

# FAULKNER IN JAPAN: A “SECOND OCCUPATION”

by

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This project is dedicated to my advisors, for reading and re-reading my drafts, providing perspective, and providing fresh points of view. It is also dedicated to my friends, for fielding my ideas, accepting my complaints, and assuring me that the worst of it was ~~almost~~ over. Most of all this paper is dedicated to my family, for the simple gift of helping me to stay sane through it all.

*To understand the world, you must first understand a place like Mississippi.*

William Faulkner

# Table of Contents

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

Research Question.....	5
Chapter Outlines.....	10

## **Chapter 2 – USIS: International Information and Diplomacy**

Second Occupation.....	12
Exchange of Persons Program.....	15
Goals and Programs Abroad.....	18
Defining USIS Intentions.....	20

## **Chapter 3 – Faulkner in Global Perspective**

U.S. Perspective on Faulkner.....	23
The Emergence of American Interest in Faulkner.....	25
Faulkner’s Reception Abroad.....	27
Latin America.....	30
Cold War Concerns.....	34

## **Chapter 4 – Japanese Impressions of Faulkner**

Nagano Seminar.....	37
General Impressions.....	39
Japan and Faulkner’s South.....	42
Interviews with Faulkner.....	47

## **Chapter 5 – Results and Conclusions**

Intended Results.....	51
Actual Results.....	53
Local Newspapers.....	54
Officially Recognized Results.....	58

## **Epilogue**..... 61

Scans.....	64
Bibliography.....	67

# Chapter 1: Introduction

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Two weeks after returning suddenly from my study abroad in Japan, I sat in the back of a classroom and watched the grainy, black and white compilation of video clips known as the film “Impressions of Japan” for the first time. The U.S. State Department created this film, c. 1955, to document William Faulkner’s first and only trip to Japan (narrated by a dialogue written by Faulkner). In making the film, they used structured, posed moments of Faulkner’s interactions with Japan such as his visit to a temple, his lectures to students and professors, and his interviews with the press. I started researching and discovered that few secondary sources pertaining to Faulkner’s trip to Japan (or the many other countries he visited) existed. This lack of information was an opportunity rather than a misfortune; this thesis could synthesize the available primary information and form conclusions as a secondary source in its own right. Essentially my goal is to define post-Occupation U.S.-Japan relations as a “Second Occupation” using the trip of William Faulkner to Japan as a case study.

I began with the history of the era I was researching. In 1945 the ultimate U.S. weapon, the nuclear bomb, defeated the Japanese army and ended the Second World War. This event permanently changed U.S. – Japan relations as well as Japanese relations with the world at large. Japan, which most of the world considered as “blindly militaristic” and some commentators considered to be worthy of sterilization or even complete annihilation, was to be controlled, broken down, re-educated, and rebuilt by

the United States.<sup>1</sup> These were tenuous years in international relations around the world as post-war concerns forced countries to pick up and begin again, but the popular public sentiments of confusion and exhaustion seemed to be heightened in Japan. This pivotal moment marked the beginning of a new era characterized by the Allied Occupation of Japan, which introduced new ideas to Japan in a wave of Westernization presented to the East as modernization. The Occupation also supported the U.S. military in East Asia by providing territory for bases, thus effectively creating a front for offense or defense against the growing Communist presence in Russia and China. Altogether, Japan was a country invaded.

However, as physically and historically prominent as the Occupation of Japan was, scholars have long debated the scope of its influence. Writers such as Michael Schaller and Anne J. Abadie argue that it was only superficially successful, and that the eventual shift in approach known as the “reverse course” was duly needed to keep U.S.- Japan relations from deteriorating past the point of repair. Schaller in particular notes that the well-known Occupation of Japan was a “back-burner” topic in Washington, a second-tier priority behind the U.S. concerns regarding Europe during the late 1940s and 1950s.<sup>2</sup> Schaller contends that decisions made about Japan were fashioned through the lens of prioritizing the European nations; every time he referred to a government policy for Japan it was an afterthought following similar actions in Germany.<sup>3</sup> In describing the situation taking shape in Europe, Schaller clearly shows the tethered relationship he believed Germany and Japan had in the minds of the U.S. officials: “As the European ‘containment program’ took form, the United States

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Schaller. *The American Occupation of Japan*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.) Pages 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 84

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 78

determined that Japan, like Germany, must serve as a bastion against Soviet expansion and, more positively, a catalyst sparking regional recovery.”<sup>4</sup> Thus scholars agree that the actual reforms of the Occupation were superficial and secondary in the minds of U.S. officials in relation to those in Europe.

