RICHARD MARIUS'S *THE COMING OF RAIN*: NOVEL TO PLAY

By

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INTRODUCTION

Richard Marius is a man of extraordinary talent who works in several fields, and unlike most people who juggle multiple metiers, he has a solid reputation in all of them. He is asked to speak on various topics—everything from the Vietnam War, education and Civil Rights to Shakespeare, Martin Luther, and Thomas More—around the world. He is a scholar of history, literature, and writing. As a teacher, he has taught at Harvard, the University of Tennessee, and Gettysburg College. He has published two biographies of Luther, and his biography of More was a National Book Award Finalist. He has edited a volume of Civil War poetry and published three textbooks: *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, *The McGraw-Hill College Handbook* (co-authored with Harvey Wiener), and *A Writer's Companion*, which is a staple of American college writing courses. He has three published novels with two more in progress. Journalist, political activist, scholar, editor, biographer, teacher, novelist—he fills or has filled all of these roles. In 1998 his first play, based on his first published novel, finished a successful five-month run at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, so he can now add playwright to the impressive list.

His play is set in Bourbonville, Tennessee, as is all of his fiction, at least partially. Bourbonville is based loosely on Lenoir City, Tennessee, close to where he was raised. Unquestionably, his socio-geographic origins influence both what and how he writes. However, his is the unique perspective of both Southern insider and outsider. To be sure, he never disclaims his Southern heritage. When introduced as "Richard Marius from

Harvard," he is quick to correct his presenter. He insists on being "Richard Marius *at* Harvard but *from* Tennessee." Likewise, when paying tribute to his father in the dedication to his most masterful novel to date, *After the War*, he describes him as "Henri Marius Panayo Kephalapoulos, foundryman, farmer, Tennessean."

The hero of *After the War*, Paul Alexander, is at least partially based on the elder Marius, and the former becomes a Tennessean in the fictional world as the latter became a Tennesean in the real world. However, while the latter became a Tennesean, there can be no doubt that part of him forever remained Greek. His perspective on the South was that of an outsider, and at least partially he gave that perspective to his son. The result is that Richard Marius can write authentically of the soul of the South. He writes of its beauty with moving detail and realism, but he also describes and criticizes the reality of its uglier aspects while at the same time debunking some of its romanticized myths.

The Coming of Rain was initially printed in 1969. His second novel, *Bound for the Promised Land*, appeared in 1976, and *After the War* debuted in 1992. *Rain*, set in 1885, and *Bound*, set about 1850, share some characters and setting, but the later novel is not really a prequel to the earlier one. The only two important characters to cross over between them are Will Bourbon and Dothan Weaver (the man who widowed Evelyn), and we only hear about them in *Rain* because they are both dead. Even in death, however, Dothan's presence is strong, not only in *Rain* but also in *After the War.*

Rain tells the tale of what happens before a journey; *Bound*'s story is of a journey itself. *After the War* tells of Paul's origination, peregrination, and destination. Its main focus, however, is what happens to him after he arrives in Bourbonville. In various ways, these three journeys are precipitated by the absence of the main characters' fathers. In all

three novels we sense that the absence of the fathers has somehow left the sons incomplete, and as with much classic fiction, the physical journeys they undertake tend to parallel spiritual journeys or quests for self-knowledge. In each novel the main characters have strong familial ties to the land where they were raised. They leave that land, but in contrast to the archetypal hero, they do not return. Unlike *Bound for the Promised Land*, *After the War* and *The Coming of Rain* do not literally tell of sons searching for fathers, but they do tell of sons searching for something that their fathers might have helped provide. The absent fathers are akin to the absent God that we also see in the three novels, and the quests they inspire are much like a quest for God or at least a quest for completion and spiritual peace.

All three novels also have hanging scenes that are pivotal to the plots. In *Rain*, Alfred Simson is hanged for having beaten his wife to death with a hammer. Seconds before his death, in the middle of the worst drought in recent memory, he predicts that it will rain the following day. After the hanging, Sam Beckwith, Jr., who recently lost his first love, Emilie, encounters two black women, known as the Hags, who tell fortunes. They claim to have predicted the death of Sam's father, and they predict that Sam will go West. The next morning, Brian Ledbetter mates Evelyn Weaver's cow with his bull. On the same day, a crazy preacher named Thomas Bazely tries to rape Sam's mother, Sarah. She fights him off, and he goes to town to try to kill his old enemy, J. W. Campbell, but the town sheriff kills Bazely first. Sarah arrives and announces that she will host a wake that night for Bazely. The worst storm in memory begins, and Sam takes refuge with a sick black man named Beckinridge. Beckinridge tells Sam that Sarah poisoned her husband. After the storm, Brian returns to Evelyn's on the pretense of relating the events

of the shooting, but he also asks her to marry him. She accepts. Sam confronts J. W., who reveals that Sam's father was a bigamist. Sam finds the can of poison his mother used and heads West. In his novels, Marius treats many different important themes, but one central theme to all of his fiction is that life is simply what we make of it. There is no God to guide us. *The Coming of Rain* ends with some promise. Brian seems to be embarking on what will be a successful marriage, and Sam has the potential for a better life than what he has previously known.

In *Bound for the Promised Land* we take a journey similar to Sam's, but with a different young man. We start in Bourbonville but soon head West with young Adam Cloud and a charlatan named Harry Creekmore. They join a family, headed by a religious zealot named Jason Jennings. Afterwards, they are also joined by a husband and wife team as well as a seasoned trapper named Shawnee Joe. Joe and Adam save the lives of the other members of their party on several occasions and eventually become the natural leaders of the expedition. Tension escalates when Adam begins an affair with Jason's wife; then Adam is overcome with cholera, Shawnee Joe dies of unknown causes, and Jason holds a mock trial of Harry and hangs him. The group abandons Adam, but Jason's son also stays behind with his sister, Promise. Adam recovers and eventually makes it to California. He marries Promise, and they become quite prosperous. In *Bound for the Promised Land*, Adam, though he makes many mistakes, does throughout what Sam cannot initially do in *Rain*: he takes charge of his own life. However, at the end, despite his success, he sees only chaos, and we are left with a bleak picture of the world where we sense neither completion nor peace.

After the War is much different. It also tells of a journey, but the physical part of the journey, though significant, is not the primary focus of the novel. Instead, Paul's spiritual journey and the events that surround him after he arrives in Bourbonville take precedence. The events of the novel are not laid out chronologically. Instead, we slide freely back and forth from the first decade of the twentieth century to the late 1920s, from Greece to Belgium to France to England, and finally the United States. (This "sliding," it should be noted, is quite fluid; we get no sense of being jarred about by the narrative.) The chronological events can, however, be pieced together.

Paul's father kills a man and flees his native country, Greece. His son leaves to attend a French preparatory school in Belgium, where he eventually attends the university. When World War One erupts, Paul and his two best friends join the Belgium army; the friends are killed, and Paul is seriously wounded. After accepting a job as a chemist, he moves to Bourbonville, where he befriends Brian Ledbetter and a young, black employee of the Bourbonville Car Works named M. P. Brown. Brian buys a plane, and M. P. becomes the older white man's personal pilot until community members torture and lynch him. When the employees of the car works go on strike the manager, Pinkerton, claims that Bolsheviks have invaded Bourbonville, and the National Guard is called into the area. Tensions rise, and five people are shot and killed. Brian's stepson finally kills Pinkerton. Paul fathers a son afflicted with Down's Syndrome after marrying a local reporter. Paul experiences extreme physical and psychological hardships. His world is frequently unrelenting in its brutality, but we end with an image of beauty, and despite his atheism, we sense that he finds a type of spiritual peace.

All three novels show us a harsh world inhabited by hard lives, but *Rain* leaves us with the possibility of something better. *Bound* offers little comfort; it ends with an unsettling image. *After the War* is an extremely complex novel, but it returns us to the same, central Marius theme: we must rely on ourselves to make life fulfilling.

Although *After the War* is the most powerful of the three novels, *The Coming of Rain* is a magnificent book and had the greatest potential for successful dramatic adaptation. It is set in a fixed locale over a two day period and has a strong plot, compelling themes, dramatic events, and dynamic characters. This thesis will follow the steps involved in the creation of the play *The Coming of Rain*. The first chapter will explore some sources of and influences on the novel and some of the major issues they raise, establishing the context of issue and value within which the story develops. The second chapter will examine the first draft of the play, denoting how the four major influences in the novel are still highly significant. It will also discuss why this draft does not work as theater. The third chapter will detail major changes in the play as it moves through its twenty-three drafts. It will note how the original four influences become less significant, and it will explain how the play's emphasis on plot compression at times changes the expansive themes of the novel. The final chapter will focus on the final draft of the play and the treatment it received at the hands of the director, designers, and actors at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival.

CHAPTER ONE

While there are many important influences on Richard Marius's fiction in general and *The Coming of Rain* specifically, the five most obvious and important in *Rain* are Marius's own personal and family history, *The Bible*, his thoughts on and rebellion against Martin Luther, literary influences such as Shakespeare and Dante, and the Southern myth exemplified by *Gone With the Wind*. Marius deals with multiple issues in this novel, but as a result of these five influences the primary concerns in the novel are religion and race relations. Therefore, this chapter will explore what the novel says about religion and the meaning and nature of hell and redemption and what the novel says about black and white societies and how they relate to each other.

Clearly, the most important influence on Marius's fiction is his own personal and family history. In "The Home that Lies Always in Memory" he writes that, as a child, he was told a story about a former citizen of Lenoir City who stood on the gallows during a drought and—just before his death—predicted rain. The rain came, and it was one of the most terrible storms in memory. In many ways, Bourbonville *is* Lenoir City, and many of the extraordinary characters Marius describes are solidly based on men and women whom he may not have known personally but whose stories he knows well.

Other childhood influences abound. Marius's obsession with both Biblical stories and the type of fundamentalist fanaticism he loathes grows from his own childhood and his mother's strict adherence to that fundamentalist dogma. As a child, Marius regularly experienced the hellfire and damnation preaching common to the South in the nineteenth

and early twentieth centuries. The Reverend Thomas Bazely is clearly derivative of those who spouted flames at Marius from the pulpit. Marius writes of Bazely: "Little children were chilled down to the roots of their hair by his ruthless preaching. And long after his bewildering and violent death, grown men still had nightmares over things they had heard him say when they were young" (10). Much of Marius's childhood was filled with *Bible*-thumping oration. Not surprisingly, Marius tends to characterize hellfire and damnation preaching as dangerous and evil. Certainly, Bazely's insane, demonic nature becomes increasingly clear as the novel progresses, and insane vengeance characterizes Bazely's religion. When he accosts Sarah, he says: "You pled with me for mercy when I told you the truth years ago. Do you remember that, Sarah? You asked me to be like God, to be merciful. [. . .] But yesterday I decided I had made a mistake. It is not like God to be merciful. God is just, and justice is terrible" (300). Clearly, Bazely's God is much more akin to the Old Testament Yahweh than the New Testament "Prince of Peace." The concept that Christianity should revolve around notions such as brotherly love is beyond his grasp.

However, such a notion is not beyond every minister in the novel. Marius portrays Bazely's type of preaching as psychotic, but he is not the only type of minister around, nor was he in Marius's childhood. For example, Preacher Henck is based on Marius's own Methodist grandfather, Frederick William Henck. While Marius does not agree with the beliefs or teachings of Henck's character or the real person on whom he is based, he seems at least to respect them. The result is that Henck provides a significant contrast to Bazely's insane religion by emphasizing patience and justice. Henck believes in the "invisible world that ties together all things visible" that "Mr. Campbell had long

ago lost his faith in" (162). In doing so, Henck's justice stands in sharp contrast with the insanity of the abominable vision of justice espoused by both Bazely and the hellfire and damnation preachers of Marius's childhood. Bazely says:

> We may be comforted, my comrades, in knowing this one thing, that though our fallen brother may end in hell, he will be there by the Will of God. That *is* a comfort, my friends. If we burn there, we know that there is a purpose to it. We can meditate on it forever and ever. In the fire we can think and thank God for using us and thank Him that He did not extinguish our souls in an eternal night. (252)

Bazely's words of comfort might sound ludicrous to a thinking ear, but this was an actual statement made by a preacher during Marius's youth. However, this minister cannot take credit for the words, or at least the thought behind them. He was merely echoing the sentiments of a dissatisfied monk some four hundred years his elder, Martin Luther. Bazely is partially based on Luther, and Bazely's religion is centered on the threat of damnation; Henck's is centered on the promise of salvation.

Bazely and Henck provide two sides of a triangle of faith that is completed by J. W. Campbell. While the two preachers' views on the nature of God differ drastically, they do believe in His existence. Mr. Campbell does not, and his world-view implies what Marius's analysis in *Luther* states:

> A part of [modern man's] being is to understand that we have no god to help us and that there will never be any divine shaft of illumination to make our night shine like the dawn. We turn from the study of Luther, the theologian of arcane lore about an arcane deity, knowing that there is no

> help for us but that residing in our own heads and hearts, and confessing wryly, too, that that help is feeble enough. If there is anything else that life can teach us, it may well be that all our striving, like his, must finally be hidden in the long cold that comes for great and small alike, and that life at its best and all history, too, are but parts of a process whereby we make our own terms with the dark. (*Luther* 255-56)

The Coming of Rain makes some significant suggestions about the nature of religion, heaven, hell, redemption and damnation. We cannot know if God exists. Marius suggests that like J. W. Campbell, we should live our lives to the best of our abilities assuming that there is no God.

Whether or not one believes in God, Heaven, Satan, and hell—and Marius has said he believes that everyone both believes and disbelieves in God in ever shifting and varying degrees—J. W. Campbell clearly thinks that we create our own hells. He and some of the novel's other likable characters experience both communal and individual versions of perdition. These hells are distinct from Bazely's psychopathic delusions, but they are hells nonetheless. Obviously, the summer's drought and the unbearable heat allude to hell, but other hellish allusions also appear regularly. J. W. refers to Bourbonville as "this accursed valley" (404), and fire appears repeatedly. Sam burns the slave quarters. Bazely feels as if his hair is on fire. Beckinridge puts flames to the unsuspecting rump of the Weavers' cow. The farmers are planning what they know will be a futile attempt at harvest in "a hell of dust" (4). The sunsets are described as "an ugly red" and "a lurid pool of unnatural light" (4). Brian says: "'And Simson said it'd rain today. Good God Almighty! It'd sooner rain in hell.' Then, reflecting: 'Maybe that's

what he meant'" (142). J.W "[sniffs] the fires of hell" (163; see summary of plot in Chart I).

Perhaps most significant, however, are the descriptions of Bazely when he awakens the morning after the hanging, having lost his few remaining dregs of sanity: "His senses were so acute that he had feeling in his hair, and the very pressure of light on his head made his hair burn as if every strand were an inflamed and elongated tooth. His fingernails ached, and the pressure of the floor against his bare feet was like a blistering fire" (214). In a way, however, this hell is a return to the hell of Kansas and Bazely's days with Quantrill. The reader knows from Bazely's own recollections that he was with Quantrill, so even though M. G. Galyon has a reputation as a liar, we believe his assertion that he saw Bazely riding through a devastated Kansas town, with "houses roaring up in flame on each side of him, throwing a lurid glare onto his wild face" (13).

We assume that this Kansas town is where Bazely's own private hell begins. He has committed many abominable acts, but it is the face of the Kansas woman he rapes and kills that fills his nightmares. For twenty years he sees her, "naked and waiting—leering at him amid the dancing red pillars of firelight in the sensuous dark" (119). While he sees his experience with the rape and murder victim as his damnation, he comes to see Sarah Beckwith as his potential savior, and as he relives the rape and murder night after night, eventually the Kansas woman's face becomes Sarah's face: "And with the years the face of the woman, which at first bore a look of indistinct generality, became something else. Something which deepened his horror and guilt and made him choke on his tears. The face of the woman in his nightmare became the face of the woman he loved so passionately and so in vain" (120). Bazely reaches a point where damnation and

salvation are so wrapped up with one another that he cannot distinguish one from the other. Furthermore, from a Biblical perspective, he seeks salvation through damnable means. He seeks salvation in Sarah rather than God. As with his religion, his concept of love is equally twisted. Sarah tells him "you can't force love" (300). However, this is what he has attempted through fifteen years of pressure. His final attempt, of course, is his sexual assault on Sarah, and like Saul consulting the Witch of En-dor, he seeks salvation through unrighteous means. He breaks God's law by worshipping her; he exacerbates that sin by attacking her.

Marius has said that one of his authorial signatures is the Witch of En-Dor, and her name appears at least once in all of his published novels. In *First Samuel* chapter 27, when Saul "saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (5-6). When Saul receives no divine sign, he consults the Witch of En-dor, asking her to call up the ghost of Samuel. He breaks his own law because he has decreed that no one shall consult with witches. More importantly, he breaks God's law because, according to *The Bible*, any apparent, temporal manifestation of the dead is really Satan in disguise.

Marius has stated that his mother and aunt argued for years over the implications of Samuel's ghost appearing at the behest of the Witch. How could it be Samuel risen from the grave when God will not allow the dead to walk the earth? Any apparent manifestation of a risen dead person must be the devil in disguise. This endless discourse in the Marius household was apparently much more than theoretical. Marius has also stated that one day while pondering and missing her dead mother, wishing that she could

see her again, his aunt heard her mother's voice say: "If you want to see me, all you have to do is turn around." She started to turn, but thought better of it as she realized that it must be Satan trying to entrap her. Instead of turning immediately, she said: "Get thee behind me, Satan." When she did turn, of course, neither her mother nor Satan was there (interview 5/15/98).

Marius even sees the Witch of En-dor episode and the question it poses as central to what is arguably the best piece of literature in the English language, *Hamlet*. Is the ghost Hamlet sees really King Hamlet risen, or is it a demon? Would God allow a ghost to walk the earth? The answer, clearly, is no. Any such apparition must be the devil in disguise. In *Rain*, the question of whether real ghosts are trundling about is left unanswered, but at the least we see plenty of figurative ghosts. Bazely rides with the ghost of Quantrill. Ghost-like memory haunts the town. The brooding ghosts of Sarah's family hang in portraits on her walls. Quantrill is to be seen as an agent of hell; however, the other shades exert their own type of evil.

In addition to the Witch of En-dor, other Biblical references in the novel abound. The two quotes preceding the prologue are both Biblical. The first is *Proverbs* 17.17: "A friend loveth at all times and a brother is born for adversity." The second is from *Leviticus*: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, He that killeth any man shall surely be put to death" (24:17). The quote preceding the epilogue is Psalm 55:

> My heart is sore pained within me:
>
> And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
>
> Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
>
> and horror hath overwhelmed me.

