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THE QUESTION OF FREE WILL IN JAMES JOYCE'S EXILES AND WILLIAM FAULKNER'S REQUIEM FOR A NUN

by

Robin Hume Brownhill

Master of Arts in English

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Alan S. Loxterman, Ph.D., Thesis Director

Joyce's Exiles and Faulkner's Requiem for a Nun are both unsuccessful naturalistic dramas written by novelists. This study compares the two texts, applying the question, "Is free will possible?" to four common themes within each work: the past, religion, marriage and politics. Within these four contexts, the two plays exibit similarities of language and content; however, they consistently distinguish themselves on the question of free will. Joyce's work shows a protagonist who "frees" himself, through sacrifice, from the bonds of tradition. Faulkner's work shows a protagonist "doomed" and "damned" to suffer endlessly for her past.

Despite their opposing presentations of free will, both dramas produce a similar disquiet and ambiguity in their audiences, leaving them "free" to interpret the endings. Thus, the works both depict morality as a complex issue in the modern world.

I certify that I have read this thesis and find that, in scope and quality, it satisfies the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Alan Loxterman, Ph.D.

Suzanne Jones

Suzanne Jones, Ph. D.

Marcia E. Whitehead

Marcia Whitehead, Ph.D.

THE QUESTION OF FREE WILL IN JAMES JOYCE'S EXILES AND WILLIAM FAULKNER'S REQUIEM FOR A NUN

By

ROBIN HUME BROWNHILL

B.A., The Pennsylvania State University, 1981

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I. INTRODUCTION

The work Noel Polk called Faulkner's "idiot sibling" and the one Bernard Benstock referred to as Joyce's "unfortunate child" have more in common than fathers who belonged to the canon of high modernism. These unsuccessful plays written by novelists are both, among other things, explorations of the ability of man to exercise free will in the modern world. Can the individual determine his own life, or is he essentially doomed to react to external circumstances? This question of free will or self determination pervades both works and is woven into the textual fabric through the common themes of the past, religion, marriage and politics. Within each context, Joyce's drama seems to lead toward the conclusion that free will is possible; however, Faulkner's work seems to arrive at the conclusion that human life is fated or determined. Both present scenarios in which there are no easy answers and in which individuals suffer.

Both Joyce's and Faulkner's fictions commonly depict the individual as a rebel, engaged in a struggle for self-assertion against the forces of the world. Joyce's characters engage in rebellion against Catholicism and the pressures of religious tradition. Faulkner's characters struggle against a kind of "original sin" embodied in the guilt of the South over the Civil War. Exiles and Requiem for a Nun both present the individual struggling for self-assertion. Their protagonists, Richard Rowan and Temple Stevens, are haunted by the question of whether they live as free agents or victims of fate and the past. The characters each achieve a greater self-knowledge over the course of their respective plays. Exiles' Richard Rowan, who begins as an "arranger" and knows (or thinks he knows) all about the other characters, ends with profound self-willed doubt and anxiety. Temple Stevens, who forces upon herself a confession of her past sins in order to ease her guilt and pain, ironically discovers that her efforts only bring about more suffering. She comes to believe that she is an unpardoned sinner, a lost soul doomed to suffer eternally.

Exiles and Requiem for a Nun, each in its own way, depict the moral complexity faced by the individual living in society. The protagonist of Exiles copes with this problem by forging an alternative reality based on doubt, rebellion and glorification of "human" (as opposed to divine) characteristics. In subsequent works of Joyce (after Exiles), images of freedom, escape and fluidity are commonplace, and so is the spirit of rebellion against the "bonds" of tradition. After Joyce wrote Exiles, he "freed himself" in a literary sense, going on to write the explosively original Ulysses, and eventually creating, in Finnegans Wake, an alternative world in text in the form of a flowing, metaphorical river where beginning and ending are one. The protagonist of Requiem for a Nun finds herself to be a small part of a larger design: one which she cannot understand but only endure. In Faulkner, it is more likely that one will encounter themes of fate and the individual who is haunted by sins of the past. As Gavin Stevens says, "The past is never dead. It's not even past" (33).[1] The later works of Faulkner often retell and revisit the earlier works. For example, in Requiem for a Nun, the story of Jefferson is told from the earliest days of the colonists and even before. It is shown, not in images of fluidity as with Joyce, but imprisonment. The history of a town is said to be "best" understood in the scrawls of prisoners scratched into stone walls and covered with the dirt and whitewash of time: an image of sadness and doom.

To date, no comparative study of Exiles and Requiem for a Nun has been published. The purpose of this one is not simply to reduce two minor works of major authors to a "yes" or "no" question and then answer that question. It is to pair the works based on their larger philosophical/cultural framework, an endeavor which I hope will encourage further study of Joyce and Faulkner together.

II. THE PAST AND FREE WILL

> Richard Rowan: And that other law of nature, as you [Robert Hand] call it: change. How will it be when you turn against her [Bertha] and against me, when her beauty, or what seems so to you now, wearies you and my affection for you seems false and odious? (197)[2]

> Temple Stevens: The letters turned up again, of course. And, of course, being Temple Drake, the first way to buy them back that Temple Drake thought of was to produce the material for another set of them. Then I found out that I not only hadn't forgot about the letters, I hadn't even reformed-- (60)

In both Exiles and Requiem for a Nun, the past and its effect on the present dominates the story line. In each of the dramas, a key event -- the Rowans' "exile" from Ireland and Temple Drake's corruption in Memphis -- takes place in the past, prior to the immediate action of the play. In both works, the protagonists ponder and analyze their pasts, struggling to shake off the after-effects of these events. The Rowans must face their native city after years of self-chosen exile and a departure together which did not include marriage. Their common-law marriage may prevent them from acceptance in Dublin society and harm Richard's opportunities for a teaching position at the university. The Stevenses live with enormous individual and collective guilt because of their irresponsible actions years before. They blame the past for their unhappy marriage, and they interpret their infant's murder as a punishment from God.

