as his ideal destination in which to begin human society again is reminiscent of the scientific racism movement's belief that Appalachia held the biologically "pure" Anglo-Saxon stock that could potentially "redeem" America, as I described in Chapter One. Lewis's idea of the hills as a stronghold would lead to a society made up solely of those who were strong and smart enough to survive, which would create a new society to made up of his ideal kind of people. Lewis explicitly associates Appalachian men with the ultra-masculine ideal toward which he aspires. This is evidenced by a story he tells from a former trip into the hills, in which Lewis's friend was injured and a father-son pair help to find his friend in the darkness and save his life. After describing the backwoodsmen, Lewis says, "So

we're lesser men, Ed. I'm sorry, but we are," before unfavorably comparing the son of the mountain pair to Ed's son Dean (47). Ironically, these are the same men he describes as "ignorant and full of superstition and bloodshed and murder and liquor and hookworm and ghosts and early deaths," which illustrates the two-dimensional way Lewis sees life in the hills. It is clear that Lewis views the way of life in the hills as rooted in precisely the qualities he obsesses over: he sees it as primitive and closely tied with his survivalist fantasies, which therefore make Appalachians perfect representatives of what he sees as the ultimate in masculinity—as "already living out a survivalist fantasy, a lifestyle boiled down to necessity and skill and cunning" (Knepper 21).

Ed, however, sees the mountain people as exactly the opposite—he views them as the epitome of weakness and incompleteness. Because Ed's descriptions of the mountain people exaggerate the weakness and physical incapability he fears in himself, the descriptions exhibit Ed's abjected gender anxiety. The first mountain character to appear is an old man at the Texaco station, wearing a straw hat and a work shirt. Ed immediately comments, "He looked like a hillbilly in some badly cast movie, a character actor too much in character to be believed" (55). From there, his comments focus almost exclusively on the man's physical attributes:

> His movements were very slow, like those of someone whose energies have been taken by something other than old age. It was humiliating to be around him, especially with Lewis' huge pumped-up bicep shoving out its veins in the sun, where it lay casually on the window of the car. Out of the side of my eye I saw the old man's spotted hands trembling like he was deliberately making them do it. (55)

A number of things are significant in this passage. First, Ed's description of the man's movements as being "like those of someone whose energies have been taken by something other than old age" suggests the kind of similarity between Ed and the man Ed

wishes to avoid, as it is reminiscent of "the old mortal, helpless, time-terrified human feeling" he describes experiencing when he thinks about his everyday life. Ed immediately goes on to say "it was humiliating to be around him." Further, Ed says this humiliation is especially intense in juxtaposition with Lewis's bicep, which represents Ed's masculine ideal. If Ed identified himself with Lewis and his bicep, this would not be humiliating for him. It might make him feel guilty, but it would not be "humiliating"; as such, this use of "humiliating" suggests that Ed identifies with the old man. He goes on to suggest that the man is purposefully making his "spotted" hands tremble, which shows how exaggerated Ed's perceptions are.

From these characteristics, it is clear that in this short passage Ed abjects his own physical and gender-related insecurities onto the man at the Texaco station. Having established the mountain people as Other and thereby differentiating them at a safe distance from himself, Ed exaggerates the physical faults he sees in the man in order to delineate a space for himself that does not acknowledge his own physical insecurities. Ed's loathing of this "slow" man in his "hookwormy" town allows him to avoid confronting his own feebleness, represented by the "alter ego" presented by this man, and to associate himself with Lewis's bicep instead. By pointing out this man's physical flaws through loathing, Ed demarcates a territory for himself that is safe from those flaws, and he pushes them away from his own identity. Much like the mob in *Intruder in the Dust* identifies as "not-Gowrie," Ed identifies as not weak by pushing that weakness away from himself and onto this mountain man.

