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Digital Yoknapatawpha Worksheet

Characterization and Tone in Faulkner's "That Evening Sun"

Objective: To lead students to new discoveries of meaning in the area of Faulkner's fiction. William Faulkner is known as a particularly difficult American writer to read and analyze; this lesson should help students begin to appreciate the nuanced nature of Faulkner's fiction, as well as serve as a fun interactive tool in exploring one of Faulkner's more straightforward short stories.

Directions:

*FIRST: of course, read the story! Read it over several times (I always read things in triplicate – three times!) Make sure you are familiar with the story line, the characters, the setting, the time in history (roughly), and the characters' names.

* Go to the Digital Yoknapatawpha site: <http://faulkner.iath.virginia.edu>

* Scroll through the squares at the bottom of the page and click on "That Evening Sun".

1. First, click on the title of the story and read about it. What does the title reference?

2. Next, drag your cursor over "Map Controls: Show Characters"; select "ALL". Run your cursor back and forth over the characters, both black and white. Take note of the names.

Question: What do you find striking about some of the black character names as opposed to the white character names?

Now, click on "Major", as in Major Characters. Take note of both "Jasons".

Question: Who are the two "Jasons" in the story? Click on "Quentin Compson III". Read Quentin's bio. What is Quentin's relation to the two "Jasons"? Who is the narrator of "That Evening Sun"?

*Click "All Locations".

*Do you see the little digital representation of the town of Jefferson? Run your cursor over the "white" buildings in Jefferson. Start at "Jefferson Bank" and go clockwise. What is the significance of the Bank? The Baptist Church? The Co. Jail?

3. Reset the DY site. Now go to "Show Characters" and click "ALL". Who is Mr. Stovall? Read his biography.

4. In "That Evening Sun", we see the Compson children innocently witness an ugly scene between Nancy and Mr. Stovall. What was Nancy repeatedly asking Mr. Stovall to do?

What does Nancy do for a living?

What do you think Nancy was demanding payment for?

What happened to Nancy at the Co. Jail? What is the possible connection between Nancy's naked appearance at the jail and her confrontation of Mr. Stovall?

5. Go back to "ALL" characters in "That Evening Sun". Run your cursor over the character of Jesus. Read Jesus' biography.

Think about Jesus' treatment of Nancy in the story. How did Nancy feel about Jesus?

What are the connections among Nancy, Mr. Stovall and Jesus?

In your own words, write a short paragraph telling what *mood* YOU think Faulkner is trying to convey with this story.