> And I said, oh that I had wings like a dove!
>
> For then would I fly away, and be at rest.
>
> Lo, then would I wander far off,
>
> And remain in the wilderness.
>
> I would hasten my escape from the windy storm
>
> And tempest.

Even if he wanted to, it would probably be difficult for Marius to avoid Biblical allusions because they are strongly ingrained in him. When he was a child, his mother read him a chapter from *The Bible* every night, and later he attended two Baptist seminaries, one in New Orleans and one in Louisville. His seminary experience was central in firmly cementing his stand against organized religion.

Naturally, other personal experiences also shaped his philosophy and world view. He was heavily involved with the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. He has been officially commended by Harvard University for advancing minority causes at that institution. Ironically, however, he has received scathing criticism for his use of the ugly word "nigger" in his novels. Even so, he used the term repeatedly in early drafts of the play. The word may be both shocking and grating to the modern ear, but it is realistic, and it was in common use in the 1880s.

In *Rain*, almost everyone uses the word, and almost every white thinks of blacks as little more than animals. Intelligent, well educated men such as J. W. Campbell and Union men who risked their lives (and in Brian's case gave their limbs) to free black men and women still see them as less than human. Hub rescues Jackson and Beckinridge from being beaten, but then he threatens to take a belt buckle to both of them. Brian says:

"The best hand on earth with an animal is a nigger. A nigger is part animal hisself, and he can do things with a cow that we can't even think of doing" (285). Accordingly, when the cow balks, Brian sends for Beckinridge, but any black will do, because somewhere in the back of his mind he thinks a black might be able to communicate with a fellow animal by "whispering something in her ear" (294). Marius tells us that Mr. Campbell's maid cleans his house so thoroughly that the house itself is "bruised," but later J. W. instructs Sam to sit despite his filthy clothes: "'I hire a nigger woman to clean this place up twice a week,' Mr. Campbell said impatiently. 'For once in her life she can earn her pay'" (393). Blacks are inherently unworthy of any dignity, respect, or appreciation, even for a job well done.

Of course, their wretched state is established almost immediately in the novel. For instance, Quillen Bradshaw is recognized by white Bourbonville to be the lowest sort of white, but he is inherently considered superior to any man of color. Whether he is irritated by the hellish heat, hungry because he is one of those poor whites who does not have the means to bring himself a picnic lunch, bored, or simply a mean, miserable son of a bitch, he decides he is going to attack, injure, and humiliate the only two black men available. Significantly, one is sick and already well on his way to dying, and the other is old and feeble. Despite their inoffensive and pitiful conditions, no one intervenes, and a few men join in. Only the woman with the "alarm clock" (27) voice fetches the sheriff, and her chief concern is not that two men are well on their way to being killed but that white children are seeing it done.

Instead of outrage at the violence, the general reaction is one of momentary interest. This attack is a diversion, something to take the collective mind of the crowd off

the heat until the feature presentation presents itself at two o'clock in the form of the hanging. After Hub does put a stop to the excitement, the narrator tells us: "Everybody despised Quillen Bradshaw. But did the sheriff have the right to be so hard on a man who hadn't done anything worse than beat up a nigger? That was the question, and everybody had an opinion about it" (28).

Quillen Bradshaw's thrashing of Jackson and Beckinridge—who, significantly, "bore a distinguished name" (23), that of the Bourbon family—makes it emphatically clear that no black holds a social position above any white, and Jackson does not find much in Will Bourbon to feel proud about. Instead, he seems much more proud that he put a hex on Will Bourbon that resulted in his death, or so he believes. The only regret he has is that his former owner did not live to see the destruction of his property or the freeing of his slaves.

However, while Marius has worked to expose and eliminate white oppression of minorities, he has also discussed what he saw in the 1960s as "the murderous rage" that many angry young black men of that time felt toward their elders. Many Civil Rights leaders wanted to advance minority rights through violence. They viewed Martin Luther King's peaceful approach as a sort of "Uncle Tomism." Marius has said that a violent approach would not only be self-defeating, but it would also undermine any advances made by non-violent Civil Rights leaders. The Jackson and Beckinridge episode is clearly symbolic of this belief. Beckinridge is a black who "doesn't know his place," and Jackson is an elder black who tries to appease whites. He thinks as long as he can get white men to laugh at him, he will be safe. The fact that Jackson ends up dead and Beckinridge seems to be close to death is indicative of the self-defeating rage and

violence practiced by some black groups during the sixties. Indeed, this impotent rage is evident in almost all of Beckinridge's actions and thoughts:

> He could see children peeping through the forest of legs around him, and he hated them. He wanted to yank them up by the hair and dash their little heads against the stones and send their bodies, speared like pigs over a spit, home to their mothers. He wanted to tear trees out by the roots and flail the white men with them till the blood ran in the streets. But he couldn't do anything. He couldn't even get up. (27)

Of course, this type of hatred is understandable since he is on the verge of being beaten to death, but significantly, his animosity here is not directed specifically at Quillen Bradshaw or those who join in the beating. Instead, he hates whatever and whomever he lays his eyes on, and like many violent black groups of the 1960s, this undirected hatred serves no purpose. This point is made even clearer in the episode with the balked cow. After tearing her nose open and rubbing salt in the open wound, he drops to his hands and knees, exhausted and tormented by his efforts and pain:

> When he lifted his head he looked like a defiant animal. The swollen bruise on his face warped his features. [. . .] There was a deadly resolution in his voice. With that same resolution the black got to his feet, staggering. He held his right hand over his chest. A blood crust of salt gleamed dully in his fingers so that he seemed to be bleeding himself. His face was contorted with something. [. . .] Brian wasn't completely sure.
>
> But he could tell that the black's eyes were implacable. Beckinridge looked at the cow with a gaze so unmercifully fierce that the white men

> fell silent before it. Brian saw the hatred burning in the black's eyes. No doubt about it. Beckinridge hated the cow. *That* was the awful thing. (293-94)

Of course, the hatred of Beckinridge and the oppressed blacks he represents is not the only issue Marius deals with here. The fact that Brian cannot understand its source is equally important. Marius suggests that Brian and whites in general do not understand that they and the society they have built are the sources for black rage.

Furthermore, while whites do not understand black society, they also do not understand much about the history of Southern white society. Marius not only debunks white, Southern fairy tales about the black South but also undermines common, Southern white self-conceptions. There is a common misconception that before Lincoln and Grant wounded them and the carpetbaggers finished them off, our Southern ancestors occupied themselves by sitting in the shade of magnolia trees sipping mint juleps and speaking in genteel, aristocratic tones about their vast acreage as they gazed out across abundant fields of cotton and corn. The truth, of course, is that most were dirt poor, and few owned slaves. Wars are usually fought for the rich and by the poor, and this was certainly the case in the Confederacy. In many ways, *After the War* is a continuation of *The Coming of Rain*, and Marius picks up this thought in his latest published novel when speaking of the recently defeated Germans of World War One: "The Germans in defeat were somehow heroic, as Confederates were now heroic, because they had lost another greedy war" (316). Indeed, while Marius could hardly be called a Marxist, his novel makes some important points about the class system of the Old South and the fact that crushing poverty prevailed. He at least suggests that plantation owners, not northern

carpetbaggers, sucked the South dry. Brian unsuccessfully tries to make this point to Virgil. The boy says:

> "Mamma says the Yankees wanted all our money, and that's why we had the war."
>
> Brian fought manfully with his first impulse. But the effort of choking down what he wanted to say was so great that he couldn't say anything.
>
> "Mamma says if we'd of won, we'd all be rich now, and we wouldn't have all this trouble we're having in the world."
>
> "Virgil, let me tell you something. If you folks had of won, you'd be living like a nigger right this minute. [. . .] And some big-assed rich man would be hollering 'Boy' at you all the time, and you couldn't do nothing but say, 'Yessir!' You'd live on the weedy ass of some rich feller's place, and that's all you'd get out of life. The ass end of everything."
>
> "Mamma says we'd of all been rich, and we'd have lots of parties, and we'd all have us a horse to ride."
>
> "You'd be poorer than a church mouse."
>
> "Mamma says if we'd of won, we'd all have us a slave. Only . . ."
>
> "Only *what*?"
>
> "Only she says she's glad we don't have a lot of slaves around the house." (143-44)

Of course, Virgil loves and reveres his mother, and it would be difficult for anyone not to adore (with a touch of fear) this strong, pragmatic woman who cannot only rebuff Brian Ledbetter's fescennine manner blow for blow with only slightly ruffled grace, but who can also club a rampaging killer bull to death with one blow from a butter churn. However, despite the initial verbal combat between Brian and his future wife, they are perfectly matched. For fifteen years, Bazely seeks salvation in a woman who will never offer it. When Evelyn offers a type of deliverance to Brian, he grabs it almost without hesitation.

Brian best exemplifies the notion that we must make our own terms and find our own redemption. He is one of the few characters who achieves a type of deliverance, and his salvation is so funny, pragmatic, and temporal that the reader almost overlooks the fact that his experience with Virgil and Evelyn is redemptive. From *After the War* we know that he dies somewhat sad but also having lived a good and--for the most part--fulfilling life. Just before his death he says to Paul:

> "I done the bestest I could, and I meant good when I done it. That's all a man can do, now ain't it? I've laid awake on many a long night and grieved about how some things turned out the way they did, but I ain't never felt sorry for what I *wanted* to do. I wanted the good for the folks that counted on me. I done everything I knowed to do good for them, and I reckon that's all a man can do—to want the good for the ones that life gives him to love. I raised a bunch of boys; I taken care of a good woman, and she taken care of me. I done the best I knowed how to do for the

> people I loved, and I loved a lot of them, and that's a real true fact. I'm glad I could love so many. Ain't that right?"
>
> I laughed softly, a laughter of consolation and peace. "Yes," I said.
>
> "They's some that can't love," the old man said. "But I never was one of them."
>
> "No," I said. "No, you were not."
>
> "If we can love, and if we got people to love, we've got all there is." (569)

According to Marius, the only salvation we can be sure of is the type Brian finds with his wife, family, and friends. Sam escapes the suffocating love of his mother, but his future is uncertain. We know from *Bound for the Promised Land* that most people who head West do so unprepared for its harsh realities. True, the young Beckwith makes the morally correct choice at the end of the novel. In doing so he sheds his past. However, we know that the West is a violent, cruel, unforgiving land, where morally correct choices and survival do not always co-exist. Brian says: "I don't see why anybody in his right mind wants to go West. The West is the asshole of this country. The people that go West are the people that have been run through the bowels of this country and can't find a place to set" (74). J. W. says:

> "Well, in the summer it's hot. Hotter than the brass dog that guards the gates of hell. You can't stand in the sun bareheaded. You have to protect yourself, and sometimes a hat doesn't do any real good. And in the winter, up on the plains, it snows so hard it sucks the breath out of your

> body. It can freeze you to death in fifteen minutes, but the bad thing is that it can drive you crazy . . . .
>
> Oh, I can't say it's all bad. But *mostly*! Mostly it's awful, the West. The scum of the earth live out there. They're all running from something definite to something unknown. You don't have kinfolks out there. Or a past. Not in the West I know. Sometimes you don't even have a last name. [. . .] It's a weir of deceit, the West." (318)

Sam's choice to leave opens the way for a type of deliverance. For the first time he takes charge of himself by making and acting on a life-changing decision. However, whether or not that decision leads to a better life we cannot know.

The other major characters cannot achieve redemption or escape because they are haunted by the ghosts of their past. They cannot or will not move forward. J. W. stays in a town he does not like, brooding over his lost son in the futile hope that one day the boy will return. Clarence is well on his way to drinking himself to death. Hub dreams of a future in the West that will never exist for him because he never summons the courage to act. Sarah is haunted by the ghosts of her father, brother, husband, and finally her son until she loses her sanity. In *Rain*, the ghosts might be figurative, and the hell which spawned them might be figurative as well, but the characters they possess are nonetheless hellishly tormented.

On the other hand, Brian's redemption is further illustrated by both explicit and implicit references to *The Divine Comedy*. The name of Evelyn's oldest son comes from the fictionalized version of the great poet who guides Dante through and out of hell. Furthermore, Marius has said that he almost gave Evelyn's character the name Beatrice,

and he wishes now that he had (Interview 15 Mar. 1998). These facts aside, however, the Weaver farm is clearly the only patch of Eden left of the Edenic countryside through which Sam and Emilie rode. The Crittendon spring is almost dry, and all of Sarah's flowers are dead. The stark contrast with the Weaver place is obvious:

> The fences seemed to be in good repair, and there was a broad pond by the barn, obviously spring-fed from a deep source because it was brimming full and the water was shining green. Brian took it all in slowly, like a man getting used to heaven when he didn't expect to make it, but what his eyes finally fixed upon was the lawn.
>
> For the lawn was green. [. . .] The grass was so fresh-looking that rain might just have passed. Brian wanted to get off his horse and roll in the grass and sing an obscene song. [. . .]
>
> And flowers! My God there were real flowers! Larkspur mostly. And roses! Green bushes laden with rose buds and blossoms, reds and whites, one bush brilliantly yellow so that it looked as if somebody had sprinkled little curds of butter through all the leaves. The whole place smelled as sweet as springtime. (255-56)

Before the drought all of Bourbonville and the surrounding area is Edenic, and Bazely is the evil that spoils that paradise. If he had not interrupted the seduction scene between Emilie and Sam, there can be no doubt that they would have consummated their relationship. Afterward, whether pregnancy followed or not, Sam would have been bound to marry Emilie. Their budding love evokes notions of paradise, and the country

they take their morning rides through is clearly meant to be Edenic. At this point, there is no warning of the hell to come:

> Around them the spring came on in a splendor of sunny mists and gentle warmth. The air grew sweet with sunlight and the smell of growing life.
>
> It looked to be a good year. Everybody said it and read signs to prove it. Women talked flowers and laid aside their quilting. Men packed themselves into town on Saturday mornings and whittled and spat and talked and felt themselves to be very wise and prosperous. The peach trees sprang into pink bloom, and almost miraculously the bees appeared droning from their winter's sleep. The woods were sprayed with patches of dogwood, and one day the martins came back and possessed their gourd nests. It was good luck to have a colony of martins on the place, and there were martins darting all through the valley, and it did indeed look to be a good year. (101)

However, this Edenic environment is not to last. Just before the attempted seduction, Sam speculates that the birds are disturbed by a snake, a reference to the manifestation of Satan in Genesis as a serpent. Earlier, Emilie says that there is "something wrong" with Bazely and suggests that "you have to be inhuman to be a preacher. You have to hate" (104-05). Sam laughs at her dark assessment, "but later the preacher would come back to them. All dark and spectral, a monstrous presence inserted like a snake in the garden of their happiness" (105).

Significantly, the first day of the drought is the day that Sam loses Emilie. Of course, rain will come and end the drought, but it will be too late to save most of the

crops. Rather, it destroys many of them. Like the Biblical episode of Noah's flood, it is both a purging and a destructive rain.

In his introduction to *The Columbia Book of Civil War Poetry*, Marius suggests that the Civil War was a terribly destructive but not so purging experience for America, at least when it came to the issue of eradicating oppression of black men and women. The best known fictionalized account of the Civil War is found in *Gone With the Wind*, and with *Rain*, Marius set out to write what he called "an anti-*Gone With the Wind*" novel because he believes that Margaret Mitchell's novel popularized many romanticized, historically inaccurate beliefs about the antebellum South that emerged almost immediately after the close of the war. He makes this point clearly as he writes of Sarah, his "anti-Scarlett," and the Bourbonville citizenry's opinion of her: "She was exalted in the mind of the valley, she the gallant Southern woman female novelists would later dream over and recall with magnificent sentimentality" (40). The gallant Southern woman is decidedly the image that Sarah attempts to project: "She did so long for people to remember her as the strong and beautiful woman who held a world together" (238). Her worst fear is that people will instead remember her as a "drooling old crone" (238).

More important, however, is the stark contrast between Mitchell's portrayal of blacks and Marius's. She gives us an antebellum plantation where almost no one is permitted to whip a slave. Landowners never sell slaves "down the river." On the contrary, they sometimes pay exorbitant sums of money to bring slave families together. When Ellen O'Hara is not exhausting herself and risking her own health nursing sick blacks and delivering slave babies, she spends her time knitting clothes for them. After the war, the trouble-making carpetbaggers convince many blacks that they are equal with

whites, and the erstwhile former slaves take to shoving innocent white women and children off the sidewalks into the streets. Naturally, the ubiquitous Southern rumor that a white woman has been raped by a black man also crops up in Mitchell's work.

Marius paints a far different picture. Before the war, slaves were regularly beaten. Owners broke up and sold off families with no more concern than if they were selling goats or cattle. After the war, no black man would dare confront a white man, much less shove his wife or child into the street. Indeed, at least one and probably two of the novel's four major black characters die because they happen to be in the vicinity when a white man decides he wants to "whip him a nigger." True, Bradshaw does not actually beat either of the men to death, but Beckinridge's fatal assault on his father is a direct result of the rage he feels toward Bradshaw and men like him. Furthermore, Beckinridge is still alive at the end of the novel, but we can assume that his broken ribs will complicate his tuberculosis, and the combined conditions will lead to an imminent death.

In approaching *The Coming of Rain*, Richard Marius sets himself the difficult goals of telling a compelling story, developing full characters, and having those characters and their actions embody complex themes. In the novel he achieves most of them with remarkable success. Marius tries to express these same themes and ideas in the first draft of the play. The themes, sources, and theatrical inadequacies of the first draft of the play will be the focus of the second chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

In the summer of 1991 AUM Professor Nancy Anderson nominated *The Coming of Rain* for dramatic adaptation at ASF as part of The Southern Writers' Project and gave a copy of the novel to Artistic Director Kent Thompson. She did not mention the nomination to Marius until the following summer when, while the two were doing research at the University of Tennessee library, they took a forced break during a bomb scare, and she suggested that he consider adapting his novel into a play. In the fall of 1994 Kent Thompson discussed the potential project with Marius, who began adapting the novel into dramatic form during the Southern Writers' Project workshops. The read through of his first draft was conducted in August of 1995.

In the first draft of the play *The Coming of Rain*, Marius attempts to tell the same story as the novel. This draft has some wonderful scenes, but as a whole it does not yet work as theater. Its initial inadequacies as a play can largely be attributed to the fact that, in many ways, it is simply the novel presented in dialogue. Indeed, many of the scenes are lifted directly from the novel. However, there are a few significant changes. For instance, at the end of the play, Sam shows Sarah the can of rat poison she used to kill his father. In the novel, we doubt that he forgives her, but he punishes her only by leaving. She may guess why, but she is not certain. In the script, she now knows precisely why he departs. We can guess, at least, that the knowledge will eventually drive her mad.