Ed soon applies this weakness on a much broader scale. In the comments that follow this scene, Ed characterizes all "people in the country" as weak and incomplete:

> There is always something wrong with people in the country, I thought. In the comparatively few times I had ever been in the rural South I had been struck by the number of missing fingers. Offhand, I had counted around twenty, at least. There had also been several people with some form of crippling or twisting illness, and some blind or one-eyed. No adequate medical treatment, maybe. But there was something else. You'd think that farming was a healthy life, with fresh air and fresh food and plenty of exercise, but I never saw a farmer who didn't have something wrong with him, and most of the time obviously wrong; I never saw one who was physically powerful either. Certainly there were none like Lewis. (55-56)

Ed goes on to suggest that mountain people have lost body parts from farming accidents and from snakebites, and then says, "I wanted none of it, and I didn't want to be around where it happened either. But I was there, and there was no way for me to escape, except by water, from the country of nine-fingered people" (56). In these passages, Ed explicitly associates what is "wrong" with mountain residents with their perceived physical abnormalities, including both innate problems like disease and circumstantial problems like injury. Moreover, Ed's attitude is precisely the opposite of Lewis's, which upholds the mountain men as the ideal image of masculinity. Ed's specification that they are not "physically powerful" is particularly telling, and his immediate comparison of them with Lewis is also important. Once again, Ed reveals his exaggerated "loathing" of the mountain characters, and once again, he compares them with Lewis, the ultimate in masculinity in Ed's eyes. In this case, "the country of nine-fingered people" is the territory Ed Others in order to escape from having to call it—or, rather, the weakness it represents to him—his own.

Another manifestation of Ed's abjected weakness is Lonnie, the albino child banjo prodigy. Lonnie's albinism itself is, of course, not merely one of Ed's exaggerations— rather, it is one of the more problematic aspects of Dickey's portrayal of mountain life; albinism has long been stereotypically associated with inbreeding, another assumed trait

of life in Appalachia in the eyes of popular culture. Inbreeding is hinted at elsewhere in *Deliverance* as well; after killing the first rapist, Lewis says, "We don't know who this man is, but we know that he lived up here. He may be an escaped convict, or he may have a still, or he may be everybody in the county's father, or brother or cousin. I can almost guarantee you that he's got relatives all over the place. Everybody up here is kin to everybody else, in one way or another" (124-125). However, despite the suggestion of inbreeding indicated by Lonnie's albinism, what is most important here is the language Ed uses to describe Lonnie; it provides another instance of his fixation on physical flaws and his abjected insecurities. Ed describes Lonnie as "an albino boy with pink eyes like a white rabbit's; one of them stared off at a furious and complicated angle. That was the eye he looked at us with, with his face set in another direction. The sane, rational eye was fixed on something that wasn't there, somewhere in the dust of the road" (58-59). Ed's language reduces Lonnie to animalistic terms, and by calling one eye "sane" and "rational," he indirectly associates Lonnie's other eye with insanity and irrationality. While Ed does admire Lonnie's banjo playing, he also calls him a "demented country kid" (60), which immediately reduces his talent and instead emphasizes his abnormalities. Like his descriptions of the man at the Texaco station—who is still present throughout this scene—Ed's descriptions place Lonnie in the category of the weak and incomplete, which allows Ed to keep his own identity safe from such characterizations.

By far the most extreme example of Ed abjecting his insecurities onto the novel's mountain characters occurs in the rape scene. When the two rapists enter, it is clear that Ed perceives the mountain people in stereotypical terms. When he first sees the rapists, he comments, "'Escaped convicts' flashed up in my mind on one side, 'Bootleggers' on

the other" (108). He later blurts out to the two men his assumption that they have a still

nearby. Ed's tendency to group the mountain characters together has been noted by

several scholars. Denise Shaw writes, "Ed looks beyond the men's individual identities to

see them as collective types: they appear to him as 'escaped convicts' or 'bootleggers'"

(38). Casey Clabough applies this same tendency to Ed's treatment of the Griner

brothers, two large, muscular men who help the urban men drive one of their cars to the

designated end point of the trip. Clabough writes, "Ed seems conscious of his portrayal of

the hill people as a collective system rather than individuals, for he barely makes any

character distinctions between the Griner brothers . . . or the rapists, who are described

mostly in terms of their physical characteristics, and he constantly emphasizes the

biological reality of the hill people's widespread kinship." (3) Ed's categorizing of the

mountain characters into the hillbilly stereotype is made even more clear when they are

carrying the dead body of the first rapist into the woods for burial, and Ed says, "Every

now and then I looked into the canoe and saw the body riding there, slumped back with

its hand over its face and its feet crossed, a caricature of the southern small-town bum too

lazy to do anything but sleep" (133).