In Exiles, Richard Rowan succeeds in his struggle to free himself from his past. He creates, for better or worse, his own version of reality. In Requiem for a Nun Temple Stevens simply suffers, living as the victim of a past she will apparently never overcome. The quotations above illustrate the difference in the two characters' thinking about the past. For Rowan, mutability signifies life. The very passage of time guarantees changes to the body and also transformations of attitude. Robert Hand had better not expect Bertha's beauty, or even Rowan's friendship, to remain constant. The past, by definition, is a lost realm. For Temple, character remains a constant, regardless of one's present circumstances. Because she has always been Temple Drake (although her married name is now Stevens), she is destined to "produce the material" for another set of erotic letters. She is doomed to have another affair, falling back into the promiscuous behavior patterns of Memphis and before.

In Exiles, the past haunts each of the four main characters. Rowan, like Stephen Dedalus in Ulysses, carries guilt, because he never reconciled himself with his dead mother over the issue of religion. He says, "I fought against her spirit while she lived to the bitter end...It fights against me still--" (127). Bertha suffers regret at her lost youth. She is in tears when she tells Brigid, "That time comes only once in a lifetime. The rest of life is good for nothing except to remember that time" (232). Similarly, the past haunts Beatrice Justice. She has suffered a major illness and describes herself as "convalescent." (She may be implying sterility, for she tells Richard Rowan, "I am given life and health again -- when I cannot use them" (125).) Finally, Robert Hand, who has grown fat and rather pathetic, suffers regret that he was not the one "chosen" by Bertha years before. "I am no longer... an ideal lover," he says. "Like my roses. Common, old" (187).

In spite of the pain it causes, the past in Exiles is by and large a lost realm, mourned but never to be recovered. As Bertha says to Robert, "Past is past" (222). The only character in Exiles who seems to argue in favor of destiny is Robert Hand, and in doing so he usually appears weak or illogical. He says to Richard, "No man ever yet lived on this earth who did not long to possess...the woman whom he loves. It is nature's law" (190). Rowan replies, "(contemptuously) What is that to me? Did I vote it?" (190). When Hand attempts to seduce Bertha, he says, "The past is not past. It is present here and now" (233); however, Bertha rejected Hand in the past, so if she accepts his logic, she will be destined to reject him again.

In Requiem for a Nun, Gavin Stevens uses words similar to those of Robert Hand, telling his nephew Gowan, "There's no such thing" [as immunity] and "There's no such thing as past either" (19). He says to Temple, "The past is never dead. It's not even past" (33). Gavin believes that the story of the past represents present "truth." Early in the play, his conversation with Temple reveals that he knows something about the murder which has not surfaced in the trial. He hints that his knowledge would prevent Nancy Mannigoe's execution. He also hints that the secret has something to do with Temple's promiscuity. To Temple (when asked what he "knows"), he says, "There was a man here that night" (14). To Gowan, he says,

> Is that what you can never forgive her for? --for having created that moment in your life which you can never forget nor condone nor even stop thinking about, because she herself didn't even suffer, but, on the contrary, even liked it -- That you had to lose not only your bachelor freedom, but your man's self-respect, to pay for something your wife didn't even regret? Is that why this poor lost doomed crazy Negro woman must die? (21)

Stevens goes on to say,

> What else happened during that month, that time while that madman held her prisoner there in the Memphis whorehouse, that nobody but you and she know about, maybe not even you know about? (22)

Stevens clearly links the murder of Temple's infant child with her character and her past. Unlike the character Robert Hand, Stevens is not an obvious liar or a buffoon. As Nancy Mannigoe's attorney and the uncle of Gowan Stevens, he has cause for loyalty to both Nancy and the young Stevenses. It is unclear, even after Temple makes her statement before the Governor, why Gowan seems to hold Temple responsible for Nancy's actions, unless he blames her general immorality for all other "wrongs" which occur in the story.

In Gavin Stevens' view of the world, the past lives into the present in the form of "doom." When he speaks of "choice," in the following passage, he describes a lose/lose situation.

> So you can take your choice about the second child. Perhaps she was too busy between the three of them: the doom, the fate, the past; the bargain with God; the forgiveness and gratitude. She just didn't have time to be careful enough. Anyway, she was pregnant again, and she probably knew fifteen months before the murder of her child that this was the end. She had merely been wondering for fifteen months what form the doom would take (64).

The reader may "choose" an explanation, but the result is predetermined. Gavin Stevens articulates a sense of hopelessness in the play which many of the other characters share, and Temple herself embodies (literally, in the passage above, as the mother pregnant with a doomed child.) The word "doom" echoes through the play, which begins with the tolling of a bell. (In its novel form, the play is set in motion by the original Jefferson courthouse clock, with its "first loud ding-dong of time and doom" (48).) Stevens refers to Nancy as "this poor lost doomed crazy Negro woman" (21), and one of Temple's last phrases in the play is, "Doomed ... Damned ... Finished" (104).