Another important change is that we now have three Hags, where there are only two in the novel. (Early drafts of the novel do have three Hags.) In the novel they are

pivotal characters. In the first draft of the play they are not only pivotal characters, but they also serve as a chorus, so that, as with the fashion of ancient Greek drama, they open the play and give us background on some of the events that have been going on in Bourbon county. Also as with Greek drama, they provide continuity between the scenes. In scenes one through thirteen they appear at least every fourth scene, and usually every two or three scenes. However, they leave us in scene thirteen, not making another entrance until scene twenty-two, and some of the continuity they help to establish is lost. Likewise, after scene twenty-two, they are on stage only once more—in scene twenty-six—until the end of the script, and in scene twenty-six they are not functioning as a chorus. They do reveal some important information (the poisoning of Sam, Sr.), but they are interacting with Sam, Jr. as he takes refuge from the storm.

The prologue of the novel is the hanging and the events surrounding it. In the script, these events are now broken into smaller, individual scenes. Some events are cut, and some are added. The choric appearance of the Hags in scene three is new. The appearance of Charlotte Campbell's ghost in scene five is also new, although this appearance is simply a revised way of expressing J. W.'s guilt about his son, which we see in chapter two in the novel. The most important difference, however, is the absence of Jackson and Beckinridge and their thrashing at the hands of Quillen Bradshaw. The script is thematically true to the novel with a few important exceptions, and their absence is responsible for one of these exceptions.

We see only a glimpse of the black rage Marius witnessed while working to advance Civil Rights during the 1960s, because Beckinridge is only mentioned as Old George's grandson, and we see no evidence of the smoldering hatred that the character in

the novel exudes. The reasons for this omission are manifold. Beckinridge's impotent rage that Marius expresses magnificently in the novel would be difficult to convey on stage, but more importantly, this impotent rage is not as timely in 1998 as it was in 1969, when the novel was first published. To be sure, to say that African Americans have achieved total social and economic equality in the late 1990s would be unfair and untrue, but conditions have improved since the 1960s. Moreover, we still have some black leaders who advocate violence to advance minority rights, but we do not have the same sort of pervasive tension between such leaders and those—best represented by Martin Luther King, Jr.—who advocated a peaceful approach to change.

Marius set his novel in late June of 1885, but he at least partially wrote it to speak to conditions in the late 1960s. The three-decade gulf between the completion of the novel and the completion of the play insured that the emphasis on certain themes will have shifted. However, the major themes dominating the novel *Rain* also dominate this draft. The oppressive racial tension is still felt, though not as strongly as in the novel.

The absence of Beckinridge as anything other than a name almost dictates that the play says something different from the novel about the nature of black and white relations. Instead of the abuses and deaths of Beckinridge and Jackson, now we witness—or more accurately, hear about—only the abuses of the Hags. The sexual assaults they suffered and the forced breakup of their families are painful and poignant. However, *hearing* a story about abuse cannot stir the same emotional response that *seeing* two men mercilessly beaten does. Marius was aware of this difference, but he also knew that the first draft of his play was much too full already. He could not afford yet another

major sub-plot in this already overburdened play, so he conceded it as a necessary loss that the new artistic form demanded.

One way Marius continued to illustrate the pervasive racism of the time was by having his characters consistently use the demeaning term "nigger." The constant, casual use of this word does help establish the state of wretchedness and lack of human dignity in which most blacks of the time lived. For instance:

> Sarah: Sam still raises tobacco. He has a couple of niggers to help him.
>
> Emilie: You mean Africans?
>
> Sarah: We call them niggers here, my dear. (1:57-8)

Again, however, a word whispers where an action shouts. More troubling to the success of the play, perhaps, is the fact that the term could also cast a villainous light on the characters who use the word, including protagonists such as Brian, Sam, Jr., and J. W. In the later drafts, Marius decided he needed a little racist language, as he needed a little Brian, but too much of either would throw the play out of balance.

Clearly, in the first draft, Brian is anything but little. The Brian, Virgil, and Evelyn subplot threatens to smother the main plot. The funny, ribald, and lovable Brian cannot be as big or coarse in the play as he is in the novel. If he were, he would be in danger of becoming more than a scene stealer; he might steal the whole show (and in this draft he does—a Mercutio unkilled). On the other hand, if his coarseness is not moderated, he might turn audience members against both him and the play. For example, his declaration that some of the good male citizens of Bourbon County have conjugal relations with sheep might lose large portions of an audience—especially when said to a ten-year-old child. This statement works well in the novel, but reading a word is a

different experience from hearing it, and it has a different impact. In the novel, we accept such a statement to be indicative of Brian's coarse but benign nature. On stage, however, seeing a grown man address a child as a "little shit" is likely to call his benignity into question. When he goes on to mention that he cuts throats "real normal," his character is cast into further doubt. Of course, Brian is kidding, and any decent actor could make this evident, but a ten-year-old child—especially a boy of Virgil's deeply serious nature—is not likely to see the humor. After all, Virgil is convinced at the beginning of their first encounter that he is going to receive a beating at the hands of this strange, one-legged man before Brian even speaks. Audience members might see the humor, or they might question the character of a man who would use such humor on a child. If Virgil fears a beating before Brian even speaks, can the boy's fears truly be assuaged when in the man's fifth line of this scene, Brian calls him a "little son of a bitch"? Of course, Brian is even more roguish in the novel. Marius writes:

> Brian glowered at him and got to talking about what a good club a wood leg made. He'd used his own to club the brains out of a lot of pestiferous little boys in his time, he said. He'd be glad to beat the living shit out of the whole litter of Virgil's brothers. But at the end of this fearful pronouncement his eyes twinkled, and he grinned, and Virgil's apprehensive stare was slowly replaced by a shy smile. (140)

He is no less crude when he meets Virgil in this draft of the play than he is in the novel. In fact, the dialogue and some of the stage directions are lifted directly from the novel. However, there are two major differences, and they present two major problems. First, in the novel, we *know* Brian by this point. He may be a rogue, but he is a lovable rogue

with no real ill intent. In this version of the play, all we have seen him do to this point is get drunk and swap war stories with his buddies. Getting drunk and swapping war stories are all he has done in the novel to this point as well, but in the novel, Marius provides us with necessary exposition enabling us to understand Brian's benign nature:

> Brian Ledbetter was large and soft-looking in spite of his ugly face. He laughed more than anybody else in Bourbon County, and there were big, crowfooted laughter lines around his eyes and his mouth. He loved to spin yarns and to drink whiskey and talk about God and ghosts and magic and religion and things like that. His peg leg was a memento of the War, its predecessor having been sawn off below the knee to save him from gangrene after he was shot in the foot at Cold Harbor. By that time he had been through so many bloody fights he was convinced he would die in battle. Probably no man in the history of soldiering ever greeted the loss of a leg with more jubilation. It was like having a baby in reverse. He never got over a jolly disposition which people who knew him before the War frankly couldn't remember his having then. (67-8)

A second problem is that children on stage—especially a stage populated mostly by adults—warm an audience's collective heart in a way that only fuzzy kittens can match. Anyone who would threaten a child, even in jest, is automatically well on his way to being a Thernadier or Bumble. The very presence of the child presents problems. Children are natural scene stealers, and this version of the play is crawling with them. Once again, Marius made a concession to the stage. He gave us three children instead of six (at least we see three, although Brian tells J. W. later, "she's got six kids and a farm"

[1:175]), and wisely, he omitted the presence of Clyde, the baby, who would have created even greater problems. These omissions notwithstanding, we have to ask: Do we *need* three children when two of them have no lines? Marius was establishing the fact that Evelyn has some boys that need a father, and she is offering Brian that position by partnership through marriage, but this fact could be established with one or two lines instead of one or two additional characters. Of course, in the final version of the play, we have other characters who do not speak. Two of the Yankee soldiers say nothing, and some of the townspeople talk only among themselves or join in the general chorus of shouted support or antagonism when Bazely and J. W. confront each other at the hanging. However, when staging an Equity production, child actors present a slew of practical problems not found with adult actors. (The ASF administration has handled these types of problems before, but it would surely prefer not to if given the choice.)

When we ask if we need two children who do not even speak, inevitably the questions that follow are: Do we need one who does? Do we need Evelyn? Or, for that matter, Brian? The final answer is that, while we miss Virgil and Evelyn, they are not essential to *Rain* as a play. On the other hand, as the second workshop taught Marius and then director Kent Thompson, we do need Brian in some muted form. However, a muted Brian is roughly akin to a muted Cyclops, and toning him down eventually presented even further problems.

In the first draft of the play, the hellishness of conditions is already toned down when compared with the novel, although Marius made some staging suggestions to establish such conditions. For example, he suggested that when Bazely rapes and kills the Kansas Woman, the scene begin with demonic laughter, screams, and flames:

> [SPOT OUT to a huge roar of diabolical laughter, so loud it hurts the ears of the people in the theater, and it rolls on and on before it dwindles and fades. As laughter dwindles, FLAMING LIGHTS ON, SUGGESTING FIRE, Stage front center, revealing Bazely walking back and forth in torment in the midst of the fire. Loud Fire noises. Sound of screaming and shouting in background.] (1:65)

Marius retained many hellish allusions and also added a few. Brian says: "Poor old Simson. One minute he's standing sweating on the scaffold, and the next he's in hell, and it's so hot both places he can't tell the difference" (1:35). The Hags say:

> First: And when the sun go down, it like a ball of fire, so red it look like blood. It look like the end of the world.
>
> Second: And the moon. The moon like a blood red eye when it come up.
>
> Third: Almost full the night before the hanging. Like blood in the sky. It drive preacher Bazely crazy. (1:5)

As with the novel, however, men and women are responsible for their own hells as they are responsible for their own redemptions. For example, we know that J. W. is just as obsessed with his lost son in draft one of the play as he is in the novel not only from dialogue but also from the scene he has with the ghost of Charlotte. The most powerful overt statement left from the novel about the fact that we create our own hells comes, not surprisingly, from his mouth. He says:

> Fact. Everybody makes a wreck out of life. We dream dreams and raise roofbeams to nail the dreams on, and we always do <u>something</u> to knock the beams down and make all the dreams a wreck. We make our blunders

> at a very early age, a very tender and early age when we don't have the sense to know better. But the things we do then haunt us for as long as we live. (1:185)

In the novel, Marius wrote: "When his boy vanished, Mr. Campbell took all the blame for the failure onto himself. He had stayed away too long. When Charlotte died he abandoned the child before the boy was old enough to know who he was. And when he returned from the West, it was as if he had come up out of the earth to carry the boy off" (173). Likewise, in the first draft of the play, we have a clear understanding of the personal hell J. W. has created for himself. In the midst of the hanging scene, we get a mini-scene between J. W. and Charlotte, or at least between him and the ghost and/or memory of Charlotte.

Again, however, this scene is indicative of what is wrong with many of the scenes in this draft. We *hear* a great deal, but we see little. Nonetheless, this scene does provide us with an essential ingredient from the novel. Ghosts and memory haunt this hellish landscape. In both the novel and the first draft of the play, ghosts and memories are, if not synonymous, at least so intricately intertwined that they cannot be separated. Both are dead, and both suffocate the present and the living, threatening to drag them into a Hades-like existence. Certainly, Sarah has lived a stiff, corpse-like existence since the death of Sam, Sr. J. W. lives a sad, lonely existence, holding onto a memory and an unlikely hope that his son will return.

Of all the major characters in *Rain*, only Emilie and Brian seem to understand the preciousness of *now* and a life lived in the present. For instance, the prospect of marrying Evelyn poses a serious dilemma to Brian, not just a bump in the road but a huge left turn

in his boiled eggs, beans, and whiskey life. However, when he decides to marry her, he wastes no time. He even defies the advice of his wisest, most respected advisor, J. W., and rides to her farm in the middle of the night to propose. For Brian, life is about *now*. Therefore, if he is going to marry her, he is going to marry her *now* (or at least propose now and marry her tomorrow). Similarly, Emilie constantly pressures Sam to leave with her, to make love to her, to marry her, to make some decision about his life and their life together *now*. She understands that the someday-we-will-marry future to which Sam refers is as empty as the dusty past to which his mother clings. As with Hub's proposed odyssey west, if Sam puts off their life together, if he has to "[wait] for courage to come" (65), it never will, nor will their marriage.

Emilie knows that opportunities missed seldom re-present themselves, and when they do they can be deadly. Sam, Sr., who got the second chance that J. W. says most people never get, is nonliving proof. Mr. Campbell says: "That's the unpardonable sin, isn't it? To want a second chance in life, where everybody gets only one real grab at fortune?" (401; 1:185).

Even Evelyn Weaver, who usually lives robustly and aggressively in the here and now, tries to peg Brian as an eternal, incorrigible Yankee turncoat, while he recognizes that the War is dead and gone. Certainly, he spends a great deal of time talking about it, but he also tells Evelyn Weaver in no uncertain terms that the present is of much greater concern to him than a dead past. Once again, the dialogue is lifted directly from the novel:

> Evelyn: So you and Mayhew MacComber is working together. And you was on the other side in the War.

Brian: Yep. We've worked together for years, and I ain't never shot at him yet.

Evelyn: Well, if Mayhew MacComber is big enough to forgive you, I say that speaks mighty well for him.

Brian: Forgive me! He ain't forgive me for nothing. And I ain't forgive him neither. He's still as big a lunkhead in politics as he ever was.

Evelyn: Then I reckon you hate each other. That ain't even Christian, Mister Ledbetter.

Brian: [Wearily] No, we don't hate each other, Mrs. Weaver. It's just that that we got oats to thresh. We got more important things to think about than the War. The War was back then; the oats is right now. (271;1:121-22)

In the novel, the "right now" of temporal reality is what Brian instinctively values most.

At this point, the play *The Coming of Rain* was not yet stageworthy. It tried to do too much, and it became cumbersome and unwieldy in the process. A novel such as this is big and flexible enough to hold and balance all of the events, characters, themes, and allusions that Marius wanted to explore. In a play, however, the elements of *The Coming of Rain* end up cluttering the landscape, and the story gets buried under components that do not propel it forward. Despite the fact that they are too talky, many of the individual scenes are compelling by themselves. However, collectively they do not hold together as a tight, cohesive theatrical unit.

CHAPTER THREE

Rain the play's story is a condensed and somewhat altered version of the story of the novel, and this compression leads to some alterations of the themes. This chapter will detail some of the major changes in the script as it moved through its twenty-three drafts and will discuss how the differences between the novel and the play grew as new drafts were written.

Most significantly in draft two, Brian Ledbetter is nowhere to be found. Marius hated to see him go, but he thought the cut necessary at the time. The novel holds Brian, barely. The play, at least draft one of it, clearly did not. His story crushes Sam's, and we become confused as to what story, exactly, we are being told. Removing this Leviathan of a character helped in other areas as well. Marius had acknowledged that the script was much too long. Cutting Brian cut the script roughly in half.

He mailed this second draft to ASF Literary Associate Eric Schmiedl upon completion on January 3, 1996. The following week he traveled to Montgomery to work on the script during the Southern Writers' Project Workshop. Veteran actor and ASF Associate Artist Greg Thornton worked with him in roughly shaping the play into the form it would be in when James Bohnen took over as director in October of 1997, although ASF Artistic Director Kent Thompson also conducted workshops with Marius early in 1997.

On the ninth of January draft three emerged. Draft one has thirty scenes; draft three has only twenty (see Chart III). The Hags open the play and immediately establish

themselves as a type of chorus. Their function is clear from the start. By making shortened appearances every second or third scene (with one exception, where they are absent for three scenes), they provide greater continuity than they do in draft one. Because some of their scenes in draft one are fairly lengthy, they sometimes slow the pace of the play. Their shortened appearances in draft three help the flow of the action.

However, Bazely and the Kansas Woman's appearance along with the Hags in scene one is a bit confusing. As an audience, we wonder, perhaps, if Bazely and the woman are the main characters. Their lines seem to belong at a later point in the play.

A problem that remains from draft one is that we do not see Emilie until almost a third of the way into the script. Sam and Sarah discuss her in scene four, but we have no clear reference for the German girl. True, she is probably not one of the first three primary characters, but her story is vital to Sam's. If Sam's coming-of-age tale is to emerge, we need to see Emilie fairly early in the script.

Instead, we first see her in scene seven (see Chart III:B). This scene is quite theatrical and is written with some wonderful possibilities for staging. Sarah's repeated appearances tell us that she is the divisive element in their developing relationship. However, again, the story is a little confused. Sam and Emilie meet and break up in the same scene. The relationship does not have time to develop clearly. Emilie appears again in scene eleven, but this flashback feels like a holdover from the story's original narrative mode. We are told important elements of the plot instead of seeing them happen. A spaced, chronological progression of the relationship would seem clearer.

A similar narrative-oriented rather than action-oriented problem exists in scene ten (see Chart III:B). Sarah tells us some important information, and now the lines are

written as if she is speaking to Sam, whereas they were not in draft one (see Chart II:C). However, the scene itself is simply not very interesting on stage; we still need some sort of interaction. If Sarah is addressing Sam, why not have Sam on stage?

In draft six he is. Not only is he in the scene, but he has obviously heard the speech so often that he joins in the telling (see Chart IV:A). In this scene, Marius adapted a technique he uses in *After the War*, when Brian Ledbetter tells one of his well-worn and familiar stories on Thanksgiving Day. The promise of his tale is met with some weariness. When Paul reveals that he has never heard of Gettysburg, most of the other guests are shocked, but Virgil says: "It's all right [. . .] Why should he know anything about Gettysburg? Mr. Campbell used to say we've got too many memories in this county. I say it'd be a good thing to let some of them die" (80). However, while telling his tale, Brian becomes a sort of Tennessean Homer, and his story is also met with some eager enthusiasm.

Gettysburg was formative for Brian. It helped create his identity. Similarly, the night the Union soldiers freed the slaves was formative for Sarah. As with Brian, her story is "all there, in lines honed and polished and stacked in clean rows in [her] mind so that to move one [is] to set them all in motion" (*After the War* 81). However, unlike Brian's, her story as she tells it in the play is met only with weariness:

> Sarah: I was alone, Sam, and Yankee soldiers were all over the valley.
>
> Sam: And you had my grandfather's pistol.
>
> Sarah: That's right, Sam, and they came. They rode up into the yard there.
>
> Sam: I know, Mamma. You've told it all before. (6:12)

The telling of her story is much more effective than that in draft three, where Sarah delivers a long monologue. *Hamlet* notwithstanding, dialogue is usually inherently more interesting that monologue on stage. Moreover, we get a clearer sense of how Sam is burdened with the weight of his mother's memory, and how he is unable to move on with his own life as long as he cannot shake off that burden:

> Sam: I know, Mamma. I know the story.
>
> Sarah: You can never hear it too much. You can pass it on to your children if you know it by heart.
>
> Sam: I don't have any children, Mamma. (6:13)

Implicit in his last statement is the fact that he will not have any children, at least not in the near future, because Sarah prevented him from marrying the woman he loved. (Sarah, of course, would be more than tickled for him to marry the daughter of a good Confederate soldier, such as the less-than-lovely daughter of Suellen MacComber.)