In addition to lumping the two men together with the collective types to which he

assumes they belong, Ed again immediately comments on their physical attributes:

> The shorter one was older, with big white eyes and a half-white stubble that grew
> in whorls on his cheeks. His face seemed to spin in many directions. He had on
> overalls, and his stomach looked like it was falling through them. The other was
> lean and tall, and peered as though out of a cave or some dim simple place far
> back in his yellow-tinged eyeballs. When he moved his jaws the lower bone came
> up too far for him to have teeth. (108)

This description plays off of the image of the typical hillbilly; the overalls, the potbelly,

and the missing teeth are all traits associated with the stereotype. However, Ed's

narration goes further than merely mentioning these stock characteristics. He exaggerates

what is "wrong with country people." Ed does not merely say that the older one is

"plump" like he does for Bobby; rather, he says "his stomach looked like it was falling

through [his overalls]." His portrait of the second man is even more extreme in its

negativity; by describing the man as if he was "peering as though out of a cave or some

dim simple place," Ed labels this man as primitive. Moreover, he specifically says this

"dim simple place" is "far back in his yellow-tinged eyeballs," which implies that this

"dim simple place" is the man's brain. The fact that the man has no teeth completes Ed's

impression of this man as incomplete and incompetent. He later describes the first as

"looming and spinning his sick-looking face" (108) and the second as "missing his teeth

and not caring" (109), both of which denote a personal flaw as well as a physical one: it

is not enough that the first man has a "sick-looking face," but rather, Ed must describe

him as "looming" and "spinning" that "sick-looking face," and Ed goes beyond his

fixation on the missing teeth to insist that the man does not care that his teeth are missing.

To be sure, these are bad men to begin with. Though Ed's language is

exaggerated, especially in its description of the mountain characters, his commentary

throughout the rape scene makes it clear that these men are not to be pitied. He mentions,

"It occurred to me that they must have done this before; it was not a technique they

would have thought of for the occasion," which suggests that they have raped before

(111). Ed also characterizes the men as completely desensitized to violence, saying, "I

had never felt such brutality and carelessness of touch, or such disregard for another

person's body. It was not the steel or the edge of the steel that was frightening; the man's

fingernail, used in any gesture of his, would have been just as brutal; the knife only

magnified his unconcern" (112) and "There was no need to justify or rationalize anything; they were going to do what they wanted to do" (114).

Of course, Dickey intended for them to be repulsive men. In a 1995 lecture to a group of students who had read *Deliverance,* Dickey comments:

> That scene of the homosexual rape is crucial to the story; you want to see those rapists get killed. I remember when Bill McKinney, who played the first and worst of them—the one who performed the rape on poor Bobby—the actor Billy McKinney came up on location, and I was talking to him about the part. I said, "Mr. McKinney, you've got one function in this movie; that audience has got to hate you." He said, "Don't worry Mr. Dickey; they're going to hate me." Have you ever seen anybody you wanted to see get shot in the back with an arrow as much as that guy? Because what he does is bad enough, but it's the humiliation of Bobby, the poor, helpless, fat guy who should never have been up there to begin with, that's so horrible. It makes it dreadful. It's the deliberate humiliation of him that is so evil. (40)

In the film version, Dickey wanted the older of the two rapists to be completely deserving of the audience's loathing, and his function in the novel is much the same. Indeed, these men are bad men not because they come from Appalachia, but because they would have been bad men anywhere. Casey Clabough argues, "Dickey's point is that good and evil are universal constructions, applicable to human beings regardless of the different cultures in which they manifest themselves. The idea that the rapists would be 'bad men' in any society is reflected by the fact that in *The Deliverer*—the initial manuscript of *Deliverance*—Dickey nearly decided to identify them as at-large criminals" (4).