"William Faulkner: The Doomed and the Damned" by Carlos Baker classifies a high percentage of Faulkner's young protagonists as either doomed to "save and and serve [their] fellow-mortals no matter how little they seem to want or to deserve salvation," (148) or damned, " 'fated'...to be sinners, enemies of the people, peripheral outcasts" (147). The study points out that, whether the characters are helpful or harmful to the society in which they live, they often seem to face insurmountable odds, and, like Hemingway's characters, have little or no hope of winning. At the end of Requiem for a Nun, Temple walks off stage answering the call of her husband, defeated, returning to her family, however wearisome this may be. Her husband's call stirs her to motion, but she still carries with her the burden of the past and quite possibly a future that is also doomed.

In a similar image, her counterpart in Exiles, Richard Rowan, ends his performance feeling weary and depleted, so much so that he speaks his last few lines in complete stasis, stretched "wearily along the lounge" (266). But Rowan resists the notion of history repeating itself. In the last scene, he says to his lover, "Bertha, you are free" (252). Bertha is angered by this, and pushes him away. She says, "A stranger! I am living with a stranger!" (252). Later, she attempts to comfort him by reviewing the story of their exile together and her faithfulness to him, and the stage direction says that he "sighs deeply," and answers, "Yes, Bertha. You were my bride in exile" (264). She does not understand that what she was then is irrelevant, just as irrelevant as Hand's evocation of the "language of his youth." Richard Rowan rejects traditional morality, and he also rejects the notion of the past as a framework for the future. As Robert Hand describes him, "He longs to be delivered...from every law...from every bond" (227). When Bertha attempts to talk to Richard about her evening alone with Robert, he says to her, "You will tell me. But I will never know. Never in this world" (250). He tells her three times that he will never know, and later, he says to her,

> I can never know, never in this world. I do not wish to know or to believe. I do not care. It is not in the darkness of belief that I desire you. But in restless living wounding doubt (265).

In Exiles, desire is linked with doubt. This contrasts sharply with the connection between desire and doom in Requiem for a Nun. The severence of the bonds of tradition, the past and even love in Joyce's work makes the protagonist, Richard Rowan, a free agent. In Faulkner's work, such an escape, however desirable, seems an impossibility.

III. RELIGION AND FREE WILL

> Richard Rowan: She [Rowan's mother] died alone, not having forgiven me and fortified by the rites of holy church...And what I suffer at this moment you [Beatrice] will say is my punishment (126).
>
> Temple Stevens: Why do you [Nancy] and my little baby have to suffer just because I decided to go to a baseball game? Do you have to suffer everybody else's anguish just to believe in God? What kind of God is it that has to blackmail his customers with the whole world's grief and ruin? (99)

In both _Exiles_ and _Requiem for a Nun_ the question of free will relates to the theme of religion. Both protagonists feel dissatisfied with the notion of God which prevails in their respective worlds and wish to free themselves from traditional beliefs and customs. Both Richard and Temple are bitter. The quotations above illustrate this. Rowan's mother, a devout Catholic, rejected him and his wife and child because Rowan refused to marry Bertha. Richard views the church as hypocritical for "fortifying" his mother with its blessing. Temple believes herself a victim of an unjust God who has "blackmailed" and punished her family for years because of a mistake she made when she was younger. Temple fixes the origin of her suffering on her _decision_ "to go to a baseball game." This "decision" (which probably also includes her choice to _leave_ the train bound for the game and escape for a date with Gowan Stevens), seems to be Temple's "original sin." Her view of religion and God fits an overall fatalistic pattern in

Requiem for a Nun, in which the unredeemed sinner has no freedom or options. Though Richard Rowan admits to suffering, he refuses to accept the idea that his suffering is a punishment. He tells Beatrice, "what I suffer you will say [emphasis mine] is my punishment" (126). Rowan seeks to throw off the restraints of traditional faith, creating in its place his own form of religion based on the incertitude of the void.

Both of the plays resonate with religious symbolism. In Exiles, the symbolism is subtle and at times playful, and in Requiem for a Nun it is closer to the surface and darker. Both protagonists act as spiritual figures within the works. Richard Rowan alternately plays God and Satan, acting as stage director, suffering Christ and tempter. "Temple," as her name implies, embodies a spirit. She seems trapped in the physical realm, doomed to be a lost soul, an unforgiven sinner.

Bernard Benstock (in his article "Exiles: 'Paradox Lust' and 'Lost Paladays'") demonstrates that Richard Rowan is very much a God figure, and that Exiles can be read as an extended allegory of the Garden of Eden. He writes:

> Not content with being the God of Creation, he "humanizes" himself on occasion to be Christ, refines himself at various instances out of existence to be the Holy Spirit, but most often awards himself the best Milton role of all: Satan (746).

Benstock's article emphasizes the Edenic theme of a "loss of innocence" in Exiles. Implicit in this theme but not specifically discussed by Benstock is the cause of Adam's loss of Paradise, which is an act of will. In Exiles, this exercise of will by man plays a key role throughout the drama. In the first act of the play, Richard toys with Beatrice's control over him, saying that he will show her his book of literary "sketches" only if she will ask for them (like sinners before Christ, who must "ask and they shall receive"). Beatrice remains passive. "I will not ask you," (119) she says. Richard criticizes her, saying, "You cannot give yourself freely and wholly" (125). Holding back of self for protectiveness is unacceptable to Rowan, for whom giving must preceed love.

In his desire to give "freely and wholly" (perhaps meant to play on the word "holy"), Richard Rowan seems self-sacrificing and Christ-like; but his outward generosity has a darker side. He admits to Robert Hand that he has both "ignoble" and "noble" motives for allowing Bertha her freedom. "I longed for that passionately and ignobly, to be dishonoured for ever in love and in lust...to be for ever a shameful creature and to build up my soul again out of the ruins of its shame" (200). He hopes secretly that Bertha will betray him, not in order to free her but to debase her.