Critics point to the change in tactics that the U.S. utilized from aggressive to supposedly passive immediately following the Occupation as proof that the famed U.S. Occupation did not achieve all that it was supposed to. The original Occupation was one of imposing power, physical presence and brute force. It was physical and invasive, with a strong military presence and an obvious line between the ‘conquered’ and the ‘conquerors’. It immediately followed the nuclear bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and thus was met with a country in turmoil. The Americans were in Japan to assist in its recovery and to help it regain a respectable place in international affairs, but this did not translate into equality or understanding between the two sides.

Despite this, the relief that the end of the war brought the Japanese people created a positive association with the West and Americans in Japan. As the Occupation plowed onward, Japanese opinion of the West and of America in particular began to change. While earlier popular Japanese thought regarding Americans changed drastically from images of demons during the war to the bringers of peace and prosperity at the beginning of the Occupation, over the years of the Occupation Japanese opinion began to decline in regards to America. Iriye Akira agrees that Japanese opinions went from highly positive in the confused haze after the bombs to a

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 77

more somber, negative perspective as the dust began to clear.<sup>5</sup> This growing aversion to America was very disconcerting for the U.S., considering that one of the goals that the original Occupation had failed to realize was the aligning of the Japanese minds with the West, or in other words, strengthening Japanese morale against the influence of Communism. In his work The Cold War in East Asia 1945-1991, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa marks Asia during the original Occupation as the ‘second front’ of the Cold War, which he states is crucial in understanding how and why things that happened in the East were different from what occurred in Europe.<sup>6</sup> Because the U.S. saw Asia as a secondary front of the war next to the European front, Hasegawa argues that the U.S. felt more comfortable using military actions than it did in Europe, where tensions were high and relations were at risk. This sense of ease with military strength led to the two ‘hot’ wars in East Asia of Korea and Vietnam, a risk to civilian safety that Hasegawa argues the U.S. actively avoided in European nations. Hasegawa has argued that U.S. interests in Japan between the years 1945-1952 were based more on a desire for control of physical land as opposed to a desire to better relations, and that the Occupation suffered because of it. My proposal is that the U.S. transitioned to a different type of interest from 1952 characterized by a distinctive Occupation strategy, as evidenced by their second attempt to turn the tide of Japanese opinion in the 1950s. The “Second Occupation” was a very quiet and soft approach incorporating language and cultural exchange. It came at a time when the Japanese had returned to their daily lives and the war damage was well on its way to being repaired.

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<sup>5</sup> Akira Iriye; Warren I. Cohen. *The United States and Japan In the Postwar World*. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1989.) Pages 209-210.

<sup>6</sup> Tsuyoshi Hasegawa. *The Cold War in East Asia 1945-1991*. (Chicago: Stanford University Press, 2011.) Page 1.

Following the end of the Occupation in 1952, the U.S. formed programs such as the USIS (United States Information Service) to approach foreign nations in a new way, by utilizing a more cultural, rather than political, agenda. One such cultural approach was an exchange program by which noted American private citizens attended conferences abroad to give lectures, interviews and answer questions in an attempt to better show what America and being 'American' truly meant. Using one trip made by such an individual, Nobel Prize winning novelist William Faulkner, to Japan as a case study, I propose that the shift in postwar U.S. – Japan relations could be defined as a "Second Occupation".

Intercultural communication, education, and more subtle sense of presence in Japanese society defined the years culminating in the Second Occupation. This Occupation was interested in bringing the Japanese into the sphere of American influence by their own choice. To accomplish this, the U.S. created an open atmosphere in which to exchange thoughts, beliefs and culture with Japan in a manner that, at least superficially, placed the two nations on equal footing with one another.

This project is situated within the world of post-Occupation U.S.-Japan relations. The Occupation is highly covered in scholarly writing from its logistics to its successes and its failings, but the immediate post-Occupation years are fairly unmentioned in most secondary literature on the subject. This essay will show how the U.S. shifted its goals and interests in East Asia from militaristic to cultural through the example of a particular academic exchange during the post-Occupation years. Through the case study of Faulkner's trip to Japan, this essay will analyze the motivations, goals, and actions of

the U.S. in post-Occupation Japan, and examine how these actions could be defined as a “Second Occupation”.