From this analysis of the rapists, three things are clear. First, these two men would have been bad men anywhere. Their badness is not dependent on their status as mountain men. Second, the fact that Ed's description exaggerates their badness—such as his speculation of the toothless man not caring that he has no teeth—shows once more that Ed is abjecting his own masculine insecurities onto these men. They present the ultimate

threat to Ed's manhood—the threat of male rape. As such, Ed's descriptions seek to render them less powerful than they are through the "loathing" Kristeva describes. Third, and most importantly, these characters confront Ed with his abjected self, and in so doing they set up the adversarial relationship that leads Ed to realize his dreams of achieving masculine power in their most extreme form—by killing the man he believes to be the second rapist. This is the ideal upheld by the novel: the individual struggle for survival, based on physical power and representative of what the novel characterizes as the ultimate in masculinity. To make this happen, Dickey created an adversarial relationship that draws on the Southern mountain literary tradition—a long tradition of characters who are lawless, animalistic, both prone and desensitized to violence, and vengeful. In picking and choosing these characteristics and exaggerating them to a degree that would be cartoonish if it was not so frightening, Dickey creates Gothic Others out of these two men: together, they are an Other that confronts Ed in a Gothic setting with the image of his abjected self, an image of femininity he has to overcome in order to triumph. As such, the rapists as characters needed to be beyond sympathy, and Dickey appropriated the long tradition of the hillbilly stereotype in order to create them as an obstacle that would unsettle and provoke Ed's deepest anxieties—anxieties representative of the 1960s era threats to Southern white male power.

The analysis of *Deliverance* throughout this chapter also points to the several ways these anxieties manifest in a fixation on the human body. First, from the rapists to Lonnie and the man at the Texaco station, Ed's descriptions of the mountain people in the text focus almost exclusively on their physical attributes and exaggerate their flaws. Abjecting his own weakness onto them, these descriptions reveal his own anxiety over

and obsession with the physical strength of the male body. Second, Ed's fixation on the body is also revealed in the way he relates to his companions. In many places throughout the text, Ed's narration focuses on Lewis's biceps, his legs, his stomach, and his whole impressively muscular image, such as when Lewis emerges out of the river. Ed also constantly refers to Bobby's weight and to his "ass," again fixating on the body to describe and relate to the people around him. Third, the multiple corpses of the text create another way Ed must confront the abject. Three bodies are buried by the end of the novel: those of the first rapist, the man they believe to be the second rapist, and Drew. Ed and his companions must deal with each of these corpses; and in order to do so, they have to lift up these corpses, carry them, and bury them under water or soil. Within the space of a few days, Ed *touches* three corpses, one of which he killed himself. Kristeva calls merely seeing a corpse "death infecting life" (4); physically touching it is an even more intense form of confronting the abject. Both dead bodies and live ones are a primary focus of this text; Lewis even says, "the whole thing is going to be reduced to the human body" and "the body is the one thing you can't fake; it's just got to be there" (42). In effect, *Deliverance* reduces "the whole thing" to the human body: it creates scenarios in which its characters depend on their bodies for survival. They must be physically strong and skilled enough to endure the tests presented by these situations. Those who do not survive are quite literally reduced to a human body, and the survivors must confront the abject in dealing with these bodies. Ultimately, those who uphold the ideal, survivalist form of masculinity presented by the text—Lewis, and eventually Ed—are the characters who make it out alive and with the least trauma from the experience.