Another problem is remedied because Bazely and the Kansas Woman do not appear in scene one. In fact, she does not appear at all. Instead, Bazely tells of his crime in scene nine (see Chart IV:B). Otherwise, scene nine is much as it was in draft three, and it retains some troubling elements. As she does in the Sam and Emilie scene, Sarah appears, disappears, and re-appears. Marius wanted us to see what we understand quite easily in the novel. In Bazely's mind, the face of Sarah eventually replaces the face of this victim. As salvation and damnation become bound together for him, so do Sarah and the woman. However, this fact is not clear on stage if we have not read the novel. Instead, we simply wonder what Sarah is doing in the middle of this scene.

Scenes fifteen and seventeen of draft six, the major confrontation scenes at the end, are significantly different. (These are scenes seventeen and nineteen in draft three.) Sam does not leave the can of poison in J. W.'s office. Instead, he places it on Bazely's coffin. This gesture would be a vindictive blow to both Sarah and J. W., though it seems more justifiable than leaving the can for J. W. to find in his office. In this draft, he punishes his mother. In draft three, he simply punishes J. W. Certainly, J. W. was instrumental in the demise of Sam, Sr., and he feels tremendous guilt about what happened between his friend and Sarah, but we, as an audience, should understand that he was simply "careless." He never intended any ill will toward his friend. Sarah, on the other hand, might have loved her husband dearly, but she loves the Crittendon name and what she perceives as her own Southern honor even more. Unlike J. W., we cannot be charitable toward her. Her sin is not carelessness. She knowingly plans and commits an abominable act, and she is undeserving of Sam's forgiveness or ours.

Another important change is that the hags no longer close the play. This alteration seems a mistake. They open the script. They provide continuity by appearing in every other scene except scenes four and five. In their absence at the end, we do not get the same, full sense of closure that their presence would provide.

Kent Thompson took over as the director of *Rain* near the end of 1996, and he conducted Southern Writers' Project workshops with Marius in January of 1997. Draft seven was the initial result. A few lines are added, cut altered, and rearranged, but the number of scenes is the same. They fall in the same order, and their content is basically the same with a few fairly minor exceptions.

While draft seven closely resembles draft six, draft eleven-and-one-half, which was completed January 23, 1997, during this second workshop, is drastically different from either of these two. The order of the scenes is shuffled significantly, and some of the individual scenes are altered (see Chart V). For instance, Sarah's recital about the night the Yankee soldiers came and her marriage to Sam, Sr., formerly scene four, is now in scene six—the dinner scene between her and Sam. The inclusion of the speech in this scene seems natural. In draft six the memory is a separate scene, and it does not flow as smoothly into the arc of the action as it does in draft eleven-and-one-half.

Also in scene six, the Hags act as servants. When they are not serving, the stage directions call for them to stand perfectly still, statue-like. This technique helps us to understand an important element of the story. Marius has talked about a "black South" and a "white South." He says that the blacks of the 1800s knew white secrets because whites would do or say anything in front of them, as if the blacks were dogs or stumps. We never know for certain whether the Hags are supernatural, very observant, or both. In this scene, however, we understand more clearly than in earlier drafts that the Hags might know information they seemingly should not simply because they are keen listeners.

This understanding is strengthened during Bazely's anguished speech about the Kansas Woman in scene twelve (see Chart V:C). As Bazely talks, the Hags insert lines describing what he is experiencing. Later we discover that Old George saw Sarah burying the can of poison while `possum hunting one night, and the Hags might also be wanderers of the night. Perhaps they understand the preacher because they are supernatural, or perhaps they are standing outside of his door listening to his maniacal raving.

Another important change is that what was scene seven—the Sam, Emilie, and Sarah scene (see Chart IV:B)—is now broken into three scenes (see Chart V:C). Sam and Emilie meet in scene nine. Sam and Sarah argue about Emilie in scene ten. Scene eleven is the "tea party" scene, in which we get a fuller sense of the development of Sam and Emilie's relationship. The scenes link naturally by subject matter. However, we might get an even better understanding of that development if they did not come one on top of the other. With the ordering of the scenes in this draft, Sam and Emilie still meet and break up within about ten minutes of stage time.

Bazely's assault on Sarah also presents an important change. Despite the fact that Sarah still beats Bazely up and chases him off, she seems more vulnerable in this scene. There is more tension than in draft six because we are more afraid that the preacher might actually overpower her. However, more important than the scene's shift in content is its re-location. The attempted rape followed by Sarah's lines: "Oh God! Oh dear God, after I have endured so much, don't let it all fall down. Not now, oh God. NOT NOW" (11.5.56) now ends act one. This ending provides a much more compelling reason for the audience to come back for act two than having Sarah tell an absent Sam to "dream about [his] duty" (6:37).

The biggest changes in this draft come in the final two scenes (see Chart V:E). Now the confrontation between Sam and J. W. takes place in the Methodist graveyard where Sam's father is buried. Sam has sent word that J. W. is to meet him there. Symbolically, this setting *might* work, but it might also fail. Among other things, *Rain* is a type of ghost story, and setting a big climactic moment in a cemetery seems clichéd. Furthermore, the setting simply does not seem very realistic. If Sam wants to see J. W.,

he would most likely go to J. W.'s office, where the lawyer can probably be located. What is more, J. W. has had a terribly traumatic and wearying day, and he still has other duties to perform in attending the wake. It seems unlikely that he would come running to meet Sam in a graveyard after midnight in the middle of the worst storm in recent memory because some child asked him to, and it seems further unlikely that there would be any available children to act as messengers at such a time or under such conditions.

Aside from the setting, the most important alteration is that Sam now reveals the story he learned from the Hags. The tension increases. In draft six, J. W. thinks the confrontation is only about Sam, Sr.'s bigamy. Now, however, Sam, Sr.'s deed seems almost mild when compared with Sarah's. Of course J. W. says he does not believe Sam's revelation, but we suspect that, in the core of his heart, he does.

He has little choice but to believe it in the final scene, when Sam leaves the can of poison sitting on Bazely's coffin. Upon seeing the can, Sarah collapses, hysterical. Her world collapses much more quickly and with greater finality than in earlier drafts. We can guess, at least, what we know from *After the War*—that she becomes insane.

The Hags once again close the play, but now they do so within the same scene as the wake and fire, while other characters come back on stage. Their lines help with closure. However, in other scenes when they are serving their choric function, they are alone on stage. Having other characters join them while they deliver the final lines is almost distracting. Giving them a separate, short scene seems more appropriate.

The many changes that the script underwent were a fruitful but, at times, frustrating process, and Marius began to suspect that *Rain* as a play might never see production. James Bohnen changed his mind. He took over the directing of *Rain* in

October of 1997. The cast would eventually come to call him "the Jedi knight," and he was at least partially responsible for saving a project that was teetering on a precipice of abandonment. Marius vacationed in France the preceding summer, where he decided that *Rain* as a play was, if not dead, at least breathing its last gasps of artistic life. After he returned to the States, Kent Thompson called him to float Bohnen's name as a possible director. The writer claimed surprise, believing that Thompson had come to share his lack of optimism over a project that, at this point, had struggled to find form for over two years.

The artistic alliance of Marius and Bohnen proved successful. The playwright objected to some of the textual changes the director made, but he also recognized Bohnen's talent. He spoke openly and affectionately of how much he enjoyed collaborating with Bohnen, and he even suggested that perhaps they should work on another theatrical endeavor at some point in the future.

Bohnen prepared for his new job by first reading the novel. The second thing he did was have Marius resuscitate Brian. A dilemma arose. Marius said that removing Brian, though difficult for him emotionally as a writer, was not hard to accomplish in the script. However, after Brian was gone, putting him back in presented a huge chore. How could the novelist-turned-playwright write a "little Brian"?

The answer was he could not, but Marius did shrink the character significantly. Perhaps the biggest step in scaling Brian down involved the removal of Evelyn, Virgil, and the rest of the Weaver brood. With their removal, Brian exists as a true supporting character. We miss the "romance" (or what might more accurately be termed "the lack of

romance") between Evelyn and him, but her removal allows the play a balance that was lacking in the first draft while also allowing for Brian's existence.

Marius completed draft seventeen December 26, 1997. Now, Brian's first appearance is at the hanging, where he whacks the gun from Bazely's hand with his cane (see Chart VI). Despite the tense situation, we get a glimpse of Brian's ribald humor. Bazely says, "Curse you, Brian Ledbetter. Curse you." Brian responds wryly, "Lord, Bazely, why don't you just say goddam and get it over with" (17:15).

Later in the same scene, Sam states that Sarah says he looks like Matthew Crittendon. Brian replies with a long, derogatory statement about Sam's uncle. J. W. finally has to interrupt and tell him to shut up. Brian's line is funny, but it also quickly establishes the fact—or at least the notion—that Sarah's rosy view of their family tree might be somewhat skewed.

The Hags still get the first and final word, but having a Sam and Emilie scene early in the play quickly establishes Sam as the central character. In draft one, the second scene is the hanging scene, and we are also introduced to J. W., Hub, Bazely, Charlotte, and others, so that Sam does not quickly emerge as the primary character, if he does at all. Having Emilie appear early in the script also gives the audience a quick, clear reference for this disruptive force that has entered Sam's life. In scene four we now know precisely why Sam despises Bazely. In scenes seven and twelve, we have a fuller understanding of the tension between Sam and Sarah about Emilie (see Chart VI:B).

The scene following the hanging scene in draft seventeen is still Sam with the Hags, but scene six now introduces us to a completely new and what will become a highly important element of the play (see Chart VI:B): we meet the Gossips. The

Gossips are one of the dramatic gems that neither Marius the playwright nor Bohnen the director conceptualized individually, but the team of Marius and Bohnen produced collectively. The director asked the playwright for some cover dialogue to fill scene changes. He suggested that perhaps various townspeople chatting about current events might do the job. Marius responded with the Gossips, and these characters, whose original function was to fill dead air, quickly outgrew their initial restraints. They came to fill multiple plot, thematic, and character roles. First of all, it became quickly apparent that their stage time would not be constrained to match the time it took to change the sets. They continued to chatter long after the last chair was moved and the last box turned. However, any audience member who dismissed them as mere comic relief missed eighty percent of what they were about.

They are a reverse image of the Hags. Obviously, the Gossips' white is the reverse image of the Hags' black, but Marius took us well below and beyond the surface of the skin. He showed us what it means to be white and to be black in the East Tennessee of the 1880s, and just as their skin colors are reverse images of each other, so are their histories, their values, their speech patterns, and, most importantly, their perceptions of truth.

In early drafts of the novel the Hags number three, but in the final, published version there are two sisters. In the play the Hags are once more three, at least partially in order to reflect Shakespeare's Wyrd sisters. As with the witches from the Scottish play, we are never certain whether they predict events, set events in motion, or both (although the last of these three seems most likely). Whether they are true fortune tellers, or, as Brian puts it, simply "three old nigger women" and "wore out old whores looking

for some way to make a living" (17:73), they see and tell the truth. Their facts are straight. Maybe they are supernatural, or maybe they get their facts because members of the black South see aspects of the white South that its members would never see for themselves. Perhaps both.

Whatever source of truth the three Hags are tapped into, the three Gossips are not similarly gifted. Unlike the Hags who get everything right, the Gossips get *everything* wrong. The day before the hardest flood in the history of the valley, Gossip One assures us, "Of course it ain't going to rain. Lordy, Lordy. If it was going to rain, my joints would ache." She is also positive that Sam has broken his mother's heart by "carrying on" with Emilie, whom she calls "that French girl" (17:26).

Likewise, her accomplice in ignorance, Gossip Two, tells us:

> I knowed that girl and her folks was up to no good the minute they come into town on that wagon. Lilly Belle Atkins told me that she heard Maudie May Oxendine said that that girl's daddy had told Mr. Campbell that his girl intended to marry Sam Beckwith because Sam Beckwith was rich. Maudie May got the story direct from Eustace Burleson whose feed store is right next to Mr. Campbell's office. That's right out of the horse's mouth. (17:27)

Of course the absurdity of the story is self-evident, but we also know that Emilie is anything but a gold digger. She is perfectly willing to ride away with Sam on the spur of the moment, without even the five hundred dollars he has saved. She assures him that they can sleep on the ground or steal or do whatever it takes to be together and away from the suffocating presence of Sarah.

Gossip Two wonders what Sam and Emilie could be doing on their morning rides together through the woods. Gossip One responds: "Well, I reckon we don't need no school book to tell us that, Ida May. We know men, don't we. Ain't we both got husbands? Ain't they men?" (17:50). Meanwhile, of course, the audience knows that it was the female member of the couple in question who tried to seduce the other.

Later, after the injured Hub saves the life of Mr. Campbell by shooting Bazely, the Gossips appear on the scene almost immediately. They quickly conclude that, despite the fact that he was brandishing a gun, the preacher never would have shot J. W. Indeed, "he might have just wanted to talk" (80). Their assertion of skewed facts demonstrates one manner in which the Gossips present a reverse image of the Hags. Lies are an inverted image of truth. Gossip is usually mean spirited at its core, and there is something at least slightly vicious in the banter among the Gossips. However, to call them a trio of liars is a little harsh. True, they take unseemly pleasure in discussing the private lives and misfortunes of others, but their dishonesty is born as much from ignorance as it is from deliberate mendacity.

Whether they are intentionally vicious or not, the three white women have little regard for the truth. On the other hand, we sense that the Hags have no alternative but to tell the truth. This apparent mandate of veracity seems to indicate they do have supernatural powers. If they seem to tell the truth about everything, why would they not also be honest about their abilities to predict the future, especially when one of the fortunes they had to tell was as unpleasant as the upcoming death of one of the few white men who had ever treated them with kindness and respect? When Sam happens upon them, they say:

Third: Your pappy's funeral go right by here that day. Oh, it was sad, a long procession, sad and slow and white folks weeping and carrying on, and you poor mamma dressed all in black and crying like she'd die herself.

First: We was sad, too. Your pappy was a friend to black folks.

Second: Can we read your hand, boy? For a nickel we can read the future, tell you what is to be.

Sam: No, I don't think so.

Third: We read the hand of your pappy.

First: Right here, where you be standing, fifteen year ago.

Second: We tell him he's gonter die.

Sam: You told him he would die?

First: We didn't want to. But if somebody give us a nickel, we got to tell them the truth. (17: 22-3)

They did not want to tell this truth but were compelled to.

The Gossips, on the other hand, seem to have a mandate of mendacity. However, the Gossips do much more than invert the Hags. They fill in for the awkward appearances of characters such as Mrs. Janeway, who no longer needs to make a brief appearance in order to express her desire to yank Sam bald-headed. Instead, Gossip Two tells us: "You know what Mrs. Walter Abernathy done. She went straight to Sam Beckwith, Jr. and she give him a piece of her mind. She told him he made her so mad she wanted to pull ever hair in his head out by the roots. That's what she said direct to his face. She told him that if he was her son she wouldn't feed him. She said she'd

starve some sense into his head" (17:50). Unlike Mrs. Janeway, the Gossips are established characters at this point. This line fits naturally into their banter.

Draft twenty-one was completed January 19, 1998, during the third workshop. Its form is similar to that of seventeen. However, some of the scenes have been re-located, and much of the dialogue has been changed.

Scene two, or what James Bohnen termed Sam and Emilie's "Malt Shop Scene" in honor of *Our Town*, is now followed by a Hag scene which is in turn followed by the hanging. In both versions, the hanging scene starts with Bazely's mad prayer which quotes *Revelations*. In draft seventeen we know exactly why Sam despises Bazely. In draft twenty-one we are not positive, but we can make an educated guess, especially since the Preacher still says to Sam: "And you, you fornicator. You have broken your dear mother's heart, and you deserve to die like that criminal in there. I have seen thine adulteries, thine abominations on the hills, in the fields" (17:14; 21:13). More importantly, however, we no longer jump from place to place in the development and final dissolution of the relationship between Sam and Emilie. Instead, we follow the growth of their love chronologically, which is clearer for an audience.

Scene seven remains the "Three Amigos" scene, which, after initial incarnations as "Two Amigos" and "Four Amigos," finds a balance it lacked in early drafts. Marius wanted a "moment of calm" amid the violent upheaval of surrounding events. Now he has it, instead of a moment of theatrical stasis that earlier drafts of the scene display. We also get a moment of character development, humor, and history. We hear enough about the imminent death of General Grant to understand that his passing marks a major

milestone in the lives of these three men, but we do not get lost in endless musings about the war.

Act two scene two has Sam and Brian at the older man's spring. Brian puts another piece of the puzzle in place by telling of Bazely's love for Sarah. He also confirms the Hags' story of having predicted Sam, Sr.'s death. He no longer describes them as "three old nigger women," and the offensive word is completely absent in this draft. (It is reinstated in extremely specific, strategic places in the final draft.)

Act two scene five is significantly changed. Both drafts seventeen and twenty-one focus on the confrontation between Mr. Campbell and Sam. However, draft seventeen is set in a graveyard, in front of Sam, Sr.'s tombstone, while the later draft returns the scene to the lawyer's office, which seems more realistic. Draft seventeen has the younger Beckwith tell of his father's murder. Twenty-one opens more efficiently and dramatically with Sam just having told the story. The first line is Campbell's: "It's a damnable lie. A damnable, damnable lie, and you're a fool for listening to it, and you're a damned fool for coming here with that story" (21:91).

In both versions Sam has found the can of arsenic, and he shows it to J. W. Where draft seventeen concludes with the lawyer saying: "We'll sleep on it, Sam. We'll talk about it tomorrow. We'll laugh about it. A good night's sleep. That's what we both need. Sleep restores the soul. Let's get our horses" (17:109). Twenty-one ends much more dramatically: the younger man "rushes out as though driven by the furies." His exit is followed by the older man calling after him: "Sam . . . . Forgive her!" (21:98).