He says, "She has spoken always of her innocence as I have spoken always of my guilt, humbling me" [emphasis mine] (200).

Rowan uses giving as a means of control. In explaining to his son, Archie, what it means "to give a thing" (163-4), Rowan essentially says that one gives in order to prevent onesself from being robbed. "When you give it you have given it. No robber can take it from you," (164) Rowan says. Perhaps he gives Bertha in order to prevent her from being taken by a robber named Robert whom he refers to as a "thief" (173) three times in speaking with Bertha. Even though Rowan seems sincere in his desire to free Bertha, he also wishes for control of the circumstances of the affair, at least initially. With his "noble" yet "ignoble" motives, he plays the dual roles of God and Satan.

The religious career of Richard Rowan reaches its climax with his self-willed crucifixion, a sacrifice of his certainty of Bertha's fidelity. Rowan describes it as follows:

> I have wounded my soul for you -- a deep wound of doubt which can never be healed. I can never know, never in this world. I do not wish to know or to believe. I do not care. It is not in the darkness of belief that I desire you. But in restless living wounding doubt. To hold you by no bonds, even of love, to be united with you in body and soul in utter nakedness -- for this I longed. And now I am tired for a while, Bertha. My wound tires me (266).

Rowan's religion inverts traditional Christian belief. He celebrates the void, the unknown. Instead of "salvation," and certainty, Rowan seeks life, change and the unknown. He must exercise his will rather than surrender it.

In Requiem for a Nun the answer to Richard Rowan's "doubt" may be Nancy Mannigoe's "hope." She says,

> I went on hoping: the hardest thing of all to get rid of, let go of, the last thing of all poor sinning man will turn aloose. Maybe it's because that's all he's got. Leastways, he holds on to it, even with salvation already in his hand and all he needs is just to shut his fingers, old sin is still too strong for him, and sometimes before he even knows it, he has throwed salvation away just grabbing back at hoping (97).

Like Rowan, Nancy Mannigoe prefers (living wounding) hope, a human substitute for the prescribed "salvation" handed down to her by her faith. Perhaps if Nancy had listened to her "hoping" or "human" side, she would not have felt compelled to carry out the murder which she seemed to believe was God's will. Just before entering the nursery for the last time, Nancy says, "I tried everything I knowed. You can see that" (78). Temple is mystified by Nancy, who, when asked if there is a heaven, says, "I don't know. I believes" (101). Temple asks, "Believe what?" and Nancy replies, "I don't know. But I believes." Nancy's innocent and "saintly" monologues are undercut by the jailor, who says:

> If I was ever fool enough to commit a killing that would get my neck into a noose, the last thing I would want to see would be a preacher. I'd a heap rather believe there wasn't nothing after death than to risk the station where I was probably going to get off (104).

The jailor reminds readers (who, like Temple and Gavin Stevens may be swept up in Nancy's spiritual wisdom) that she is a murderer. He also explains the primary image of the drama, that of a requiem mass for a "nun," or prostitute. The townspeople gather each Sunday evening around the prison to hear Nancy, Gavin Stevens and other prisoners singing hymns in the prison. The jailor says, "To tell the truth, we come to enjoy it too...by the second or third Sunday night, folks was stopping along the street to listen to them instead of going to regular church" (91).

The jailor and the people of the town know that the Sunday hymn sessions will end with Nancy's execution. But what of the play's other "nun," Temple? Although she has confessed her sins to her husband, his uncle and the Governor, Temple finds no peace in the play. "Even if there is a heaven and somebody waiting to forgive me, there's still tomorrow and tomorrow..." (103) she says. The future seems to her an unbreakable chain of cause and effect, of debt and payment.

The God of Requiem for a Nun is in business to make a profit, and the characters often talk about "paying" him for their sins. Gowan speaks of "paying for" immunity by not drinking, (19), and of Temple finding "some price...some last nickel in the world" (38) which she will not have to pay. Temple refers to Gowan's marrying her as "paying for" his past sins, and Gavin describes Temple's existence with Gowan as a "bargain with God" (64). In the last scene, Temple wonders why God has to "blackmail his customers" [emphasis mine] (99) with the world's agony. In the spiritual realm, just as "nothing is free" in Requiem for a Nun, no person is free, particularly those who have incurred a heavy "debt" of sin. Temple Stevens seems to be an unfortunate soul who must "pay" God through a life of suffering. Unlike Richard Rowan, who defies and discards "the laws of nature," Temple finds herself trapped by them, forced to face a seemingly endless chain of "tomorrows" and the inevitable suffering they bring.

IV. MARRIAGE AND FREE WILL

> Richard Rowan: It is not in the darkness of belief that I desire you. But in restless living wounding doubt. To hold you by no bonds, even of love, to be united with you in body and soul in utter nakedness -- for this I longed (265-6).