Through Ed's eyes, unlike the narrative perspective of Chick by the end of

Intruder in the Dust, the southern mountain characters are far from humanized; rather,

their difference is exaggerated in a portrait of abjection that explores the unstable sense of

masculinity unsettled by 1960s-era threats to white male power. As such, the distinct

space of the Southern mountains and the stereotype of the hillbilly are, for Dickey, a

means of creating an alien world in which his protagonists are stripped of their usual

comfortable lifestyles and thrust into a struggle for survival with only their brains and

bodies to help them. The ideal presented in the text is not manifested through overcoming

such difference and coming together as a community, as it is in *Intruder in the Dust*—

rather, *Deliverance* upholds an ideal of individual, masculine triumph. It explores the role

of power and masculinity in individual struggle at its most primitive, and uses contrast to

create a space in which its characters can struggle. Thus, the distinctness of the space and

its people are exaggerated in order to create the contrast that will set up its characters to

individually triumph—or not—against all odds. This is further enabled by the Gothicized

setting—a setting of decay and buried bodies that will become even more Gothic when

hundreds of feet of water from the impending dam cover up the buried bodies even

further. It is in this doubly Gothic setting that Dickey's characters confront the abject,

thereby working through some of the most troubling cultural anxiety of his contemporary

South. Though *Deliverance*'s negative portrayal of Southern mountain life still holds

cultural currency, it should be read in light of this context, as well as the real Appalachian

history on which the dam is based; through this close reading, it is clear that Ed's

abjected insecurity and the exaggeratedly negative descriptions in which it manifests are

necessary for the novel to uphold its ideal of masculinity through individual struggle,

symbolized by Dickey's original image of a man standing on top of a cliff.

CONCLUSION: *INTRUDER IN THE DUST, DELIVERANCE,* AND GOTHICIZED

APPALACHIA

Initially, I had planned to use this conclusion to contextualize my work within the larger tradition of Gothic literature in the South; however, while writing the thesis, I discovered so much detailed material that I now feel the previous three chapters merit a more inward-looking conclusion that refocuses, synthesizes, and examines my analysis. Though an opportunity for future study exists in a bigger-picture analysis of the Southern mountain tradition in the larger context of Southern Gothic literature, this conclusion instead focuses and synthesizes my analysis of *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance* as pieces of those traditions. It details the ways Faulkner and Dickey have engaged in a similar process: they have appropriated an already Gothic Appalachian history in order to create Othered, abject hillbilly characters and a Gothic setting in which their urban characters must confront their abject selves. Moreover, it examines the takeaway concepts from this analysis, ultimately showing how each author's combination of the Southern mountain tradition and the Gothic mode allowed him to explore some of the most profound cultural anxieties of his time.

From very early in the region's history, Appalachia has served as a symbolic representation of the primitive past for America, which has allowed urban Americans to define themselves as modern through comparison. Like Horace Walpole capitalizing on the allure of the perceived barbarism of the Middle Ages in writing *The Castle of Otranto*

in 1764, portrayals of Appalachia capture America's fascination with primitivism. The idea of Appalachia and the way it has been sensationalized and dramatized in journalism, cartoons, films, and much more over time has led to a symbolic link with the primitive past, and as a result, these portrayals make Appalachia a haunting space for urban Americans. As detailed in Chapters Two and Three, Faulkner and Dickey appropriate elements of this history, ranging from specific and factual to widely cultural. However, what matters here is not that Faulkner and Dickey include historical material in their work. Rather, it matters that they appropriate, combine, and augment the already Gothic qualities of this history to create the Gothic mode in their own work; and ultimately, they use this mode to explore widely cultural issues through the abject.

For abjection to function, an abject Other is needed to reinforce the "I"; and one of the most important ideas that emerges from my analysis is an understanding of how and why the hillbilly stereotype acts as an abject Other for self-definition in American history and in literature. From the Civil War-era double Otherness of Appalachia in the face of both the North and the South to Albert Votaw's 1960 description of the "vicious and knife-happy" mountain people coming to Chicago, defining Appalachia as an Other has allowed urban Americans to reinforce their own positive identities and to self-identify, for instance, as modern, progressive, clean, and law-abiding. The hillbilly stereotype in *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance* functions in much the same way: it lets the text's urban characters define themselves in relation to the abject mountain characters and the cultural burden they represent. In *Intruder in the Dust,* the townspeople abject the threat of violence at the community level—the "something shocking and shameful out of the whole white foundation of the county" that is the lynch