In writing on the art of writing, Marius comments on the circle essay, which ends with the same general topic that it began with. The technique can achieve many

objectives, but chief among them is to effect a sense of closure with an audience. Marius uses a similar device with his script to aid closure. The script begins with the Hags making general statements about seeing the past, present, and future, and also about their ability to see elements of the white world that "white folks . . . . don't want to know" (21:1). The play leads to its concluding line by having the three Hags make fairly specific comments about Sam, Jr. and the spirit of Sam, Sr. However, the final line comments on their understanding of the white world:

> Second: Now he's free, sisters.
>
> Third: His pappy's spirit can rest now. We can all rest.
>
> First Hag: [Looking to audience] We knows all dem white folks. But they don't listen to us. We knows dem all. (21:107)

Draft twenty-one is close in form and substance to the final draft. However, a number of important changes were made during rehearsal before the performance-ready script emerged. The script in its final version and its performance at The Alabama Shakespeare Festival will be the focus of the final chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

The final version of the script worked well as a theatrical vehicle, and the production was a success. As a result, for the most part, audiences spoke favorably of it, and in general, reviewers did as well. Thomas Harrison of *The Mobile Register* titled his review "ASF Production Has Ring of Truth," and Fred Goossen of *The Tuscaloosa News* corroborated this statement. He wrote:

> The interaction between familial and societal customs, actions and transgressions makes for a powerful evening in the theater. Nothing that happens in *The Coming of Rain* strains credibility. No "suspension of disbelief" is required to accept the plot and its working-out. It is vital, strong and true on every level. (H1+6)

The vitality of the play was the result of a long, intense struggle, as most good writing and acting are. Neil Simon says that writing is not difficult at all, but Neil Simon inspires laughter, not thought. Richard Marius inspires both, but *Rain* the play necessarily inspires a different type of thought from *Rain* the novel. Many of the characters' characteristics have been altered, the plot is simplified, and some of the themes have shifted.

Of course, the presentation of the characters was now out of the hands of Marius and in the hands of the actors. Greta Lambert said in an early rehearsal (26 Jan. 1998) that she was concerned that Sarah would "come off as a loud bitch" throughout the play, where in the novel she uses gentle manipulation. She commented that she wanted to

make Sarah "richly human," not a Southern, crazy lady cliché, but she also said of herself in the role of Sarah: "I am looney."

Bohnen contradicted her, saying that Sarah is "stark, raving sane." She is in constant tension, or as he phrased it, "stretched very tightly all the time . . . but very human." He said that he wanted women audience members to think to themselves of Sarah: "That could be me." At this same 26 January rehearsal, he went on to suggest that Sarah sees her heritage and legacy as bigger than individual lives. That does not make her crazy; it makes her determined.

This early discussion (and others) of Sarah's character found fruition in production. Sarah Beckwith is richly human, and Greta Lambert played her with an accomplished complexity that only the finest thespians can achieve. She probably captured the essence of her character more thoroughly than any other actor in the production. She was, by turns, girlish, maternal, flirtatious, combative, and, at one point, priapic. Bohnen told her in a 9 February 1998 rehearsal that while she was dusting and speaking to Sam, Sr.'s portrait before Bazely entered and assaulted her: "We want to see sexual energy oozing out. What I love about that is that it's unlike anything else we see in the entire rest of the play. She is real. She does have longings." This scene is one of the few where she is vulnerable, and her vulnerability is accented when Bazely assaults her. Before February 9, Lambert usually had her character chasing Bazely and shooting as he ran off the stage. This rehearsal was the first one where she shot at the fleeing psychopath from her knees, a choice the director approved of heartily. He said: "I love that! You on your knees instead of chasing him. It makes you much more vulnerable. It explains so much." However, despite this vulnerability, with rare exceptions, she always

wins her fights. She wins with Sam, Sr. by killing him. She wins—until the final scene—with Sam, Jr. by using precisely the kind of gentle manipulation Lambert spoke of earlier. She knows he loves her, and she uses that love to twist him into what she wants. She wins with Bazely by doing exactly what he accuses her of (one of the few things Bazely sees clearly): she toys with him until he goes completely mad. When toying no longer works, she physically fights him off, a testament to the iron strength beneath the soft demeanor. With the exception of Sam, Jr. in the final scene, the only person she does not win with is Emilie, so she simply refuses to fight by leaving the room.

Emilie, another strong, determined woman, is also a character who is used to winning her fights. As Emilie, Elizabeth Long turned in a nice performance. She adequately captured Emilie's strength, and we sensed that perhaps Sam sees the same sort of iron will in her that Sarah possesses, only Emilie's is an honest, at times brazen power. At the same 26 January 1998 rehearsal, Elizabeth Long suggested that Emilie is brazen at times because she is an only child, and she is used to getting what she wants. Nothing in the text suggests that Emile is an only child, but nothing contradicts this assessment either, and Long could certainly decide for herself that her character has no siblings. However, while her assertion might well have been true, it might also have been a bit of an oversimplification. James Bohnen suggested that since Emilie has no roots, she has an innate belief that people simply make choices, then find a way to make them work. Long agreed and said that perhaps Emilie's forwardness is the result of always having to be the one to make the friends. Bohnen reminded all of his actors to remember that she is not a

late twentieth-century character, and, considering the period to which she belongs, her forward manner is extremely rare in a woman, especially a young woman.

We certainly see her forwardness in every scene she occupies. She undresses and attempts to seduce Sam. She also introduces herself to him, another taboo. Early in the rehearsal process Long played the scene so that the introduction was not quite so forward but was, instead, "accidental." This early "accidental" staging had her rushing about the stage in preparation for Sam's entrance, then assuming a casual posture as if she believed herself to be entirely alone. Played in this manner, the scene did not work, and it did not establish Emilie's character. The scene worked much better as she played it late in the rehearsal process and in production. She is precisely the sort of character who might walk up to a young man she has not met and say: "Hello, my name is Emilie" (script: 3). Moreover, she reveals shortly afterward that she has already asked other people about Sam. As it was staged in production, the scene even suggested that she followed Sam to his "secret" place.

She is equally brazen in the tea party scene but, at least partially, for different reasons. James Bohnen suggested that she is one of those rare people who can be very passionate or emotional while remaining remarkably clear-headed. He also suggested, however, that she becomes tactless in this scene at first because she is nervous, but then "she loses her cool and decides to shove it in Sarah's face." Sarah feels threatened and uses sophistication to fight. Emilie then asserts her own worldliness, thereby undermining the older woman's refinement (26 Jan. 1998).

Probably the only other character with any real sophistication in the play is J. W. He thinks of himself as a fixer. He stands as a beacon of clarity and sanity against

Bazely, and he solves problems that less intelligent or less educated characters cannot solve for themselves. This self-assessment is at the heart of his guilt and anger about what happened to Sam, Sr. He was supposed to solve problems—not simply in his professional capacity, but for his friends as well. Instead he caused a fatal problem for someone he considered to be one of the best men he had ever known. He then went on to exacerbate that problem. At a Sunday February 9th rehearsal, Bohnen said of Sam, Sr.'s first wife: "Remember, Philip, as a smart man you missed a *real* obvious two plus two." This lack of understanding made J. W. angry, but even worse was when he tried to solve the problem he had caused and failed. Bohnen continued: "You are angry because you thought the lawyerly thing would work, but it didn't."

However, while Bohnen wanted the audience to see J. W.'s anger as the confrontation progressed, he also said that in the first part of the scene that J. W. could "enjoy this a lot more. These are good, funny memories." Enjoying these memories may have been right for this scene, but this enjoyment also led to one of the major problems with the final scene. Philip Pleasants asked for clarification of Marius's stage direction that J. W. should be "worn and sad," and Bohnen told the actor to ignore the direction. "Worn and sad" may not have been right for J. W. in all of this scene, but it certainly *seemed* right for the final scene.

In the final scene, Philip Pleasants made a rare, questionable choice. Here Sarah had shed her customary black and was adorned instead in an elegant, purple dress. Campbell's reaction to her suggested anything but the staggering burden of ill news that should be weighing him down. He feels a paternal love for Sarah her entire life. He has no faith in an afterlife or a spiritual, master plan for the universe. He has lost his wife and

then his son. He has just discovered that he not only lost his surrogate son in Sam, Sr. but his surrogate daughter has poisoned the elder Beckwith because of a chain of events that he, J. W., set in motion. His despair should be even greater because he knows, or at least suspects, that he is about to lose a potential second surrogate son in Sam, Jr. However, Pleasants' portrayal suggested that despair was the furthest emotion from his mind. He and Sarah spent most of the scene with small, lusty smiles playing about their lips while they eyed each other in an overtly sexual manner. He should have been staring into a deep, emotional abyss. Instead, he saw a pretty woman in a nice dress and was ready to cart her off to the hayloft. Indeed, when the voice yelled "Fire!" (script: 106) the audience was much more aware of the heat on stage than off. In his comments to Bohnen on the production, Marius wrote:

> The closing scene gave me lots and lots and lots of trouble. When you called me to ask about a possible sexual attraction between Sarah and J. W., I agreed that there might be such a feeling because (I suppose) I would feel a sexual attraction to a female statue. I think sex is always present in our perceptions, and I think J. W.'s fondness for Sarah in the scene immediately after Bazely's death can be paternal or even sexual. But I was startled to see Philip play the last scene with that almost passionate affection for Sarah. It jarred me terribly. I liked it much, much, much better the way Philip has always played that scene before as I thought it had to be played. Here is a man growing old, having been condemned to stay all his life in a town he doesn't like because he hopes that his son may come back to him, and he has lost a surrogate son, and now another

> possible surrogate son comes to him with the message that Sarah has poisoned that surrogate. Philip used to play that scene in a mood of dumbfounded and sorrowing resignation, the attitude of a man who has taken many blows now taking another that almost destroys him, and yet his stoic resolve makes him keep on trying to do the right thing. I wrote that scene both in the book and in the play with the thought that Mr. Campbell would find the whole evening almost unbearable, that Sarah's effusion of happiness would collide on the bleak, granite face of this grief and unbelief. Campbell is an atheist. Yet he comes onto the stage in that last scene like a man resolved to believe the better thing even if in his heart of hearts he cannot. (16 Mar. 1998)

Such unfortunate choices, however, were few. For the most part, Pleasants built a solid and sympathetic character. As J. W., he presented us with a hardened surface, but there was sympathy in his face, and we got frequent glimpses of the strength, intelligence, humor, honor, and—except in the final scene—sorrow beneath. Because of the mostly strong, consistent, and honest portrayal, his concupiscence for Sarah grated doubly, like a flubbed trill in an otherwise expertly played Mozart minuet.

Andrew Long as Preacher Henck also made some questionable decisions about his character. Marius said he loved hearing his words come to life on stage, but they sometimes made him squirm as well. An example was the delivery of Preacher Henck's response to Campbell's question about the voice of God near the end of the play:

> J. W: At least God spoke to Job out of the whirlwind at the last. I have never heard God speak, Mr. Henck. Did you hear God speak in the

whirlwind today? Did you hear God in that storm?

Henck: I hear the voice of God every day, John. When I ride my horse on the road, when I preach the Word. Yes, I heard the voice of God in the storm out there today.

J. W: I should be most interested to know what the voice of God told you today.

Henck: The voice of God tells me to wait, John. It tells me to be patient, and it tells me God is just. If you don't mind, I'll read the scripture. (script: 105)

Marius intended the discussion between Henck and J. W to be a fragment of a serious, ongoing, theological debate. J. W., Bazely, and Henck are meant to be the corners of a theological triangle whose separate planes reflect different, serious spiritual beliefs, yet we got little sense of serious spirituality from Long's Henck. Instead, he reduced the character to banality and the moment to a quick laugh. The playwright wanted the "patience" line to indicate humankind must wait patiently to understand the invisible world connecting and explaining the inexplicable chaos of the temporal world. The actor, on the other hand, delivered the line as if God were telling him to be patient with insufferable, outspoken nonbelievers such as J. W. Marius wrote to Bohnen of the portrayal:

> And I objected passionately to playing Mr. Henck as a fool. He is a tough old bird. (He was my grandfather, Frederick William Henck.) He has ridden thirty miles through the most god-awful storm in memory, and he understands the ultimate religious dilemma that people yearn to believe

> in God and have no empirical reason for doing so. That is the faith of some fools, but it is also the faith of martyrs, and the book of Job was not written for fools. I meant him to speak the most profound statement of religious belief that anyone can utter. It is not a belief I happen to share. But it is a powerful statement running through the Western tradition, not at all uniquely Christian, but passing through the Inquisition and the Holocaust, and I didn't mean for it to be mocked. I wondered why you changed the line, "I heard your daddy preach in the old days." That line conveys a sense of affection and long knowledge. To say, "And your daddy was a preacher" makes it almost sound like mockery, as if he's saying to J.W., "Take that!" I think the guy playing Mr. Henck could just as well play him as the tough old salt he is, standing toe to toe with J.W. and slugging it out and in fact getting the last word. (16 Mar. 1998)

Bohnen, of course, changed the "Daddy preach" line for entirely practical reasons. The actor playing Henck easily could have been thirty years the junior of J. W. His youthful appearance told us he never heard Campbell's daddy do anything.

Bohnen either missed the nuance of what Marius intended, or he deliberately made a different choice. To the casual observer, or maybe even the seriously involved participant, the change in the line might seem so slight that it is almost trivial. It does, after all, still reveal the reason for the ironic naming of the town atheist as John Wesley Campbell. To Marius, however, the line speaks volumes. Henck should both have disagreed with and respected J. W., as he demanded respect for himself and his own beliefs. Long's portrayal reduced Henck to a smug, self-satisfied dolt.

However, most of the actors turned in powerful performances, and Greg Thornton's of Bazely is an example. He was appropriately horrific, his face set like hard, cold, unsympathetic granite through most of his scenes, his dark eyes smoldering with intense hatred. We saw the granite-like surface break only when he asked God for a sign in his initial scene, when he assaulted the Kansas Woman, and finally and most importantly when he attempted to rape Sarah. These breaks in his hardened composure were especially powerful because we saw the insanity that roiled beneath, particularly when he attacked Sarah. Significantly, these were all essentially private scenes. True, the Kansas Woman joined him in one and Sarah in another. However, he forever silenced the Kansas Woman, and we can safely assume that if Sarah had not fought him off, he would have done the same to her. At a 28 January 1998 rehearsal, Bohnen told Thornton that he wanted to see a big shift in Bazely the private man and Bazely the public man. These breaks in composure gave the director what he asked for.

Because Marius continued to play with the lines up until the last possible moment, Bohnen continued to rearrange his blocking as well, and remarkable changes were made in the short lapse between the first preview and opening night. One example of such a change was the staging of the immediate aftermath of Bazely's rape and murder. Up to and including the previews, all stagings of this scene had Bazely's victim lying dead before him, usually with her head cocked in such a way as to suggest a broken neck. However, opening night the scene was staged so that as Bazely delivered his line, the spirit of his victim approached him slowly from the rear, then stood looking over his shoulder into the audience. The image wonderfully conveyed the message that his crime would haunt him for the rest of his days and would aid in his self-destruction.

Thornton seemed to feel freer than any of the other actors to tinker with his lines and request changes. For instance, at a 9 February 1998 rehearsal he was unhappy with his line "You've broken my arm," because if his arm is broken in the first scene, he either could not use or would have limited use of it for the rest of the play. Bohnen told him he would cut the line, and rather than being broken, Bazely's arm has a "bone bruise." At a 28 January 1998 rehearsal, Thornton said simply that he was going to "ignore stage directions." He went on to say that when he speaks of Simson, he was uncomfortable with the line "black cinder of his soul." It was cut. He continued by commenting that something was missing in the confrontation between his character and Pleasants's when J. W. said of Simson to Bazely, "He hasn't said a word since he killed the woman." Thornton, Pleasants, and Bohnen discussed the line and decided it would be clearer as: "He won't answer. He hasn't said a word since he killed the woman."

These changes are only a few examples of why the production script is not entirely Marius's. Usually, playwrights attend rehearsals for first runs of their work, and they revise as necessary. Frequently, they even attend rehearsals for subsequent runs and do even more revision. Of course Marius worked with great energy and enthusiasm during the workshops, but he simply could not attend six weeks of regular rehearsals; the not so small duty of teaching at Harvard kept him away. As a result, he and Bohnen faxed and called each other regularly to discuss changes. However, a few changes were not discussed, and a few lines ended up in the script that Marius was unhappy with. For instance, in the scene when Emilie and Sam first met in performance, Sam said: "Sometimes I ride up here before dawn. For a while all you can see is the mist, and feel the dew, and then the sun rises and the sky fills with fire . . . well, it's sure pretty." The

line's poetic language contrasted with its simplistic and somewhat awkward ending usually got a laugh, and the two actors in the scene were comfortable with it. However, Marius was unhappy with it, and he was particularly unhappy that he was not asked about its inclusion. In his 16 March 1998 letter to Bohnen, he wrote:

> The first scene with Sam and Emilie worked beautifully. I was very pleased with the way Harry pulled off the denial when Emilie said, "You're a poet." The audience laughed when he said he slept all the way home and didn't see a thing, and I thought that was a sweet moment. I did not like the line you gave Sam about the mist in the grass, the sun rising, and all that. It seemed to come from outer space, and I certainly did not write it like that, and I thought it was clumsy and off character entirely. I wish you had consulted me before you stuck it in. I winced both times when Harry delivered it, but it passed quickly, and the general serenity came back. It would be all right in exposition, but it sounded corny as dialogue. And besides that, it was in the wrong place in the development of the conversation.

Eventually, Harry Carnahan portrayed Sam well, but there were a few times early in the run when he did not seem entirely connected to his character. This disconnection was probably a result of rehearsal, where he frequently did not seem completely involved, and the true "listening" that needs to go on between actors during the discovery process was not always present. The fluidity of the text seemed to give him problems, so he was given to saying lines that neither Marius nor Bohnen had written. However, as the production moved into the heart of its run, he nailed his character more thoroughly.

Occasionally he substituted vocal volume for acting detail, but we followed his progression from a confused, malleable boy to a determined man. We saw the change most clearly when he confronted J. W. When he left the Hags we were unsure of the course he would take. At that point he refused to accept the truth, attempting, instead, to dismiss the Hags' story as a "nigger tale" (one of only three places where the word is used in the final script). When he confronted J. W, however, he had accepted the truth. He had evidence in hand, and he now demanded that the lawyer accept the truth as well. His final action, leaving, but taking the can of poison with him, told us that, despite all, he truly loved his mother. However, he would no longer dance at the end of her strings. He shed her, his past, and went to build a different and, we hope, better future.