> Gowan Stevens: Say yes, Temple.
> Temple: I can't.
> Gowan: Say yes, Temple. We loved each other once. Didn't we?
> Temple: We must have.
> Gowan: Then say it. You said it once.
> Temple: We loved each other once.
> Gowan: Then prove it. If she [Nancy] must die, let her. (43)

The marriages of the couples stand at the center of both Exiles and Requiem for a Nun; and the question of how one can remain both "free" and "bound" in a monogamous relationship pervades the works as well. In Exiles, the violation (real or imagined) of fidelity constitutes the drama's central conflict. In Requiem for a Nun, Temple's unhappy marriage and her desire to escape it causes the conflict with Nancy Mannigoe and leads to the murder of the infant. Both works address the question of how two individuals may freely choose to remain together when their desires and interests conflict, and in both plays, "marriage" and "freedom of choice" turn out to be quite distinct phenomena. In the case of the Rowans, this study will frequently use the term "marriage," although the couple shares a monogamous relationship of nine years without having legally married. The very fact that they did not marry indicates the importance of choice to the Rowans. Their relationship is based on mutual consent, and, as Rowan says, they are held together by "no bonds." The Stevenses, by contrast, seem to have felt "obligated" to marry. They were married shortly after Temple's kidnapping in order to protect Temple's reputation. Gowan describes this decision (sarcastically) as "purest Old Virginia...indeed the hundred and sixty gentlemen." He implies that he was bound by a code of honor, and that, given "free choice," he would not have married Temple.

The quotations above illustrate the contrast between the two couples. Rowan desires a union that is completely outside of the "bonds" of the world. His phrase "in the darkness of belief" shows contempt for the power of religious ceremony. He refuses to marry and play the conventional role of husband, and he rejects even the "bonds of love," with their dependence on history and habit. He defies the logic of cause and effect. Gowan Stevens, in contrast, has nothing but the past to use as his anchor. He reasons that if Temple and he loved one another once, they must maintain a certain amount of that love, and consequently, they must be loyal to one another. From there it follows that even if a wrongful death is the consequence, the couple must remain silent to protect their original union. Temple agrees that they loved one another, but she refuses to keep silent as Gowan desires

Prior to settling into monogamy, both couples made the choice to "run away" together, but from that point, the relationships take very different courses. Richard and Bertha left Ireland and sailed to Italy together in an elopement without marriage. Gowan waylaid Temple at a train stop on her way to a baseball game, planning a tryst with her. The first couple remained together in spite of hardship. This may have been a combination of "free choice" and a sense of responsibility for their son, Archie. Richard tells Robert that he "pierced" Bertha's heart by waking her up in the middle of the night to confess an incident of adultery. Richard says, "My house was silent. My little son was sleeping in his cot" [emphasis mine] (195). Bertha says, "Heavens, what I suffered then...I was so sad. I was alone...I felt my life was ended" (263-4). Ostensibly, Richard confesses to Bertha because he is incapable of lying to her; however, if Bertha, as the mother of his child, feels bound to Rowan regardless of his behavior, then Rowan's confession also carries a measure of cruelty, and he is flaunting his power over her and showing her that he has freedom and she does not. He tells Robert, "I was feeding the flame of her innocence with my guilt" (195). When Richard encourages Bertha to stay in Robert's cottage, she says it is, "To have that against me. To leave me then" (208). She also describes it as, "To have it always to throw against me. To make me humble before you as you always did.

To be free yourself" (250). Throughout the play, the Rowans relate to one another in terms of a power struggle: Richard acts as inquisitor and exposer of hidden truths, and Bertha undermines his control, shrugs it off. In his notes to Exiles, Joyce describes the play as "three cat and mouse acts."

The Stevenses, who also struggle with one another for personal freedom and dominance, are forced to stay together by external circumstances more powerful than either of their individual wills. Their life together begins in a collision with destiny, and they remain together initially to save face, a reaction to social pressure rather than an act of choice. Their early life together is an attempt to recover some of their former respectability and pride. Temple says, "You know; face it: the disgrace: the shame, face it down, good and down forever. The Gowan Stevenses, young, popular: a new house on the right street, a country club, a pew in the right church" (62). In contrast with the dynamics of exposé which characterize the Rowans, the Stevenses engage in covert behavior throughout the play. Temple hides her affair and her letters from Gowan, and Gowan conceals his presence in the Governor's chamber as he listens to Temple's confession. Their attempts at maintaining their privacy fail because Temple's husband learns her secrets and Temple, by revealing her secrets to the State, shatters the couple's respectable image. The couple ultimately stays together because they have nothing more to lose. It is a passive and hopeless union, described by Temple as "Oh God. Again. Tomorrow and tomorrow--" (83).

In spite of the failure of the Stevens' union, there remains at the end some hope for their son, Bucky. In Requiem for a Nun, the children play a major role in the plot, and they are integral to the themes of destiny and doom. When Nancy murders Temple's six-month-old daughter, it is to prevent Temple from running away from her husband, exercising her freedom. Temple's return from California and attempt to save Nancy is a result of her son's words, which echo those of Gavin Stevens. He asks, [after Nancy is hanged] "Where will we go then, Mamma?" (25). Temple's account of the night of the murder, the central act of the play, is made (if we can believe Gavin Stevens) so that "little children, as long as they are little children, shall be intact, unanguished, untorn, unterrified" (86).

The question of Bucky's paternity, whether real or imagined on Gowan's part, is also a major source of conflict for the couple, and one which threatens both characters' sense of freedom. If Bucky was, in fact, the child of Temple's former lover, his paternity serves as a constant reminder to the couple of Temple's past. In protecting and caring for Bucky, the couple nurtures the results of Temple's past and carries out a destiny.

In contrast with Bucky, who seems to anchor Temple and Gowan to the past, Archie seems to embody his parents' free spirits. Robert Hand says of him, "Perhaps there, Richard, is the freedom we seek -- you in one way, I in another. In him and not in us" (261). With this phrase, Robert implies that Archie embodies both the past and the future, innocence and potential. Robert says to Richard, "I would say almost surely if...(with a faint smile) If he were mine" (261), and he later tells Archie, "I am your fairy godfather" (263). By an act of will (imagination), Robert makes himself a member of the Rowan family as Bertha's "dream" lover and the child's "fairy godfather." His position, which is purely theoretical, makes an interesting contrast with the threatening and very real lover/alternate father in Requiem for a Nun.