The first chapter investigates in detail the origins and the functions of the United States Information Agency (alternately known as the United States Information Service). Having an understanding not only of the processes that led to its creation, but also the motives and goals of this agency is fundamental to the full understanding of how the USIS conducted Faulkner’s trip and the significance of the outcomes of his trip. The USIS provided the framework of a pro-American, pro-democratic system in which they asked Faulkner to perform in interviews abroad. By researching this organization we are better prepared to understand this framework and to evaluate its effectiveness in repairing and strengthening post-Occupation U.S.-Japan relations.

The second chapter explores William Faulkner in a global perspective outside of Japan; how various countries received his literature and his identity. This context is critical to the question of why he was chosen by the State Department to be a global ambassador. This chapter will ultimately investigate the drastic differences in how countries abroad received Faulkner, and how they affect his global reputation going in to 1955.

The next chapter looks specifically at Japanese impressions of Faulkner. I will discuss the Japanese opinion of Faulkner previous to his trip and the Japanese opinion of Faulkner following his trip. It is important to understand the Japanese image of Faulkner prior to his visit in order to understand the depth of Japanese enthusiasm to have him visit their country. Likewise, it is important to understand how the Japanese press, public, and scholarly individuals received Faulkner in person when compared to

previous expectations. Utilizing articles from a vast array of Japanese newspapers and international journals, this chapter discusses what about Faulkner was expected, emphasized, downplayed and surprising to the Japanese press and the Japanese people, and to people around the world, including students, scholars and consumers.

The last chapter will analyze the results of Faulkner's trip to Japan and draw conclusions regarding the legitimacy of the hypothesis. This section will break the results down into the expected results, or those that the USIS was planning on when it extended the invitation to Faulkner, and the unexpected results that Faulkner was able to produce from his own character and personal quirks. This distinction is important in understanding the contributions the USIS made to bettering U.S. – Japan relations as opposed to the contributions that only Faulkner himself was able to make; the impact of the program versus the impact of the individual. Important topics to consider here are the cultural, socioeconomic, historical and international changes that constituted the outcome of this trip.

Finally, an epilogue section will evaluate the holistic affect of William Faulkner's international travels and reputation on his hometown of Oxford, Mississippi by looking at news articles, international educational interests, and general American interests in Oxford as a whole.

## Chapter 2: USIS

# International Information and Diplomacy

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President Dwight Eisenhower established the United States Information Agency (USIA, alternately called the USIS, or United States Information Service) in 1953 in an effort to “understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions, and their counterparts abroad”.<sup>7</sup> In the President’s own words, upon the creation of the USIS, “The purpose of the United States Information Agency shall be to submit evidence to peoples of other nations by means of communications techniques that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress and peace”.<sup>8</sup> These were the lofty ideals that Eisenhower built the USIS upon, and these ideals laid the groundwork for the Second Occupation of Japan.

### **Second Occupation**

The paradigm of a Second Occupation is based on the hypothesis that improving international relations that was in most ways polar opposite to the original occupation of Japan. The USIS was the program that coordinated with Japanese officials regarding visitors and distributed texts and films in an effort to fully capitalize on the new, “soft”

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<sup>7</sup> “USIA: an overview” <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/USIS/USISHome/oldoview.htm#overview>. USIS. August 1998. Retrieved September 30, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> John W. Henderson. *The United States Information Agency*. (New York: Frederick A Praeger Publishers, 1969.) page 65.

approach. The USIS was the center of the Second Occupation of Japan, and as such it is crucial to understand how and why this organization was created.

The political context in which Eisenhower developed the USIS largely shaped the motives and the goals of this program. Eisenhower viewed the U.S. dissemination of information and propaganda as a weapon in its own right. To better control and monitor progress of this weapon he created the USIS as a singular agency within the State Department to take responsibility for the comprehensive coordination of the various previously isolated sections that eventually wound up producing information, often with a pro-American tilt, for consumption abroad. In the case of Japan, the cultural approach of the USIS produced the possibility of a congenial relationship between the U.S. and Japan, and was a welcome change from the harsh militarism of the U.S. Occupation.