mob mentality (Faulkner 135)—onto the Gowries. They self-identify as not-Gowrie while joying in Gowrie-like behavior, and pushing those characteristics away from their own self-definition allows them to preserve their own identities. In *Deliverance,* Ed abjects his insecurities about his masculinity onto the mountain characters he encounters in what he calls "the country of nine-fingered people" (Dickey 56). His descriptions cast the people of this territory as weak and incomplete, and in so doing, he excludes those qualities from his identity and self-identifies as powerful and masculine by comparison. In each text, the hillbilly represents the abject self of the urban characters: the Gowries represent the lynch mob mentality, and the mountain people around the Cahulawassee stand for weakness.

Eventually, the urban characters must confront these abject selves, and Faulkner and Dickey create the Gothic setting in which this can occur by piecing together elements of Appalachian history and stock Gothic tropes. Faulkner's Beat Four, based on Appalachia, is described as a "synonym for independence and violence" and given discrete physical boundaries (35). In Beat Four, Chick confronts multiple abject corpses at multiple gravesites; and later, he is haunted by the image of Vinson Gowrie's dead body and grieving father. In *Deliverance,* Dickey creates a Gothic setting when his characters cross "the exact point where suburbia ended and the red-neck South began" and reach the mountains (38), whose landscape is already haunted by an unknown number of buried bodies. Moreover, it is about to become *doubly* haunted through the hundreds of feet of water that will flood the space as a result of the impending dam, covering both the previously buried and the new corpses. In this way, Dickey uses the historical wilderness exploitation of Appalachia to create his Gothic setting. This

example, in which Dickey pieces together elements of Appalachian history and stock Gothic tropes in order to create a doubly Gothic setting, epitomizes a second key takeaway concept from my analysis: an understanding of how these authors create a Gothic setting by using both Appalachian history and stock Gothic elements.

Finally, these pieces come together—the appropriation of the Southern mountain tradition, the use of the hillbilly as a Gothic Other, the Gothic setting—and culminate in the confrontation of the abject. After abjecting the violent lynch mob mentality onto the Gowries, the mob in *Intruder in the Dust* realizes its involvement in "something shocking and shameful" and flees from the knowledge; they "ran home to hide their heads under the bedclothes from their own shame" (Faulkner 198). In addition, Chick confronts the abject when he is faced with the multiple corpses that are buried and unburied in Beat Four. In *Deliverance,* Ed confronts his abject self when he must watch as his friend is raped by a mountain man, epitomizing the weakness and lack of masculinity he fears in himself; but instead of fleeing from this fear, he eventually rises above it by engaging in combat with the man he believes to be the second rapist, defeating him, and successfully getting himself and his companions home alive. Each text's Gothic setting, created out of pieces of the Southern mountain tradition and classic stock elements of the Gothic tradition, creates a space for this confrontation of the abject. In the bigger picture of each text, the confrontation of the abject provides its thematic power. Kristeva defines the confrontation of the abject as a part of the process of primal repression and writes that "great modern literature unfolds over this terrain" (18). Ultimately, this analysis shows the ways Faulkner and Dickey use the Southern mountain tradition to situate their work on that terrain—the borders of what is thinkable and what is unthinkable, what is

included and what is excluded from identity, and the subjects and objects repeatedly

tangled up in this exchange.

In *Intruder in the Dust*, the thinkable and unthinkable rest on what Faulkner saw

as the deep-seated shame bound up in the lynch mob mentality of the desegregation-era

South. The text registers the anxiety and shame tied up in this cultural problem on many

levels: Chick feels it while the mob is assembling outside the jail; the mob feels it after

discovering the identity of the murderer in such full force that they flee at a "frantic

stumbling run" (Faulkner 182); and finally, this sense of shame permeates through to

North-South relations, as Chick and Gavin abject their shame into imagined opinions of

the North that picture the South as a dog in need of housebreaking. All of this shame and

anxiety are initially so intense that the urban characters in the text cannot face it, pushing

it away from their own identities and placing it instead at the border between the

thinkable and unthinkable—the abject. The abject is manifested in the characters

stereotyped as hillbillies, whose historically established reputation for violence,

lawlessness, and independence make them a perfect scapegoat for the lynch mob

mentality. Through the abject Gowries, the repeated connection of the word "shame" to

the lynch mob mentality, and Southern characters abjecting this shame into their

imagined views of how the North perceives the South, Faulkner uses the Gothic mode to

make this anxiety come to light—to demonstrate the inadequacy of the lynch mob

mentality, arguing instead for Southern communities to come together to solve the

problem of desegregation on their own terms and without the intervention of the North.