Rodney Clark's Ledbetter was solid, though audience members who knew the book kept waiting for the huge Brian of mythic proportions to come strolling across the stage. Of course he could not, and he was not intended to. Marius said that Clark "has Brian right down to the fingernails," and given Ledbetter's reduced role and proportions, the playwright was entirely correct. Clark's constant half-smile was not a smirk. He laughed at the world, but not viciously. He was brave when he needed to be, such as when he defended Sam from the pistol-wielding Bazely. He also gave what he believed to be sound advice to Sam when he urged the younger man to forget going West.

In the Three Amigos Scene, we readily accepted the deep camaraderie and affection between Ledbetter, Hub, and J. W. We did not need to be told that he and his friends had spent night after night for the past twenty years re-hashing history and drinking whiskey together. We saw it in their relaxed conversation and gentle ribbing. Bohnen said he wanted the audience to *feel* their history without having to be told much

of it. We did. Marius complained that the scene was truncated and too fast, but perhaps he was too close to the material to see that it nicely provided what he wanted--a moment of calm in the midst of the surrounding apocalyptic events. The fact that it no longer slowed those events or the pace of the play is a credit, not a hindrance. True, much was lost when the story was broken down to its most basic elements, but now it held an audience's attention. It *moved.*

It did so in large part because of the choric Hags and Gossips. They linked the scenes nicely, the Hags giving history and the Gossips creating alternate histories. Each of the Gossips took her turn at the reins of the unseen buggy as they bounced across the countryside, and their comic dialogue was doubly funny because of their desperate clinging to hats and, as they jounced their way toward the wake, their wild balancing of their various dishes. Ida May took the reins in this final ride, and her no-nonsense slap of the reins told us that the unlucky horse in front better move and fast. Jennifer Thomas as Henrietta responded appropriately to the frenetic equine pace, and on more than one occasion she nearly sent her "chicken . . . fried in a kettle of lard" sailing into the audience.

The Gossips were not needed and had no place in the novel, but they are a key element to the play. The story of the play is not the same as the novel's, and the original influences are largely obscured. We certainly still feel *The Bible*, and we see how dangerous organized religion can be in the hands of a man like Thomas Bazely. Marius has said that Martin Luther was a catastrophe for the Western world, and Bazely is certainly a catastrophe for the small world of Bourbon County. He contributes to the death of Sam, Sr. If the consummation between Sam and Emilie were completed, then

surely their status as a couple would be cemented, but Bazely interrupts, and their relationship disintegrates. The preacher keeps Sarah in a kind of emotional and psychological prison for fifteen years. However, as an audience, we did not fully understand, as we do in the novel, that his twisted view of religion and salvation led to these events. We know in the novel that he seeks redemption in Sarah rather than God. In the play, despite his twisted love for her, we got only the vaguest notion that Bazely saw Sarah as salvation.

In the production script, Bazely's original atrocities are committed during the Civil War. We still feel the weight of the War, and we see that the men who fought it have a far different view of it from those who did not. This fact is best illustrated by contrasting Sarah's vision of the conflict with the views of Brian, Hub, and J.W. She says:

> I'm sorry, Sam. I can't help the way I feel. I think about you and what I want for you—what I want for us—and I think about the things our men fought for. *Purity*, Sam! Oh, don't laugh. They fought for *purity*. It was the noblest thing anybody ever dreamed of. It makes me want to cry when I think you never can see what I have seen. All we can do is try to be true to all those people who died, Sam. Can't you understand? I have a responsibility to you and for all the things my family loved. If I had not said what I thought about that girl—
>
> Sam: She had a name, Mamma. It was Emilie.
>
> Sarah: If I had not said what I thought I would have dishonored every

> spirit in this house from the past. Besides, I don't think you really loved her at all. (script: 5)

Sarah honored the spirits but not necessarily the living. She killed Sam, Sr. so that she could pay tribute to a reconstructed past that suited the way she wished to view the world. Hub, J. W., and Brian, meanwhile, have a much more pragmatic view of the conflict. From them we get little sense, however, as we do in the novel, that Civil War veterans also had a different view of the world in general and—with the exception of Bazely, the disruptive element—a greater appreciation of life than those who did not. Hub, J. W., and Brian still discuss the war, of course, but the Three Amigos Scene is brief now, and the awe and mystery they feel for the war does not have time to develop. In the introduction to *The Columbia Book of Civil War Poetry*, Marius writes of Civil War veterans what he implies of the three friends in the novel:

> Yet despite its horror, for its survivors the war was the most intense experience of their lives. Nothing afterward was the same. Some discovered, long before Wallace Stevens put the thought into words, that death was the mother of beauty. The senses were heightened with the desperate knowledge that time and death were speeding, that a vigorous young man astride his horse in the sun might be a mutilated corpse in an hour, in weeks an anonymous skeleton in an unmarked grave. Men learned that they were capable of bravery they could not have imagined before the war. Afterward they recalled their own deeds with amazement, although in a trance of mysterious recognition they remembered strangers

> on a stage doing incredible things. And momentary fragments of lost days glittered in their memories. (xxx)

In the play, ghost-like memory still drapes itself like a death shroud across the parched landscape. Bazely's memory of the Kansas woman he raped and killed coupled with his futile desire for Sarah drives him insane, and J. W. broods for his lost son. The most overt statement about how devastating the wrong kind of memory can be comes from J. W.'s mouth. He says:

> Hub's right. We all remember too much. I remember my lost son. Memory is choking the county to death. Memory is a rag in our throats, the principal possession of our estate. That, my friends, is the supreme injustice. We grub around in the garbage of our past and unroll memory. We devour it in banquets of recollection, and we choke on it, but at the instant we expire we manage to jerk the damned thing out of our own mouths and stuff it down the throats of our children, and we die secure in the knowledge that they will choke on the same poison that killed us. (script: 40)

His account of memory, at least as it is applied within the context of the play, is entirely accurate. However, despite his perceptive and passionate observation, he is unable to escape its stranglehold. In the final script, we only know that he lost a son, but beneath the surface we know he believes he failed his son. He sits in judgment of himself, unable to escape memory's hold.

On the other hand, for Sam Beckwith, his own memories—except for those of Emilie—are not what weigh upon him. Instead his ancestors sit in judgment, and they look unhappy. When he first meets Emilie he says of the mountains:

> When spring gets up there in a couple of weeks, they will be covered with a blue haze, and you can't see the trees. I heard that the Indians said the Great Spirit smoked his pipe every summer, and his smoke rose up and blessed the mountains. Sometimes I close my eyes and wish that when I open them I'd find everything as it was before we all came.
>
> Emilie: But then you would not have your land and your big house with all the pictures of your family in it.
>
> Sam: My God, you do know a lot about us!
>
> Emilie: People do talk, Samuel Beckwith, Jr.
>
> Sam: I get tired of the pictures. They all look cross. Not my father. He looks a little scared.
>
> Emilie: But they are your family.
>
> Sam: I wish one soul in the whole bunch looked happy. All those eyes on me day and night! I come up here to get away from them all. Where did you come from? (script: 4)

In his small way, Sam is already trying to get away from the haunting presence of his ancestors, but he cannot until he leaves the valley for good. As the young German woman points out, the memory of his family members is ubiquitous in the county. Their stories are told and re-told by almost every mouth. Even foreigners whom few people

trust quickly learn these stories. However, if these memories are felt throughout the county, their presence is crushing in the Crittendon house.

For the ASF world premiere, the house and the set were designed to emphasize the role memory played in this production. Splendidly, almost Shakespeareanly spare while at the same time wonderfully evocative, it was designed as a memory box, connoting both the theme of strangling memory and to a lesser degree, the fact that Sarah "sets home like a charm in its box" (script: 80). Many of the set pieces were boxes themselves, with various antebellum and Civil War pictures featuring images such as women in period dresses and Confederate and Union soldiers. During set changes, the boxes were moved and different images revealed, emphasizing various aspects of the antebellum and Civil War periods. Slightly up of center was a trapdoor which functioned both as Brian's spring and the hole where Sarah hides the can of poison. Leaves and dirt were scattered in this area, and Sarah scooped some of them together to indicate that she was first filling in the hole, then scattered them again to hide the more obvious signs of her digging. The base of the Crittendon staircase started slightly left of center and ascended to a landing, where the portrait of Sam, Sr. hung, then continued to rise stage left to a second level. This level did not simply function as the second floor of the Crittendon house. The Hags appeared above and up stage left to deliver commentary, and the hanging took place on the stage right gallows. Above this second level hung the "memory boxes," in which were placed Sam, Sr.'s Confederate uniform, Sarah's mourning dress, a worn 1863 United States flag, an even more ragged Confederate flag, the moon, and Emilie's yellow dress, which the lights accented during the Sam and

Emilie memory scene. Frequently, the lighting emphasized different items in these boxes to correspond with the details of the different scenes.

Love and memory, James Bohnen said, are what the play turned on. In his *Director's Notes*, he first quoted Tim O'Brien from *The Things They Carried*: "They carried all they could bear, and then some . . . . They shared the weight of memory." The same could be said of the denizens of this play, particularly Sarah and Sam. Bohnen went on to write:

> On its surface, *The Coming of Rain* is a coming of age story, the familiar territory of a young man grappling with family and responsibility to create his adult self. But beneath the surface, where all real stories live, throbs the terrible potency of memory and love. There are many kinds of love here: Youthful, urgent and confident; the enriching and suffocating love between mother and son; obsessive, unrequited love; the deep unpenetrable love for a dead spouse; the love of a particular place, a home. All these loves ensnare the inhabitants of Bourbonville, Tennessee. But love, as we know, is never enough. Set in 1885, the all encompassing cataclysm of the Civil War looms over the lives in this play. It's [sic] effects are still deeply felt and the wounds of memory have not begun to heal. There is, of course, another kind of memory, sweet, unsullied and encouraging. Memories that don't weigh down upon us, but help us move forward. This play, finally, turns on the uses of memory, and our same young man's struggle to sift these meanings of memory and love to find his way to the world.

Bohnen nailed the heart of the play nicely, as well he should since he was largely responsible for its final incarnation. That incarnation was strong, it played well, and audience members were treated to a powerful afternoon or evening of theater.

EPILOGUE

Richard Marius has said that his fiction is primarily character driven, an accurate assessment of his own writing, and one that certainly applies to *Rain* the novel. But, in many ways, *Rain* the play is fundamentally different from his previous fiction. Marius called it melodrama, which is something of an exaggeration, although we do have some melodramatic elements such as the suggestion of ghosts, three fulfilled prophecies, one rape, one attempted rape, one attempted seduction, one hanging, and, if the offstage murders of Sam, Sr. and Mrs. Simson are included (which seems fair since, in many ways, these two events precipitate the onstage events), four killings. Of course, all of these events also take place in the novel, but now they occur within about an hour and fifty minutes of stage time. In its early incarnations, *Rain* the play was also mostly character driven, but in production, it was primarily plot driven. This difference is the key to the thematic changes.

In *Rain* the novel, the characters primarily carry the themes. In the play, the plot becomes increasingly intense as it moves through its many drafts, and the characters become increasingly altered. In some cases, nuance of character is sacrificed to the necessity of having the plot move dramatically and efficiently, which is not at all to say that the characters become cartoon sketches, but of necessity we know them differently and perhaps less deeply than we do in the novel. We see this alteration most clearly in Brian, but we see it in the other major characters as well.

At the hanging, during the confrontation between J. W. and Bazely, audiences would sometimes laugh at the preacher. He is anything but a comic character, and they would see that by the middle of the play, but early on they would sometimes develop false expectations. They thought they recognized Bazely as a dramatic cliché: the standard Southern version of Tartuffe. Isolated and taken out of context, his words and actions in the hanging scene could be seen as predictable. Of course, overall, Bazely is a solid character; we see that he is insane, and we know that he is evil as the play progresses. However, we do not see the major issues behind his nature. We do not see that he is derivative of Martin Luther, and we do not understand what Marius implies in the novel: that his views, like Luther's, were catastrophic for their followers.

In Bazely's nemesis, J. W., we see that the lawyer believes that people create their own hells, but we are not entirely sure of why he holds this belief. We know only that he lost his son. We do not know that he lost his son because he abandoned the boy twice.

The lawyer's old friend Brian and the sub-plot surrounding him embody temporal salvation in the novel. In the play, we no longer have a little Virgil to guide him out of his figurative hell and to his salvation with Evelyn. Instead, Emilie's *words* give us the notion that we must make choices and act decisively in order for our lives to be worthwhile, but we have no actions on which to hang the redemptive theme. She tells Sam that he must act in the here and now if his life is to have meaning, but he chooses action only after their love affair has ended sadly, and we have no way of knowing what becomes of Emilie. Because the power and clarity of these two characters are somewhat muted, the major theme that they embody is not as clear in the play.

Put simply, the intensity of the plot changes the complexity of the characters and the themes they carry. Is *The Coming of Rain* a lesser play than it is a novel? No. It is simply and necessarily different, just as watching a play is different from reading a novel. *Rain* the novel exists throughout time; we can return to it again and again, underlining favorite passages and writing comments in the margins. The performance of *Rain* the play existed at the moment of creation and was then gone, at least until the next production. The novel involves an engagement between Richard Marius and his reader. The play was an engagement between dozens of artists and hundreds of audience members. We can praise *Rain* the novel endlessly with the spoken and written word. What we could only briefly once do was applaud the production, rising to our feet among a temporary but important theatrical community, to show our appreciation of the playwright, the actors, the director, and the designers who have so thoroughly and entertainingly engaged our hearts and minds.

Twenty-five years ago, Marius suggested in *Luther* that we successfully make our way through life only by relying on what resides "in our own heads and hearts" (256). Many times since he has both explicitly and implicitly re-stated that we have only ourselves to rely on. There is no God to save us; we must save ourselves. Among all of the themes, this central idea, embodied by J. W., remains clearest. Throughout his career Marius has returned many times to the same themes and historical and literary figures while at the same time embracing the ever new and challenging such as, at the age of sixty-three, writing his first major play. In the play the point still exists: the heart and the mind are our guides through life. They are also the tools of the great artist, and the audience of Richard Marius remains grateful that he possesses both.

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CHART I: A
(Novel Chart)

Chapter	Pages	Characters	Major Action
Prologue	1-36	Bazely J. W. Quillen Bradshaw Simson Beckinridge Jackson	Alfred Simson is to be hanged for having beaten his wife to death with a hammer. Hangings are community events, so many of the town citizens have gathered to witness this one. Preacher Bazely arrives to pray for Simson's soul. Simson responds by laughing hysterically. J. W. confronts Bazely, and Sam suggests that they kill the preacher. Bazely leaves. Bradshaw attacks Beckinridge and Quillen, and several other men join in for sport. Sheriff Hub Delaney breaks up the scuffle by beating up Bradshaw and sending the two injured black men on their way.
One	37-61	Sam The Hags	After the hanging, Sam goes to visit his father's grave. On the way he passes the Hags. They tell him they predicted the death of his father, and when one of them reads his palm, she says he will go West, a prediction he denies. Sam goes on to his father's grave, where he spends most of the visit thinking of Emilie.
Two	62-81	Clarence Brian, J. W. The memory (or ghost of J. W.'s son) Hub	The night of the hanging, the four men meet, as they do almost every night, at the railroad station, where Clarence is the town agent and telegrapher. They drink whiskey and talk of the Civil War (all four men are Union Army veterans), the imminent death of General Grant, and the hanging. After they part ways, J. W. crosses the square to his house and goes to bed. Later that night he dreams that his lost son

CHART I: B

Chapter	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			rides into town, naked, and shouts that he hates his father, who watches from his bedroom window.
Three	82-91	Jackson Beckinridge	When the two arrive at their hovel the night of the hanging, Jackson beats his father. Later, he returns, drunk, and kills him by crushing his skull with a whiskey jug.
Four	92-115	Sam	Sam lies in bed with his memories, primarily those of Emilie and his mother's disapproval of their relationship. He remembers convincing Emilie to come to the Crittendon house for tea, something she did not want to do. In this scene, Sarah is gracious but manipulative, and she outmaneuvers the girl so that Emilie is unable to adequately express her love for Sam and the reasons she feels they should be married.
Five	116-22	Bazely	Bazely paces his cabin's floor with his own memories. He recalls riding with Quantrill's raiders, and he remembers raping and killing the Kansas woman. He remembers coming to Bourbon County after the war and meeting and falling in love with a woman who does not return his affection. (We suspect the woman is Sarah, but we do not know for certain.) Later he thinks he has a second chance with the woman, but it fails too, and he is convinced that J. W. is somehow involved with the failure. We suspect he is insane, especially at the end of the chapter.

CHART I: C

Chapter	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			when he hears God, "the hosts of angels" (122), and hell laughing in unison at him.
Six	123-131	Sarah	The chapter consists of one long monologue with Sarah speaking to Sam (although we sense, at the end of the chapter, that Sam is probably asleep in bed) of how much she loved his father and the night the Union soldiers came to free the slaves. She goes on to talk sentimentally of her marriage and Sam's birth.
Seven	132-50	Virgil Brian	The morning after the hanging, Brian awakens with a ten-year-old boy named Virgil Weaver beating on his wooden leg with a knife. Virgil's mother, a recent widow named Evelyn, has sent her son to get Brian to breed his bull to her cow. They are to go to the Weaver property, collect the cow, take her to Boston (the bull), and return her that evening. If Brian is timely in getting to the Weaver house, he will get breakfast for his trouble. Virgil also reveals that Evelyn, despite the fact that she thinks God punished Brian for fighting for the wrong side in the war by taking his leg, is thinking of marrying him because he is one of the few eligible bachelors around, and she needs a father for her six children.
Eight	151-60	Sam	Sam awakens on the morning after the hanging and has breakfast with his mother. They discuss the hanging and the confrontation

CHART I: D

Chapter	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			between Bazely and Campbell. Sarah is curiously unnerved by the news of the confrontation. She also makes the surprising observation that perhaps Simson killed his wife as an an act of kindness.
Nine	161-80	J. W.	J. W. awakens the morning after the hanging. He recalls his father, a Methodist minister, and his wife, Charlotte. He thinks of their marriage and their son, and her death from appendicitis. He remembers the Mexican War and his subsequent time out West. He goes on to think of his time in the Civil War and the fact that his son ran away, never to return, while J. W. was fighting in it.
Ten	181-85	Beckinridge	Beckinridge awakens to his hangover, broken rib, and dead father. Despite his agony, he starts digging his father's grave.
Eleven	186-214	Sam Sarah Mrs. MacComber Mrs. Janeway Emilie Bazely	Suellen MacComber visits Sarah and tells Sam to prepare to help her husband, Mayhew, thresh oats the following day. Sam remembers almost consummating his relationship with Emilie in a deserted area during one of their rides. However, they are interrupted by Bazely, who says nothing but stands observing them silently.
Twelve	214-19	Bazely and the ghosts of Quantrill's Raiders	Bazely awakens the morning after the hanging having lost his final dregs of sanity. He decides to ride to the Crittendon property, and on the way he believes Quantrill and his Raiders join him.