Richard Rowan and Bertha create the potential infidelity at the center of their story. Both partners participate in it, talk about it, analyze it. Temple and Gowan attempt to hide from their own crises but are driven, both by guilt and by the pressure of Gavin Stevens, to confront them. In both works, the end result of marriage seems to be an uneasy mix of two individuals. For the Rowans, marriage involves painful struggles for power through which the partners gain respect for one another. The fact that neither Richard nor Bertha ultimately dominates allows them to remain together in "living wounding doubt." For the Stevenses, marriage is incarceration. They remain together ultimately because of a kind of inertia mixed with fear. They seem to have no better prospects for happiness outside the marriage, and their child, Bucky, serves as both a bond between them and a link to their past.

V. POLITICS AND FREE WILL

> Richard Rowan (Reading from Hand's article A Distinguished Irishman): Not the least vital of the problems which confront our country is the problem of her attitude toward those of her children who, having left her in her hour of need, have been called back to her now on the eve of her longawaited victory, to her whom in loneliness and exile they have at last learned to love (245).
>
> Mr. Tubbs: Lawyer here and Nancy have been singing hymns in her cell...all of us home folks here in Jefferson and Yoknapatawpha County both know Lawyer Stevens, even if some of us might have thought he got a little out of line -- defending a nigger murderer, let alone when it was his own niece was mur--maybe suppose some stranger say, some durn Yankee tourist, happened to be passing through in a car, when we get enough durn criticism from Yankees like it is-- (90)

There is a connection between freedom for the individual and political freedom in both Exiles and Requiem for a Nun. Bertha, like the nation of Ireland, must assert her independence from the "bonds" of conventionality; and Rowan, like Parnell, champions the cause of her freedom and is betrayed. Gowan Stevens, like the American South, suffers because of the past and tries to preserve a sense of pride, and the appearance of chivalry and respectability. Temple Stevens, also like the South, is defeated, humbled by her past and forced to live in a Union from which she has attempted to secede. In Exiles, freedom is possible but never guaranteed to last. There is an uncertainty built in to all of life. In Requiem for a Nun, freedom is not possible because sin has destroyed it. The future by definition is blighted by the past.

In 1912, which is also the year Exiles takes place, the House of Commons passed a bill granting home rule to Ireland, and it appeared that Ireland would become independent, although the bill was later defeated in the House of Lords. That year, James Joyce wrote an article in an Italian newspaper which declared that the ghost of Parnell would haunt the new nation of Ireland (Ellman 319-20). In Exiles Robert Hand also publishes a newspaper article about Richard Rowan entitled A Distinguished Irishman, which begins:

> Not the least vital of the problems which confront our country is the problem of her attitude towards those of her children who, having left her in her hour of need, have been called back to her now on the eve of her longawaited victory, to her whom in loneliness and exile they have at last learned to love (245).

The article goes on to distinguish Rowan as one who left Ireland in "spiritual" as opposed to "economic" exile, (making his transgression pardonable), and to praise Rowan's intellectual contributions to the Dublin literary circle. Nevertheless, the phrase "those who left her in her hour of need," implies that Rowan is a false patriot, unwilling to participate in the struggle for Irish Independence until victory looked certain. Rowan calls attention to the phrase, and he also stares "searchingly" at Bertha before he walks to his study. With this phrase and gesture, Rowan links Bertha with Ireland. She, like the nation, is one who was abandoned by Rowan in an "hour of need" the night before. Bertha, like Ireland, is female and a mother figure, and her "freedom" to act poses one of the central questions of the drama.

"But was she really free to choose?" Robert Hand asks of Bertha's decision to elope with Richard in 1903. "She was a mere girl. She accepted all that you proposed" (153). He suggests to Rowan that he has played the role of oppressor or ruler of Bertha. Richard answers him by saying, "I played for her against all that you say or can say: and I won" (154). At the time of the play, Richard may have some doubt as to Bertha's freedom of choice in her decision to stay with him. Although he "won" her in their original exodus, he no longer wishes to conquer her. When he leaves her with Robert in Act II, he says, "Who am I that I should call myself master of your heart or any woman's?" (208), and in the last scene, he tells her, "Bertha! Bertha, you are free" (252). Although Robert depicts Richard as Bertha's master or ruler, the role which Richard Rowan prefers to give himself in the play is closer to that of Charles Stewart Parnell. Like Parnell, Rowan sees himself as betrayed by those he attempts to set free, surrounded by false friends who are secretly his enemies. In Act I, Robert tells Richard:

> I fought for you all the time you were away. I fought to bring you back. I fought to keep your place for you here. I will fight for you still because I have faith in you, the faith of a disciple in his master (159).

Rowan comments to him that "There is a faith still stranger than the faith of the disciple in his master...The faith of a master in the disciple who will betray him" (159). Rowan resembles Parnell (in his own mind) because he believes himself betrayed by his constituents. Like Parnell, Rowan has a liason with a protestant woman, Beatrice Justice. (She inspires Rowan to write about his love, like Dante's Beatrice). In his Notes to Exiles, Joyce wrote:

> The relations between Mrs. O'Shea and Parnell are not of vital significance for Ireland -- first, because Parnell was tongue-tied and secondly because she was an Englishwoman. The very points in his character which could have been of interest have been passed over in silence. Her manner of writing is not Irish -- nay, her manner of loving is not Irish. The character of O'Shea is much more typical of Ireland. The two greatest Irishmen of modern times -- Swift and Parnell -- both broke their lives over women. And it was the adulterous wife of the King of Leinster who brought the first Saxon to the Irish coast (354).