Many scholars, such as historian John Dower, believe the U.S. Occupation of Japan provided an opportunity for a defeated nation to rebuild itself and start again. The heavily structured relationship that characterized U.S.-Japan relations during the Occupation was a testament to the U.S. desire to restore order, by force if necessary, to a country that was supposedly radically imperialistic and populated by “fanatical soldiers”.<sup>9</sup> What most people fail to realize is the dissent within the Japanese population towards the militarism and imperialism that Japan displayed during WWII. Many Japanese expressed a desire for a peaceful outcome to the war; by 1943, many Japanese bureaucrats “realized the futility of the war and hoped to negotiate a conditional surrender” and “believed Japan ought to try again to cooperate with the United States in developing the Asian economy by returning to pre-1931 Wilsonian

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<sup>9</sup> Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan*, 3-4.

principles” of nonmilitary-based expansion.<sup>10</sup> Japanese conservatives largely considered the war to be an “unwinnable blunder likely to bring revolution in its wake”. The Prime Minister and the Crown Prince Konoe Fumimaro went so far as to submit a memorial to the emperor prior to the nuclear attacks in 1945 requesting that he consider the possible negative outcomes of continuing the war needlessly.<sup>11</sup> Although the memorial proved ineffective until after the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, its very existence proves that key, high ranking Japanese officials were against continuing the war, were open to change, and desired peace.

This desire for peace changed during the years of the Occupation into a desire to learn. The Japanese population had been denied many publications during the war years due to military censors, and with the opening of Japan to the U.S. forces came the opening of Japan to a vast array of world literature. Dower describes this scramble for literature succinctly in his book *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* by stating that “words matter; as if a dam had broken, defeated Japan was engulfed in words,”<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, the first best-selling book in post-war Japan was entitled *Nichi-Bei Kaiwa Techō* (Japanese-English Conversation Manual); in its thirty two pages it outlined basic English phrases accompanied by the translation in Japanese and by a phonetic (katakana) rendering of each phrase. This book was produced thirty days after the emperor’s surrender speech, and had sold 3.5 million copies by the end of 1945.<sup>13</sup> What people were looking for was bright, upbeat publications, and the atmosphere around English was made to be just that; English prepared the Japanese people to

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

<sup>12</sup> John. W. Dower. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999.) page 168.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 188.

begin looking to the future, a future that included increasing integration with the U.S. and the world at large, in which being able to speak English would become invaluable. The English language's popularity stemmed from its appeal to all members of society; a shopkeeper had every right to need to learn English as a top government official did because both their jobs very likely depended on it.<sup>14</sup> With this interest in English came an interest in the Western culture associated with it, and it was in this context that the USIS was created.

### **Exchange of Persons Program**

The USIS began offering cultural, social, and linguistic ties to a country that had a historical desire for them. It then expanded its services to include the 'exchange of persons program', whereby noted scholars, professors and artists travelled abroad as goodwill ambassadors sponsored by the U.S. State Department. A spokesman for the USIS explained:

We have tried to represent abroad as many aspects of American life as possible not only through the visits of Americans to foreign countries, but also through the visits of foreign students, teachers, professors and leaders to this country.<sup>15</sup>

One of the most notable individuals to participate in this program was renowned American novelist and self-proclaimed "southern farmer" William Faulkner, who travelled on behalf of the State Department to Latin America in 1954 to attend a literature conference in 1954. Despite his offer to help again should the need arise,

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<sup>14</sup> Walter Carpenter . *Japan and English: Communication and Culture, History and Power*. (University, Vol.17, No. Annual, 2009), pp.1-26. page 4.

<sup>15</sup> File 511.943/8-2455; Harold E. Howland. September 9, 1955; Specialists Division: International Educational Exchange Service; Unclassified Records of Department of State, Record Group 250; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

Faulkner was a noted recluse and had to be coaxed into participation, but eventually agreed to attend and speak at the Nagano conference for American Literature in Japan in August, 1955.<sup>16</sup> Faulkner rarely travelled within the U.S. much less abroad, and he was known for detesting public speech, so why did the USIS fight to have him represent a positive view of America in a foreign nation? The first contributing factor was that Faulkner had just won the Nobel Prize for literature (1950), which placed him on the radar of international literati. Though he initially refused to travel to Stockholm to accept the award, his presence in Sweden was surprisingly positive; press and public alike were taken with the Southern author and his popularity made the trip not only a success but also the highlight of international affairs that year.<sup>17</sup> This performance put him at the top of the USIS's list for a trip to Latin America, and despite a slightly rough beginning due to health issues, his trip through Brazil was a second rousing success for Faulkner, the USIS, and ultimately the United States as well.<sup>18</sup> Upon returning home, Faulkner offered his services the USIS in the future, and when searching for a speaker for the Nagano Conference they turned to him once again.