CHART I: E

Chapter	Pages	Characters	Major Action
Thirteen	220-36	Brian Sam Virgil	On their way to the Weaver property, Virgil and Brian encounter Sam, who decides to join them for breakfast.
Fourteen	237-49	Sarah	Sarah is alone on her property. She calls for Sam, but he is away. She remembers how, at the age of sixteen, she replaced the slave Jessie as head keeper of the Crittendon house. Jessie was subsequently banished to a shack, where other slaves abused her. She died a few months afterward.
Fifteen	250-54	Bazely Beckinridge The ghosts of Quantrill's Raiders	On his way to Sarah, Bazely comes across Beckinridge, who is burying his father. In his insanity, the preacher believes the young black is burying a fallen soldier. Bazely preaches a sermon, then continues on his way.
Sixteen	255-79	Evelyn Virgil his five brothers Sam Brian	They have breakfast at the Weaver house. Brian and Evelyn spar verbally, but we also sense that they would be a well-suited match.
Seventeen	280-97	Brian Sam Virgil Beckinridge the Weavers' cow	After breakfast, Brian, Sam, and Virgil depart for the Ledbetter property. The cow balks. None of the three can make her move. Brian knows that Beckinridge lives nearby, and he believes that blacks are naturally more adept at handling animals than whites, so he sends Virgil to fetch the young, injured man. Beckinridge tries some different techniques that do not work. He finally builds a fire against the cow's backside. This approach succeeds. The journey continues.

CHART I: F

Chapter	Pages	Characters	Major Action
Eighteen	298-305	Sarah Bazely	Bazely arrives at the Crittendon property for "an accounting" with Sarah. We learn that he has been in love with her for many years, and he knows something about her he could potentially blackmail her with. He tries to convince her to love him. She says he is insane. In his delusional paranoia, he believes she has conspired against him with J. W. He tries to rape her. She wrestles the gun from him and hits repeatedly in on the head with it. She shoots at him but misses. He flees on his horse. She goes after him on hers.
Nineteen	306-15	Mr. Curry Mrs. Curry J. W. Bazely Hub Sarah	J. W. is visited by a farm couple, the Currys, because Mr. Curry wants to have a will created. During their conference, bedlam breaks out in the street outside of Campbell's office. He walks outside, where Bazely confronts him with a gun. The preacher has just stolen Hub's pistol and shot the sheriff with it. Now he fires at J. W. but misses. Hub, wounded, appears and with his uninjured arm shoots Bazely dead with a rifle. Thunder is heard.
Twenty	316-24	Sam Brian Virgil	The cow has a brief but intense romance with Boston. Virgil and Brian start back to the Weavers' with her. Sam leaves them and goes home, where he finds the house deserted except for a curious note Sarah.
Twenty-one	325-34	Sam Joseph Tilley J. W.	Sarah arrives in town. She goes to jail because of the commotion there and discovers the preacher's dead

CHART I: G

Chapter	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			body. She cleans him, then announces that he will lie in state at her house that night. She then goes to J. W.'s office. He comments on the two bullets in Bazely's pistol, and she tells him that she had planned on killing the preacher and and then herself. She also invites J. W. to the wake.
Twenty-two	335-42	Brian	Slightly after two o'clock, Brian leaves Evelyn, who has suggested that if he is going to propose, he had better do it soon. The rain begins, and in this moment of renewed life, he decides that he will, indeed, propose.
Twenty-three	343-48		It storms violently in the valley.
Twenty-four	349-66	Sam Beckinridge	Sam takes refuge from the storm in the shanty where Beckinridge lives. The black man tells the young white man that Sam's grandfather and uncle made great sport out of raping slave women. Sam becomes enraged and attacks Beckinridge, but the injured man laughs and says he has more to tell. He goes on to say that Sarah murdered Sam, Sr., and Old George had recovered the can of poison she used. Sam rides off into storm, but not before Beckinridge tells him that the can is till sitting on a shelf in Old George's cabin.
Twenty-five	367-80	Sam	He rides without purpose through the storm, thoughtlessly pushing his exhausted horse on. Finally, he dismounts and walks, leading the animal. He thinks of Emilie. The storm subsides. He goes to Old

CHART I: H

Chapter	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			George's abandoned cabin.
Twenty-six	381-92	J. W. Brian Sam	Brian visits J. W. at his office after the storm. The lawyer assures his friend that Josephine is legally dead. He also reveals that Evelyn had visited his office to find out Josephine's legal status the week before. J. W. leaves for the wake but meets Sam in the street who insists that they talk immediately.
Twenty-seven	393-415	J. W. Sam Doctor Cogill	Sam demands to know what secret Bazely knew about his father. He repeats the story told him by Beckinridge. J. W. finally reveals that Sam, Sr. had a wife from before the war. Bazely found out about the marriage, and threatened to reveal it to the town.
Twenty-eight		J. W. Sarah Sam Brian Evelyn Virgil Virgil's brothers Preacher Henck Town citizens	J. W. arrives at the wake. Sarah is giddy with delight, although she is also worried about Sam, who is missing. Brian arrives with Evelyn and her children. He explains the he woke them up in the middle of the night to relay the day's events, and since she was already awake, he decided to propose marriage, and Evelyn accepted. Preacher Henck arrives, then Sam. While Henck is praying, someone announces that a fire has erupted in the old slave quarters. Everyone but Sam goes to battle the flames. He gathers a bedroll and a private cache of money, kisses the portrait of his father, and departs into the night.

NOVEL CHART I: I

Chapter	Pages	Characters	Major Action
Epilogue	434-37	Sam Mr. Kayro	Sam crosses the river with the ferryman, heading West.

CHART II: A
(Draft One)

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
1	1-5	The Hags	Comment on the heat, the drought, their fortune telling ability, and the upcoming hanging
2	5-6	Bazely	Prayer from *Revelations*
3	6	Hags	Comment on Bazely
4	6-15	J. W. Simson Sam Bazely	J. W. and Sam discuss Sam's family history. Bazely enters. They confront him.
5	15-17	Charlotte J. W.	Campbell's dead wife admonishes him for leaving their son to fight first the Mexican War, later the Civil War.
6	17-20	Hub town citizens J. W. Simson	Simson predicts rain and is hanged.
7	20-26	Sam Hags	Hags tell Sam they foretold his father's death and predict he will go West.
8	26-34	Sam (Sam, Sr.'s presence is strongly felt.) Sarah	They discuss Hags' prophecies, Simson's comments, and the hanging, and argue about Sam's relationship with Emilie
9	35-47	Hub Brian Clarence J. W.	They discuss the war, General Grant's imminent death, the drought, Simson's prediction of rain and his hanging.

CHART II: B

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
10	47	Hags	Commentary on preceding and upcoming events.
11	47-56	Sam Sarah Emilie	Flashbacks/memories of some important episodes in Sam's relationship with Emilie: Their introduction, a profession of love, Emilie's argument that Sam should go West with her, then that she and Sarah should meet.
12	56-64	Sam Sarah Emilie	Emilie tries to win Sarah's favor. Sarah is condescending and inflexible, so Emilie becomes confrontational. When Sarah leaves Emilie questions their relationship.
13	64-65	Hags	Commentary on the previous scene, Bazely's insanity, and the blood-red moon.
14	65-69	Bazely Kansas Woman Sarah	Bazely remembers raping and murdering the Kansas Woman. Sarah appears; Bazely begs her for her love, but she is unresponsive, and disappears. Bazely speaks as if to town citizens about his terrible atrocities.
15 (End of Act one)	69-71	Sarah	She recalls the night the Union soldiers rode onto the property to free the slaves, her marriage to Sam, Sr., and the birth of their son.
16	71-82	Virgil Brian	Virgil awakens Brian, explaining that Ledbetter is to bring the Weaver cow to Boston, his bull. Virgil also says that his mother, Evelyn, is thinking of marrying Brian.

CHART II: C

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
17	82-90	Emilie Sam Sarah Mrs. Janeway Bazely	A series of appearances—Sam and Emilie on their early mornings rides, their first kiss, Sarah saying Sam has shamed her and his father. Mrs. Janeway pities Sarah and is furious with Sam. The scene shifts to Emilie's attempted seduction of Sam, which Bazely interrupts. The scene shifts to Bazely reminding Sarah that she owes him "twice." He begs for her love.
18	90	Sam Sarah	Sam wakes up in his bed, as if he had dreamed scene seventeen. He refuses breakfast and leaves.
19	91-99	Brian Virgil Sam	Brian and Virgil discuss the fact that Brian fought for the Union Army. Sam agrees to join them for breakfast.
20	99-106	Bazely Sarah	Bazely confronts Sarah at the Crittendon house, begging her to love him. He tries to rape her, but she wrestles his pistol away from him and fires at him as he runs off stage.
21	106-27	Sam Brian Virgil Virgil's two brothers Evelyn	Brian and Evelyn spar verbally, but they also seem well matched.
22	127-28	Hags	They comment on the heat and "the curse on the land." They see Bazely riding bareback to town with the ghosts of Quantrill's Raiders and his Kansas victim following him. Sarah follows him, too.

CHART II: D

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
23	129-41	Mr. Curry Mrs. Curry J. W Bazely Hub Town citizens Sarah	Mr. and Mrs. Curry consult with J. W. in his office about making a will. Bazely enters and is about to shoot J. W., when Hub, whom Bazely shot off stage, enters and shoots him back. Town citizens remove Hub and the dead body of Bazely. Sarah enters, having cleaned the body, and plans on holding a watch over it that night.
24	141-43	Brian Evelyn	She suggests that if he is going to propose, he had better do it soon.
25	143-45	Brian	Brian reflects on the war. The rain begins. He decides to marry Evelyn.
26	145-63	Hags Sam	Sam takes shelter with the Hags, who reveal that his grandfather and uncle regularly raped their slaves, and Sarah poisoned Sam, Sr. They suggest that he go to Old George's shack, where he can find the can of poison Sarah used. He flees into the deluge.
27	164-97	J. W. Brian Sam	Brian learns from J. W. that his first wife, Josephine, is legally dead. Sam enters, demanding to know what Bazely knew about his father. J. W. reveals that Sam, Sr. had a wife from before the war. Bazely discovered the fact and threatened to reveal it to the town.
28	197-99	J. W. Sarah Sam Town citizens	Sarah frets over the missing Sam but is also giddy with delight. Sam enters and reveals the can of rat poison, which Sarah frantically tries to get. Everyone except J. W. and Sam rushes off stage to battle the fire

CHART II: E

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			in the old slave quarters. Sam bids the portrait of his father good-bye. He tells his father that he loves him and that he is going West.
29	206-07	Hags	Speaking directly to the audience, they tell us that Sam has gone West.

CHART III: A
(Draft Three)
9 January 1996

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
1	1-3	Hags Bazely Kansas Woman	The Hags discuss the murder of Mrs. Simson, the drought, and the insanity of Bazely, who appears and prays a prayer lifted from *Revelations.* The Kansas woman appears and curses him.
2	3-10	J. W. Sam Hub Bazely Simson	J. W. and Sam meet at the hanging and discuss Sarah and Emilie before Bazely and Hub enter. J. W. confronts the preacher, and Sam physically assaults Bazely before Hub intervenes. Bazely prays for Simson who responds with mad laughter. Bazely suggests that J. W. may have killed his own son during the war, then curses Simson, J. W., and Sam. Sam confronts Bazely again, and the preacher pulls his pistol. Hub convinces Bazely to leave, and J. W. speaks of his lost son, then joins Hub and Simson on the gallows. Simson predicts rain and is hanged.
3	11-13	Sam Hags	On his way to visit his father's grave Sam is stopped by the Hags who tell him he will go West and they predicted his father's death.
4	13-17	Sam Sarah	Sarah suggests that Simson killed his wife as an act of mercy. Sam tells of his visit with the Hags, and Sarah becomes agitated. Sam says he threatened to kill Bazely. At the end of the scene he promises never to leave her.

CHART III: B

Scene	Pages	Character	Major Action
5	17-22	Hub J. W.	Talk of the war, Grant's cancer, and the hanging. Hub says that J. W.'s son would have been about the same age as Simson.
6	22	Hags	They say it is the end of the world—at least for one person.
7	22-31	Sam Sarah Emilie	Sam and Emilie meet. Sarah appears and says she doesn't like the idea of foreigners in Bourbonville. Sam promises to start riding with Emilie. Sarah appears again to chastise Sam. The scene shifts forward in time, and Emilie convinces Sam to arrange a meeting between her and Sarah. The scene shifts into that meeting.
8	31	Hags	Comment on Bazely's damnation.
9	32-4	Bazely Sarah Kansas Woman	Bazely rapes and kills his victim who disappears, and he speaks directly to the audience. Bazely begs an unresponsive Sarah for her love after she appears. Bazely says that J. W. turned her against him and that everyone knows of his horrible deeds.
10 (End of Act One)	34-5	Sarah	Speaks of the night the slaves were freed, of rescuing Sam, Sr., and then marrying him. She addresses Sam, Jr., but he is not on stage.
11	35-8	Sam Sarah Emilie Mrs. MacComber Bazely	Sam sleeps while Emilie sits nearby. He awakens, and they speak of their first kiss. Sarah appears to say that Sam has "shamed" her and Sam, Sr. Mrs. MacComber appears. Alone again, the couple talk of their love, and Emilie tries to seduce Sam. Bazely interrupts. Sarah appears, and the preacher begs her for her

CHART III: C

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			love. Sam awakens—apparently having dreamed the preceding events. He skips breakfast and goes to check on the oats.
12	38	Hags	Comment on Bazely riding by with the ghosts of the many people he murdered following him. They say that he will be dead by the end of the day.
13	38-41	Sarah Bazely	He tries to rape her, but she gets his gun, beats him off with it, and shoots at him as he runs off.
14	41-42	Hags	Talk of Bazely riding to town followed by his ghosts and Sarah.
15	42-48	J. W. Mr. Curry Mrs. Curry Bazely Hub Sarah town citizens	The Currys consult with J. W. about making a will. Bazley enters to kill J. W., but Hub, wounded, shoots the preacher first. Sarah enters, and she and J. W. discuss the wake and the two bullets left in the pistol. The rain begins.
16	45-48	Sam Hags	He takes shelter with them from the storm. They tell him that his uncle and grandfather regularly raped their slaves, then that his mother killed his father.
17	58-71	Sam J. W.	Sam confronts J. W. demanding to know what secret has been held from him his entire life. J. W. finally reveals that Sam, Sr. was a bigamist. J. W. leaves, and Sam shows the can of poison to the audience.
19	72-76	J. W. Sarah Sam	At the wake the fire begins, and Sam and J. W. share a moment on stage after everyone else leaves. The lawyer leaves, and Sam says goodbye to his father's portrait.

CHART III: D

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
20	76	Hags	Say Sam went West, he never found Emilie, but he did make himself "all over again . . . and he was free."

CHART IV: A
(Draft Six)

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
1	1-3	Hags	They discuss their prophetic ability, the drought, the murder of Mrs. Simson, the upcoming hanging, and Bazely coming to pray for Mr. Simson.
2	3-10	Bazely Hub J. W. Sam Simson various town citizens	J. W. confronts Bazely after the preacher prays for Simson. Sam confronts Bazely who prays once more for the condemned man. Simson responds with hysterical laughter. Sam and J. W. discuss Sarah, Sam, Sr., and Emilie. J. W. joins Hub and Simson on the gallows where Simson predicts rain and is hanged.
3	3-10	Hags Sam	The Hags tell of having predicted Sam, Sr.'s death. They predict that Sam, Jr. will go West.
4	12-19	Sam Sarah	Sarah tells of her love for Sam, Sr. and the night the slaves were freed. Sam wearily joins in the telling. They discuss the hanging, and Sam tells Sarah that he and the preacher confronted each other. He goes on to talk of the his visit with the Hags and their two prophecies. He promises never to leave Sarah.
5	20-26	Hub J. W.	They drink whiskey on J. W.'s porch. Hub says that Simson would have been about the same age as J. W.'s son. J. W. says that his son might have fought for the Confederacy. Hub suggests that perhaps the boy went West. When J. W. says that perhaps his son will one day return, Hub responds with "it ain't likely."

CHART IV: B

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
6	26	Hags	Comment on the blood-red moon and that it is the end of the world "for some."
7	26-35	Sam Emilie Sarah	Sam and Emilie meet. After Sam promises to ride with her, Sarah appears to chastise him. The focus shifts back to the couple, and she tries to convince him to go West with her and her family. Emilie then convinces Sam to arrange a meeting between her and Sarah. It follows.
8	35-36	Hags	They speak of Sam and his ghosts and Bazely and his ghosts. They say the preacher is crazy and doomed.
9 (End of act one)	36-7	Bazely Sarah	Bazely speaks directly to the audience of raping and killing the Kansas woman. When Sarah appears, Bazely begs her for her love, but she is unresponsive and disappears. Bazely speaks to the audience as if they were town citizens, saying that they know about his horrible deeds and that J. W. has turned Sarah against him. He exits, and the lights go up on Sarah who is dusting Sam, Sr.'s portrait. She speaks as if to Sam, Jr., although he is not present, telling him to "dream about [his] duty" (37).
10	38-41	Sam Emilie Sarah	Sam is in bed with Emilie sitting nearby. They speak of loving their mornings together and their first kiss. The scene shifts into her attempted seduction of Sam, then to Bazely telling Sarah what he has witnessed and that she owes him. Sam awakens as if he had dreamed the preceding events. Sarah says that he

CHART IV: C

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			shamed her and his father. She calls Emilie a "common woman," and Sam leaves, furious.
11	41	Hags	They say they saw the preacher riding followed by his ghosts, and he will be dead by the end of the day.
12	41-44	Bazely Sarah	He attempts to rape her. She chases him off.
13	44-45	Hags	They comment on Bazely riding, followed by his ghosts and Sarah, to meet J. W. They say there is a curse on the land.
14	45-51	J. W. Mr. Curry Mrs. Curry Bazely Hub Sarah town citizens	Bazely tries to kill J. W. but is killed first by Hub. Sarah arrives and says she will have a watch over the preacher's body that night. The rain begins.
15	51-61	Sam Hags	While it storms, the Hags tell Sam that his uncle and grandfather regularly raped their slaves, and Sarah poisoned his father. They comment that Sam, Sr.'s father is just outside the door.
16	61-73	Sam J. W.	Sam demands that J. W. tell him what terrible secret his father had. Reluctantly, J. W. does.
17	75-7	Sarah J. W. Sam Henck Town citizens	At the wake, the fire breaks out, and everyone except J. W. and Sam exit. J. W. asks Sam not to leave, and Sam says he must. J. W. exits. Sam puts the poison on the coffin and exits.