There is more than a hint of the erotic between Beatrice Justice and Richard Rowan, and both Bertha and Robert suggest this to Richard. If Rowan is associated with Parnell, Joyce's note above seems to support a view that whether or not Rowan is involved with Beatrice, their affair is irrelevant to Bertha's freedom. It is only Parnell's love of Ireland -- Richard's love of Bertha -- which matters. Joyce names the two greatest Irishmen as Parnell and Swift. In Exiles, Robert twice describes Richard as having, "that fierce indignation which lacerated the heart of Swift" (158 and 245).

If Richard Rowan in the politics of Exiles is Parnell, one wonders if his wound of doubt will be fatal, breaking his life as the life of Parnell was broken by the betrayal of the Irish people. The morning after Bertha's and Robert's evening alone, Richard tells Robert that he spent the night alone, writing and walking on the strand. "Hearing...the voices of those who say they love me," (260) he says. "And what did they tell you?" (260) Robert asks him. Rowan replies, "They told me to despair" (260). Richard later tells Bertha, "It is too soon yet to despair" (265). The question of individual freedom, like the freedom of Ireland, remains unsettled at the end of Exiles.

In stark contrast, Requiem for a Nun ends with the phrase, "Doomed...Damned...Finished" (104). The individual, like the rebelling region, is defeated. Just as the past and future of the Rowan couple seem linked with the fate of Ireland, so the Stevenses share in the history and fate of the South. Unlike Exiles, which uses political symbolism subtly and at times humorously, the history of the South pervades Requiem for a Nun and is openly acknowledged by the characters. In the first act, Temple describes her husband to Gavin Stevens as "something of Virginia or some sort of gentleman in him too that he must have inherited from you through your grandfather" (15). When Gowan describes his fateful automobile accident, which led to Temple's imprisonment and corruption, it is in terms of "Virginia." He was "trained at Virginia to drink like a gentleman," (19) and he says that, "Marrying her was purest Old Virginia" (20). The burden of Southern pride, chivalry and respectability trap the characters into reacting in ways they do not consciously choose. The politics of Requiem for a Nun doom and damn the characters because the South was defeated. The question of free will, as it relates to political freedom, turns on the sins of the past and locks the characters into determined behavior. Gowan marries Temple because he is a Southern gentleman, and marriage is the only alternative left to him.

Temple Stevens, who makes a mockery of the stereotypical "Southern Belle," may also be read as a symbol for the South. Like the South, she has sought her freedom and independence from the established order and has lost the battle and had to suffer the death of a loved one. She finds herself with no cause to defend and no wish to defend her past actions in the aftermath of defeat. She has no realistic choice other than to continue with her marriage. The words Gowan speaks to her could very well be applied to the post-Civil War South, and they carry an inherent contradiction: "If there is any reason for grief and suffering, it's so that you will learn at least not to make the same mistake again...But I still believe that there is some drop of blood you won't have to pay for what you did and can't recall" (42). Gowan desires earnestly that Temple learn from the past; yet he also urges her to forget it. His advice shows the conflict between the defeat of the South and the remnants of Southern pride and chivalry. The characters struggle vainly to ignore the past while reliving it.

This contradiction and conflict -- doing the "right action" vs. forgetting and moving forward -- is embodied in the central irony from which the play takes its name, that of a requiem mass for a "nun" or prostitute. Mr. Tubbs, the jailor, expresses concern over what some "durn Yankee tourist" passing through Jefferson would think of lawyer Gavin Stevens standing outside Nancy's prison cell, singing hymns. For this reason, he urges Stevens to come inside, and he feels compelled to do so, because appearances are important to him. Ironically, Tubbs himself is carried away by the music, and he, along with other citizens, listen to the hymns at the jail "instead of going to regular church" (91). Perhaps Tubbs and others prefer the real-life drama of Nancy's suffering and imminent death to the more abstract discussion of crucifixion they would find in church. The community can participate in Nancy's drama with a degree of emotional distance from the defendant, because, as Tubbs says, Nancy has committed "as horrible a crime as this county ever seen" (102).

Is the music at the jail to be read as a sincere expression of faith, or as an ironic touch on the part of the author? The black humor of Tubbs in remarks such as, "I had an idea at one time to have the Marshal comb the nigger dives and joints not for drunks and gamblers, but basses and baritones" (91) suggests the latter. Nancy Mannigoe believes that she has carried out God's will, and in her supreme effort to "save" the young Stevens family, she kills its youngest member. The drama of hymn singing has caused the community to put this fact aside during Sunday evenings prior to her execution. If Tubbs is disturbed at the notion of some "durn Yankee tourist" witnessing this "requiem mass," it is with good reason. The town, like the South, has chosen the worst elements of its past to glorify. As Gowan Stevens says to Temple, the community must learn from its mistakes, but if amnesia prevails, it may be impossible for them to do so.