One reason Faulkner thrived in his position as a civilian ambassador for the United States is that the basic tenants that he promoted in his speeches and in his interviews in Japan (humanism, perseverance, and the universality of the human struggle) were also core values in the creation of the USIS. President Eisenhower often spoke of the need for the U.S. to concentrate on bettering its international relations, and upon his founding of the USIS these ideas appeared in his comments and speeches

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<sup>16</sup> File 511.943/5-1255; Martha G. Geesa. May 12, 1955; International Educational Exchange Service; Unclassified Records of the Department of State, Record Group 250; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

<sup>17</sup> Deborah Cohn. "Combatting anti-Americanism during the Cold War: Faulkner, the State Department, and Latin America." *The Mississippi Quarterly*. Volume IV. June 22, 2006. Pages 395-396.

<sup>18</sup> Cohn, "Combatting anti-Americanism", 387-389

more frequently. For example, Eisenhower addressed these points in detail during a commencement speech he made at the graduation ceremony for Baylor University on May 25, 1956.

The responsibility for carrying forward America's part in helping improve international cooperation cannot be met through paper work in a governmental bureau. But it can be met through a combined effort by all of us, in and out of government, all trying to develop the necessary understanding that every international problem is in reality a human one.<sup>19</sup>

Thus the goals for the USIS's involvement in Japan were designed to be humanistic rather than militaristic, and educational as opposed to economic. These factors clearly defined a different, at times directly opposite, approach to the problem of settling and furthering U.S.-Japan relations than those that had been employed during the original Occupation of Japan.

The USIS scrambled to make the idea of aligning Japanese popular thought with the U.S. the spearhead goal for the Second Occupation, because of concerns about losing their "bulwark in the Pacific". Near the end of the Allied Occupation of Japan, Mao Zedong, Communist leader of China, made an announcement to other 'aspiring Communist Asian nations' encouraging them towards revolution in order to liberate themselves from Imperial oppression. The Soviet Union's attitude towards developing nations changed after Stalin's death in 1953 from one of disinterested detachment to one of active involvement and even sympathy. They donated money to the poorer regions, and Khrushchev and Kikolai Bulganin toured South and Southeast Asia in 1955 to assess the state of each area. The Soviet Union advocated UN membership for

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<sup>19</sup> Working Together for International Understanding: Address by President Eisenhower. Reprinted from the Department of State Bulletin of June 4, 1956. Department of State Publication 6361. International Information and Cultural series 50. page 8.

nations that they claimed had been ‘overlooked’ by the UN in 1952, and by the late 1950s the admission of these nations (such as Malaysia, Laos, and Indonesia) had produced an overwhelming anti-colonial consensus within the UN.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately this anti-colonial sentiment went hand in hand with anti-American and anti-Western rhetoric, due to the near U.S. and European monopoly on Imperialistic expansion. With such complications to navigate, the U.S. – Japan relations required careful cultivation.

While Japanese opinion of the U.S. declined during the Allied Occupation, American opinion of Japan shifted in the opposite direction. Americans who served in Japan during the Occupation as a whole gained a respect for Japan and the Japanese. Due to their interaction with the culture and the people on a day-to-day, personal basis, the “Japanese enemy” became humanized in their eyes. Cohen adds, “At the least, Japan acquired a valuable ally in American public opinion for the next decades”.<sup>21</sup> Having seen that person-to-person interaction produced positive results in changing American opinions during the Allied Occupation, the “Second Occupation” could be tailored to address the opinions of the Japanese population, thus strengthening the U.S.’s uncertain relationship with Japan at the time.

### **Goals and Programs Abroad**

These new goals are clearly outlined in a series of pamphlets published by the State Department beginning in 1952, regarding the motives, programs, areas of interest and palpable affects of the USIS, specifically the “International Education Exchange Program” and the “International Exchange of Persons Program”. Exchange of Persons

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<sup>20</sup> Hasegawa, 71-75.

