



# Sutpen's white women in W. Faulkner's "Absalom, Absalom!"

*Julia Klewin*

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Seminar paper from the year 2007 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 2,7, University of Wuppertal, course: American Historical Novels, 9 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: William Faulkner's novel Absalom, Absalom! is often proclaimed to be one of his best writings no matter how hard and difficult the first glance seems to be. After I had finished Faulkner's "masterwork" (Dimino 181), I decided at once to choose it for my term paper.

For me, the novel is not a difficult one: It is demanding and gives you, as a reader, the opportunity to activate all of your background information and ideas concerning a story about the South. Of course, it is not a kind of book you can 'look through' at one day on your vacation, but it is hugely eventful that you could read it again and again without losing interest. The more often you spend some time with Absalom, Absalom!, the more you will find out about the plot's hints and ideas.

This term paper concentrates on Thomas Sutpen's three white women, namely Rosa Coldfield, Ellen Coldfield Sutpen and Judith Sutpen. To be examined are their roles in the novel, their relationship to Sutpen and their femininity or gender respectively. The interpretation of Rosa will be the largest one, because she gives the reader as a narrator more information than the other females.

After a short overview of Absalom, Absalom!, I begin every analysis of the single white female characters with a short introduction of their biography and status, before I describe more detailed aspects and facets of their functions in the story.

Because the novel itself is full of useful passages that have to be interpreted and questioned, I have decided to limit the secondary literature for this term paper in order to stay close to the book as much as possible. My research in the internet did not turn out to be useful for this term paper.

What perhaps might be true in Absalom, Absalom!

One absolute important aspect which should be kept in mind during entire the novel is the fact that nothing actually is a fact. When you think you are done with Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!, you suddenly realize that every detail of the plot has to be questioned and rethought.

In Absalom, Absalom!, the reader comes across three or rather four narrators:

Starting with Rosa Coldfield, Faulkner introduces furthermore Mr. Compson who passes over his father's stories about his friend Thomas Sutpen in Yoknapatawpha County and the roommates at the Harvard dormitory, Quentin Compson and Shrevlin McCannon.

As it would not be enough, two totally different settings move the detailed hints about the plot even more apart from each other.

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