VI. CONCLUSION

Temple Stevens and Richard Rowan, as artistic creations, certainly do more than act as mouthpieces for their authors; yet their expressions of anguish and rebellion ring a familiar note in conjunction with some of the words of their own authors. The following passage, taken from a letter by Joyce to Lady Gregory in 1902, might well have been written by Richard Rowan to Beatrice Justice in Exiles instead:

> I want to achieve myself -- little or great as I may be -- for I know that there is no heresy or no philosophy which is so abhorrent to my church as a human being.... I shall try myself against the powers of the world. All things are inconstant except the faith in the soul, which changes all things and fills their inconstancy with light. And though I seem to have been driven out of my country as a misbeliever I have found no man yet with a faith like mine (Brivic, Joyce the Creator 28: taken from Joyce's Letters 1:53).

Joyce's statement in the letter that "there is no heresy or no philosophy which is so abhorrent to my church as a human being" (emphasis added) shows Joyce's overt hostility to organized religion. Throughout his career, Joyce's work defies conventional morality. Although this may not be obvious to contemporary readers, it explains the fact that Joyce had great difficulties with censorship of his works over the years. They were considered obscene and politically subversive. In Exiles, Richard Rowan glorifies that which is human, "living," as opposed to what he calls the "darkness of belief." At the very center of Exiles, in place of belief, lies an abyss of doubt, a void. Rowan's self-wounding doubt, like Joyce's declaration to "achieve" himself, is an act of defiance and an exercise of will.

Faulkner, in contrast with Joyce, expresses acceptance of traditional values and beliefs. It is not difficult to imagine the passage below, taken from Faulkner's "Address Upon Receiving the Nobel Prize," spoken by Gavin Stevens in Requiem for a Nun:

> He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed....It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. (The Portable Faulkner 723-4)

Like Joyce, Faulkner expresses high esteem for the spirit of the individual and his power; however, unlike Joyce, he sees the salvation of man expressed in "old verities" and "old universal truths," without which the individual is "doomed." Far from Joyce's intrepid, "I want to achieve myself -- little or great as I may be --," Faulkner offers a vision of the end of time which is markedly fatalistic. He sees man approaching a "last ding-dong of doom," a "last worthless rock," and a "last red and dying evening." As in Temple Stevens' visions of the past in Requiem for a Nun, Faulkner expresses in his Nobel Prize speech a view that the past is always with man. He also implies, like the drama, that politics leads to defeat and that salvation transcends man's ability to understand its reasoning. We are not told why Faulkner believes that against all odds man will not only endure but prevail -- Faulkner, like Nancy, simply "believes."

In contrast with the fatalistic world of Requiem for a Nun, Exiles posits free will. In Exiles, "past is past," and it is gone forever. Political freedom is attainable, though not assured. Marriage, as a legal or even a moral bond has no meaning, and religion must come from individual thought, not from an external set of rules to be followed. It would be possible, I believe, to make further Joyce/Faulkner textual comparisons with similar conclusions. The linear and irreparable path of Stephen Dedalus, for example, takes a much more successfully defiant stance against the world than that of Quentin Compson, doomed by the sheer weight of time, history and unfulfilled longing. One path ends in exodus, the other in suicide.

Yet in the final analysis, despite the contrast in content, both authors produce works which have a similar effect upon the emotions of their readers. Both authors' artwork produces a certain moral ambiguity that is a characteristic of modernism. We are not told what to make of the stories. We do not come away from them with a feeling that loose ends are tied; furthermore, the stories often sustain multiple interpretations. This is particularly evident in the two dramas, _Exiles_ and _Requiem for a Nun_, because the absence of a narrator strips the works of a point of view and makes them starker and purer examples of Joycean and Faulknerian artwork.

In _Exiles_ the audience feels the same doubt and discomfort as Richard Rowan. In _Requiem for a Nun_ the audience experiences an inexplicable tragedy and does not know whom, if anyone, to blame. Perhaps it is the complexity of these two dramas which makes them difficult to stage and has, in part, kept them unsuccessful. Each drama proved itself "stageable" in at least one well-received production: _Exiles_ in 1970 in London, directed by Harold Pinter (MacNicholas 14) and _Requiem for a Nun_ in 1956 in Paris, directed by Albert Camus (Taylor 127). For the most part, however, audiences found _Exiles_ tedious and _Requiem for a Nun_ difficult to believe. The plays, though interesting to serious students of Joyce and Faulkner, never enhanced the reputations of their authors.

Both Joyce and Faulkner were creators and, in a sense, fathers of "alternative worlds," Joyce of the Dublin of Bloomsday and Faulkner of the county of Yoknapatawpha. I hope that this study, with its comparison of the "bastard dramas" in the contexts of the past, religion, marriage and politics -- and finally, in overall effect on their audiences -- has demonstrated in some degree the remarkable affinity between James Joyce and William Faulkner. Given the evidence presented in this study, the dramas' distinctive representations of the question of free will may help to provide a new frame of reference for Joyce/Faulkner studies.

ENDNOTES

[1] All citations to the text of Requiem for a Nun, unless otherwise noted, are taken from Requiem for a Nun, A Play from the Novel by William Faulkner by Ruth Ford and William Faulkner (New York: Random House, 1959). This text was chosen because its excision of the long prose narratives introducing each act of the play make it easier to compare with Joyce's drama. Admittedly, this choice of text in itself constitutes a "reading" of Faulkner's work.

[2] All citations to the text of Exiles are taken from: James Joyce, Poems and Exiles, ed. J.C.C. Mays. (London: Penguin Books, 1992). This edition also includes Joyce's notes and draft scenes from Exiles, taken from notebooks now in Buffalo, NY.

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VITA

Robin Hume Brownhill grew up in Grove City, PA and obtained her B.A. at the Pennsylvania State University. She worked six years as a technical writer, then she married, moved to Richmond and began selling used paper making machinery, which is her current career. The Brownhills have a son, William James, age 3.