CHART V: A

(Draft Eleven-and-one-half)
23 January 1997

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
1	1-3	Hags	While doing laundry, they discuss their prophetic ability, the drought, the murder of Mrs. Simson, and the upcoming hanging. The stage directions call for them to pull a bloody shirt that matches the one Bazely will be killed in from the cauldron at one point.
2	4-7	Sam J. W. various town citizens	Sam and J. W meet in front of the gallows. They discuss Sam's father, Sarah, and Simson. Sam asks why Sarah now hates J. W. J. W. avoids answering the question, but he does say that his son disappeared during the war and losing Sam, Sr. was like losing another son. They also discuss Emile, and J. W. expresses his surprise that she left because he thought that she and Sam would be married. Sam says: "Well, Mamma stopped <u>that</u>" (6).
3	7-8	Hags	They say that Bazely thinks it would be a miracle proving that he is not damned to hell if he can save Simpson's soul. They are doing laundry, and one by one they pull from the cauldron "a Confederate private's uniform of the sort SAM BECKWITH, SR. wears in the portrait we will see of him later. A yellow dress. A wedding dress. The bloody shirt. A tattered Confederate battle flag. An immaculate flag of the United States dating from 1865. A long, flowered dress such as a slender young girl might wear in 1885. A black dress for mourning.

CHART V: B

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			At the last a shroud, black and ghostly.
4	8-16	Bazely J. W. Hub Simson Sam Town citizens	Bazely prays. J. W. interrupts and confronts him. He goes on to call Preacher Bazely "crazy," then asks him if it is true that he rode with Quantrill. The crowd members support the preacher. Bazely prays, and Simson responds with hysterical laughter that turns to crying. Sam physically assaults Bazely, and Hub separates the two men. Bazely pulls a pistol on Sam, but exits without using it. J. W. joins Hub and Simson on the gallows. Simson predicts rain for the following day and is hanged.
5	16-19	Hags Sam	The Hags tell of having predicted Sam, Sr.'s death. They go on to predict that Sam, Jr. will go West.
6	20-29	Sarah Sam Hags	In the dinner scene between Sarah and Sam the Hags act as silent servants. Marius suggests that they should serve "with mechanical efficiency," and while they are not serving they should be perfectly still, statue-like. Sarah and Sam discuss the hanging and Simson's prophecy. Sarah suggests that perhaps Simson killed his wife as an act of mercy. Sam tells of his visit with the Hags that afternoon, of their predicting his father's father's death, and that he will go West, but Sam assures her that he will stay with her. He also says that he threatened to kill Bazely that afternoon, and Sarah becomes quite agitated. Sarah then launches into her tale of the night the Yankee soldiers came and of meeting and

CHART V: C

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			marrying Sam, Sr. Sam, Jr. says she does not need to tell the story because she tells it to him "every night" (25).
7	29-33	Hub J. W.	They drink whiskey and talk of the hanging, the War, the drought, and J. W.'s son.
8	34	Hags	They are now taking from the clothesline the clothes they hung up earlier. They comment on Emilie's father, who wants to make time stand still. They say that for some it is "the end of the world."
9	34-39	Sam Emilie	They meet, and Emile gets Sam to promise to ride with her every morning.
10	39-40	Sam Sarah	Sam argues that Sarah should have Emilie over for tea. This episode plays much as it did in draft six, but there is a more definite scene break both before and after it.
11	40-47	Sam Sarah Emilie	This episode is also more or less unchanged from draft six, although Emilie's "jelly" line is gone, and she uses more German in her anger at Sam than she has in earlier drafts.
12	47-48a	Hags Bazely	The Hags discuss Sam and his ghosts and Bazely and his ghosts. Bazely appears. Bazely describes raping and killing the Kansas Woman. During his description, the Hags insert lines saying that Bazely hears and understands his ghosts and that he is damned.

CHART V: D

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
Thirteen	48b-50	Sam Sarah	After Sarah unsuccessfully tries to get Sam to eat breakfast, they argue about Emilie. Sam is more confrontational than he has been in earlier drafts of this scene.
Fourteen	50-51	Hags	They describe the Preacher riding, followed by his ghosts.
Fifteen (End of Act One)	51-56	Bazely Sarah	Bazely attempts to rape Sarah. Aside from the fact that she seems much less imperious than she has in earlier drafts, the scene is much the same.
16	56-57	Hags	They discuss the preacher riding with his ghosts and Sarah following him and Sam riding in the hills where he used to ride with Emilie.
17	57-67	Mr. Curry Mrs. Curry Town Citizens Sarah Bazely Hub J. W.	The Currys visit J. W. to have a will made. Bazely enters and tries to kill J. W., but Hub kills the preacher first. Sarah enters, say she has cleaned the body of Bazely and intends to have the wake for him at her house that night. They discuss the last two bullets left in the pistol she took from Bazely. She invites J. W. to come to her house that night.
18	67-76	Hags Sam	The Hags tell Sam that his uncle and grandfather regularly raped their slaves, and his mother killed his father.

CHART V: E

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
19	76-89	J. W. Sam	Sam has sent word that J. W. should meet him in the Methodist graveyard where Sam, Sr. is buried. Sam demands to know what terrible secret his father had. J. W. reveals that Sam, Sr. had a first wife before the war. Sam reveals that Sarah poisoned his father. J. W. refuses to believe it, although the story greatly disturbs him. J. W. wants Sam to ride to the wake with him, but Sam says he has something to do first.
20	89-96	Sarah J. W. Sam Henck Town citizens	The scene is mostly the same as it was in draft six until the end. Now when J. W. exits, he does so "hurriedly" (95), and we get the sense he is going to help fight the flames. Sam still leaves the can of poison on the coffin, but now Sarah and J. W. re-enter and see it. Sarah collapses, hysterical. J. W. speaks to the audience as if he were calling after Sam. Campbell says that Sam should "fly away" and "be free"(96). The final lines are still the Hags', but now they walk in and surround the coffin as other characters re-enter. The final line is now: "First Hag: And we're free, too, sisters. His pappy's spirit can sleep now. Be at peace."

CHART VI: A

(Draft Seventeen)
26 Dec. 1997

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
1	1-3	Hags	While doing laundry the Hags pull out various, significant cloth articles. They speak of their prophetic ability and the drought. They also speak of Sam and his affair with Emilie.
2	3-7	Sam Emilie Bazely	Sam and Emilie talk of their love. Emilie tries to convince Sam to go West with her. She then tires to seduce him, but Bazely interrupts.
3	7-9	Hags Bazely	While doing laundry they pull significant articles of clothing from the cauldron. They talk of Emilie's departure, the drought, Mrs. Simson's murder, and the upcoming hanging. Bazely's voice is heard from off stage. He prays both for Simson's and his own soul. During his prayer, the Hags continue commenting on him, eventually saying he is crazy.
4	10-21	Bazely J. W. Hub Brian Sam Simson Town citizens	Bazely prays. J. W. confronts him, and Hub intervenes. The crowd supports Bazely. Bazely prays again, and Simson responds with hysterical laughter that turns to sobbing. Sam threatens to kill Bazely who pulls a pistol, and Brian knocks it from the preacher's hand with his cane. Bazely curses Brian, then the whole crowd, saying that he sees that they are all conspiring against him. Hub leads Bazely to his horse. J. W., Brian, and Sam discuss Sarah, Sam, Sr., and Matthew Crittendon. On the gallows J. W. joins Hub and Simson who predicts rain and is hanged.

CHART VI: B

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
5	21-25	Sam Hags	The Hags stop Sam on the way to his father's grave. They tell him they predicted his father's death; they go on to predict that Sam will go West.
6	25-27	Gossips	They discuss the hangings of Simson and Billy Ray Abernathy and say that J. W. ought to be hanged. They talk about Sam's affair with that awful "French girl" (26).
7	27-37	Sam Sarah Servants Federal troops	The scene is much as it was in draft eleven-and-one-half, except now Sarah's memory of the night the Yankee soldiers came to free the slaves is so powerful that the soldiers actually appear on stage and have lines.
8	37-44	Brian J. W. Hub	They speak of the blood-red moon, the hanging, and where Hub buried Simson. They talk of Gettysburg, where Simson fought for the Confederates. They talk of Bazely and the animosity between him and Sam, Sr. Brian mentions that the last time he saw Sam, Sr. alive he was coming out of J. W.'s office, and the elder Beckwith seemed to be in a daze. He did not even notice Brian. They speak of Grant's cancer, Brian's wife, and the fruit-tree salesman she ran off with. J. W. ends the scene by saying "I don't have a son to remember me" (43-4).
9	44	Hags	They speak of the blood-red moon and the day Emilie came to town with her family. The Third Hag says: "For some folks, it's the end of the world" (44).

CHART VI: C

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
10	44-49	Sam Emilie	They meet. The scene is basically as it was in draft eleven-and-one-half.
11	49-51	Gossips	They talk of the scandalous affair between Emilie and Sam. They say that Mrs. Walter Abernathy told Sam that she wanted to pull his hair out. They conclude that a pretty "French girl" is a danger to their marriages, so they will not talk to her.
13	53-60	Sarah Hags (in their roles as servants) Sam Emilie	Aside from the brief appearance of the Hags, the scene is much as it was in draft eleven-and-one-half. Emilie's "jelly" line is back, and she uses less German than she did in the earlier draft.
14	60-61	Hags	They say that Sam has only one more day left with Emilie. They comment on his and Bazely's ghosts.
15	61-62	Bazely the Kansas woman Hags	Initially, Bazely addresses the audience directly. He then begins interacting with the woman. He rapes and kills her, then speaks again to the audience, saying that he simply wanted to stop the screaming. As Bazely says he has pleaded with God for forgiveness, the Hags say that he is doomed and that Bazely hears God laughing at him.
16	62-63	Sam Sarah	Sarah wants Sam, who refuses, to eat breakfast. He is angry and he leaves, but he is not as confrontational as he is in the draft eleven-and-one-half version of this scene.
17 (end of act one)	63-64	Bazely Sarah	Bazely tries to rape Sarah, and she chases him off.

CHART VI: D

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
19	69-70	Hags	They speak of the curse on the land, Sam riding in the hills where he used to ride with Emilie, and Bazely riding with his ghosts and Sarah following.
20	71-77	Brian Sam	At Brian's spring they talk of Simson's prophecy and Sam's physical resemblance to his father. Brian remembers the last time he saw Sam, Sr. alive. He says that J. W. had just returned from a trip to Virginia, where he was trying to get information on his son. Brian goes on to say that the Crittendons had been Methodists, but after Sam, Sr.'s death, Sarah started going to Bazely's Baptist church. he also believes the whole valley is haunted. He reveals that Bazely had proposed to Sarah. He advises Sam to stay in Bourbon County, and Sam says he will.
21	77-85	Bazely J. W. Town citizens Hub the Gossips Sarah	An off-stage voice shouts that Bazely has shot the sheriff. The preacher enters J. W.'s office and threatens to kill the lawyer, but Hub, wounded, enters and kills Bazely first. The Gossips enter and immediately create an alternate history about what has just transpired. Sarah enters and gets rid of the Gossips by asking them to go clean the preacher's body. She says she will hold a watch over it that night. J. W. asks about the two bullets left in Bazely's pistol, and Sarah explains that she saved one for the preacher and one for herself. The rain begins.

CHART VI: E

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
22	85-96	Hags Sam	Sam takes refuge from the storm with the Hags. The scene is basically as it is in draft eleven-and-one-half.
23	96-109	Sam J. W.	They meet in front of Sam, Sr.'s grave. The scene is essentially as it was in draft eleven-and-one-half.
24	109-111	Gossips	Gossip one tells a story of a woman being buried alive. All three women hope for wine and whiskey at the wake.
25	111-119	Sarah J. W. Sam Henck Town citizens	The scene is essentially the same as in draft eleven-and-one-half except for the ending. Sam puts the can of poison on the coffin but then changes his mind and takes it back before he exits. J. W. and Sarah do not re-enter. Instead, we simply hear Sarah from off stage saying that the fire is contained.
26	118-19	Hags	They say that Sam is free and his father's spirit can rest now. The new line is the first Hag saying: "We knows all you white folks. We knows you all."

CHART VII: A

(Production Script)

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
1	1-2	Hags	They discuss the drought, the upcoming hanging, the relationship between Sam and Emilie, and their prophetic ability.
2	2a-6a	Sam Emilie	The couple meet. We learn a little of their backgrounds, and Emilie makes Sam promise to start riding with her every morning.
3	7	Hags	They discuss the drought, the upcoming hanging, and Emilie's departure.
4	8-17	Bazely J. W. Town citizens Simson Sam Brian Hub	Bazely prays alone in a spot, then the lights fill the stage and he joins the other citizens for the hanging. J. W. confronts him, and the crowd initially supports Bazely and his actions. Simson emits crazy laughter that turns to sobbing. Sam confronts Bazely, and a few members of the crowd turn against the preacher. He pulls a pistol on Sam, and Brian whacks it out of the preacher's hand with his cane. Bazely exits at Hub's urging. J. W., Brian, and Sam discuss the war and Sarah, Matthew, and Sam, Sr. J. W. joins Hub and Simson on the gallows for the hanging. Simson predicts that it will rain the following day and is then hanged.
5	18-23	Hags Sam	The Hags stop Sam on his way to visit his father's grave. They discuss Sam, Sr.'s funeral and their prediction of his death. They then read the young Beckwith's hand and predict that he will go West.

CHART VII: B

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
6	24-26	Gossips	They discuss Simson's and Billy Ray Abernathy's hangings. They wonder about Simson's prophecy and Campbell's heresy.
7	26-35	Sam Sarah	They eat dinner while discussing the hanging, Sam's confrontation with Bazely, and Sarah repeats the story of the night the Yankee soldiers set the slaves free, the day Sam, Sr. arrived, and Sam, Jr.'s obligation to carry on the family name. We sense, perhaps, that she means Crittendon, not Beckwith.
8	36-40	Hub J. W. Brian	In "The Three Amigos Scene," the men discuss the day's events, events in the war, and Grant's impending death. Campbell makes two obscure references to his son, but no mention of the fact that he ran away and may have joined the Confederate Army is made.
9	41	Hags	They discuss Emilie and Sam. The first Hag delivers one of her signature lines: "Dese white folks! If they can't fence you *in* they got to fence you *out*" (41).
10	47-49	Gossips	They discuss Sam and Emilie.
11	49-50	Sam Sarah	They argue about Emilie. Sam convinces Sarah to have Emilie to tea.
12	50-58	Sam Emilie Sarah	Dubbed, ironically, "The Tea Party

CHART VII: C

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			Scene," there is nothing festive here. Emilie is initially obsequious before Sarah. After Sarah's repeated polite rudeness, she then makes an obvious decision to confront Sam's mother. She signals the decision by putting down her tea and straightening her shoulders before her line " I am not good at small talk" (53). Emilie asserts her womanhood/adulthood. Sarah rebuffs her in the saccharine sweet tone of pure hatred. Emilie responds with an insult to Sarah by referring to the Confederates as rebels after the older woman had called the Confederacy "our country." Sarah leaves the room (Emilie had threatened to leave herself a moment before). Emilie tells Sam he is hopeless and rushes off.
13	57	Hags	They comment on Sam, Emilie, and Bazely.
14	57-9	Sam Emilie Bazely	Emlie tries to seduce Sam, but the preacher interrupts them.
15	59	Hags	They comment on the "blood red moon" and Judgment Day.
16	60	Bazely the Kansas woman	Bazely rapes and kills her. The scene ends with Bazely addressing the audience in obvious psychological torment while the smiling spirit of his victim stands just behind and over him.

CHART VII: D

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
17	60	Hags	They comment on the weather and Bazely, followed by his ghosts, riding to confront Sarah.
18	60-64	Bazely Sarah	Sarah is dusting, calling for Sam, and talking to the portrait of the elder Beckwith. Bazely intrudes. He tries to rape her. She gets his gun, hits him with it, and shoots at him, missing. He flees.
19 (Ends Act One)	64-65	Hags	They talk about the weather, the preacher and his ghosts, Sarah riding after him, and Sam.
20	65-71	Brian Sam	At Brian's spring Brian reveals some of the Hags' history, and he and Sam discuss the nature of the spirit world. Sam suggests that his own father cannot be at rest because of Sarah's obsession with him. The two men speculate about why Sarah and J. W. do not get along, and Sam learns of Bazely's proposal to Sarah. Brian advises Sam not to go West.
21	71-79	Bazely Hub J. W. Sarah The Gossips Town citizens	Bazely attempts to shoot J. W., but Hub shoots Bazely first. The Gossips enter and immediately alter the facts about what just occurred. Sarah enters and gets rid of the three women by suggesting that they go clean the preacher's body. J. W. and Sarah discuss her possession of the preacher's gun. The rain begins. Sarah invites J. W to the wake, and he accepts.

CHART VII: E

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
22	79-90	Hags Sam	Sam is with them taking shelter from the storm. They tell him Sarah went looking for Bazely and that they saw his father's ghost the night before, just as they see Sam in the present, sitting by the fire. They tell of Matthew and Benjamin raping the slaves and the cold-bloodedness of Henry Bourbon. They tell Sam that Sarah poisoned his father. Sam rushes off into he storm.
23	91-97	J. W. Sam	Sam confronts J. W with his news. J. W. reluctantly reveals that Sam, Sr. was a bigamist.
24	98-100	Gossips	They discuss the shooting and hope for wine and booze at the wake.
25	100-07	Sarah J. W. Sam Gossips Henck Town citizens	The Gossips enter the scene, followed by J. W. He and Sarah speak of the day's events and Sarah's triumph. Sam enters and responds dully to her giddy affection for him. Preacher Henck enters, and he and J. W. resume their ongoing theological debate. The preacher ends the debate by reading from *Psalms*. He then begins to speak but is interrupted by the news of the fire in the old slave quarters. Everyone exits except for J. W. and Sam. They embrace, and the younger man bids the older farewell. J. W. exits to help battle the flames. Sam, Jr. speaks to his father's portrait, telling it that he is going West. He puts the can of poison on Bazely's coffin, but

CHART VII: F

Scene	Pages	Characters	Major Action
			then changes his mind and retrieves it. He runs offstage with his bedroll and saddlebags. We hear from off stage that the fire is contained.
26	107	Hags	The Hags enter. They say that Sam is free and his father's spirit can now rest.