Intruder in the Dust has been continually analyzed for this political message of reform,

but what this analysis shows is how Faulkner used the Southern mountain tradition and the Gothic to make that happen.

Dickey's *Deliverance* unsettles cultural anxiety through the same method. At the beginning of the text, Ed feels so weak and powerless that he calls himself "impotent as a ghost" (18). He continually questions his masculinity, characterizing himself as feeble in his day-to-day life and comparing himself with Lewis's muscular body as Lewis emerges out of the river. Ed sees physical strength as the ultimate, ideal form of masculinity, and defines a territory for himself that is aligned with this masculine power by casting others as weak and incomplete. Though Lewis sees the mountain men as the epitome of his survivalist values, Ed's descriptions of them focus on their physical abnormalities. Like in *Intruder in the Dust,* the hillbilly stereotype is an ideal Other to host these abjections; popular perception often supposes that the Southern hill people are isolated and participate in inbreeding, which can lead to physical abnormalities. Yet Ed's exaggeration of these physical abnormalities betray the buried anxiety behind this behavior—the anxiety surrounding the 1960s-era Southern white male. The use of the Gothic mode and the Southern mountain tradition allow Dickey to bring this anxiety to the surface, just as it did for Faulkner in *Intruder in the Dust*. Within the Gothic setting Dickey creates out of Appalachian history and stock Gothic tropes, Ed confronts this anxiety and achieves his masculine ideal. As such, though Dickey's use of the hillbilly stereotype has often been seen as problematic, this analysis allows us to see how Dickey uses it to illustrate the confrontation of the abject—the "terrain" Kristeva defines as the stuff of great literature.

Appalachia's Otherness has arisen out of a haunting history of feuding, mine strikes, industrial exploitation, and charity movements—of perceived violence, lawlessness, independence, and helplessness—all of which have been sensationalized to create drama for the urban public in newspapers, magazines, and fiction. The social construct of Appalachia haunts America with the abject past and, much like the origins of the Gothic, is founded on the repellent but alluring quality of this past. These two authors use this already Gothicized Appalachia to create the Gothic elements of their texts and use them to unsettle some of the deepest and most troubling cultural anxieties of their time, which is what provides the most central aspects of each text's thematic power. Though they are excellent representations of Appalachia serving as urban America's abject Other, *Intruder in the Dust* and *Deliverance* are but two literary instances of this pattern. Because of the long history of abject Appalachia and the capacity of this thesis to include only two texts, future studies might apply Kristeva's concept of the abject to other pieces of literature that use the Southern mountain tradition. In addition, the first paragraph of this conclusion suggests that an opportunity for further study exists in contextualizing the Southern mountain tradition within the larger tradition of Southern Gothic literature; specifically, this could take the form of an analysis of Appalachia's "double Otherness" in the face of both the North and the South and how Appalachia offers a space for Southern writers to parallel North-South relations. Often dismissed for its perceived simplicity, the hillbilly stereotype is used in much more complex ways than scholarship has traditionally acknowledged. As Faulkner and Dickey have shown, it is not enough to dismiss instances of this stereotype; rather, it is far more important to examine how and why this stereotype is used by specific authors and to consider what

happens when stock characters traditionally on the periphery of a text are shifted to its center. As such, there is much more to be said on literary Appalachia to deconstruct the neat packaging of the hillbilly stereotype and its use over time. This neat packaging and the conventional understanding of the history behind it deserve to be unsettled—which is, after all, the function of the Gothic.

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