<sup>21</sup> Theodore Cohen. *Remaking Japan: The American Occupation As New Deal*. (The Free Press: New York, 1987.) page 135.

programs like the one that Faulkner engaged in, were large, complex, highly publicized versions of the smaller efforts that the USIS made towards international understanding, such as the impressive number of cultural centers they created abroad. By 1955, 24 countries were participating in some aspect of the cultural center program, including nations from Australia to Egypt to Thailand and, of course, Japan.<sup>22</sup> According to these sources, the USIS established cultural centers in Japan as early as 1952, and widespread approval on the part of the Japanese people to the point that some such centers became fully sponsored by donations from the communities in which they resided.<sup>23</sup> In these centers the USIS displayed and distributed over 350 films and 40,000 prints, apparently “aiding in true understanding of the United States”.<sup>24</sup> In a pamphlet from 1953, the USIS explicitly declared its specific interest in Japan.

The critical Far Eastern area is one of vital concern to the United States and the nations of the free world. It is a major target in the Soviet drive for world domination. Here the Soviets have used, and are still using, subversion, infiltration, economic penetration, and outright aggression – every trick from the Kremlin’s store of designs for subjugation.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, the USIS invested substantial effort in creating a body of text about the U.S., the State Department, and the USIS that would be accessible to the Japanese public. The idea was to create positive documentation about the United States to show good will and as a signal of the U.S.’s “honest and true desire” to be better understood.<sup>26</sup> Apparently, it was a successful move.

Great emphasis was placed on increasing the amount of USIS material in the Japanese language. During the temporary closing of the Tokyo center,

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Partners in International Understanding*. International Information and Cultural Series; Nos. 28-54. Division of Publications: Print. page 14.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 23

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 34

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 22

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 22-23

the patrons traveled 1 hour or more to the neighboring city of Yokohama to make use of that center's library...the centers contributed to good relations between the U.S. security forces and the local populations by...fostering personal contacts between service personnel and Japanese citizens.<sup>27</sup>

Overall, the pamphlets expressed strong belief in the power of person to person exchange as opposed to highly politicized or militaristic efforts, and went so far as to give specific examples of individuals abroad who had been impacted and impressed with this new mode of interaction. The pamphlet summarized: "The personal approach through exchanges makes it possible for these people to obtain a true picture of America. It allays suspicion and inspires cooperation."<sup>28</sup>

This dedication to producing a positive, accessible view of America shows that the general plan for the USIS's actions in Japan involved approaching the Japanese society in a more personal, informal manner than the Occupation of Japan had, but planning can only go so far. The USIS's chief purpose in its service to the U.S and its actual performance have long been a point of controversy, with the two main opinions being that either it was an objective information service or it was a propaganda machine.<sup>29</sup> Depending on the definition of this organization, its work in Japan was educational, or propagandist.

### **Defining USIS Intentions**

Senator Homer E. Capehart of Indiana was an outspoken individual on the idea that the USIS should stick to more propagandist measures so as to distract from

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 24

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 27

<sup>29</sup> Ronald I. Rubin. *The Objectives of the U.S. Information Agency*. (New York: Frederick A Praeger Publishers, 1968.) page 42

negative aspects of American life that could possibly prove to be a detriment to furthering international relations. He argued that the USIS's job was much like that of a salesman, explaining that "no one ever got anywhere in marketing by promoting the negative characteristics of their products".<sup>30</sup> Senator John J. McClellan of Arkansas, Chairman of the Senate subcommittee dealing with USIS appropriations agreed with Capehart, adding that "...I think this agency should display more initiative toward putting itself in the position of making an attack on Communism, rather than continually defending ourselves against the charges that are made against the Western World..."<sup>31</sup> In other words, McClellan urged the USIS to employ more propagandist tactics in a psychological attack on the Communist camp, much as Russia was doing, against the "imperialistic" West. In fact, Rubin argues that Communist propaganda at the time was extremely effective in Asian, Latin American and Eastern European nations because it was using fear of war, anti-colonial sentiment, and anti-western nationalism to its benefit. Given the historic ties of U.S. to colonialism and war, the USIS considered Russian efforts threatening to the U.S. agenda.<sup>32</sup>

John Henderson, author of The United States Information Agency, presents a different view in his work on the USIS. He argues that the USIS was strictly an informational agency and contended that claims of propaganda were unfounded. The facts of the creation of the USIS support his stance; the agency evolved out of the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (OIC), the main goal of which was to gather and disseminate straight, unfiltered information.<sup>33</sup> William B. Benton, the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 45

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 46

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 36

<sup>33</sup> Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 36

assistant secretary of state for public affairs and the man behind the OIC, gave a speech in 1946 in which he called for a “dignified information program” as opposed to a propaganda machine, and insisted that he was going to present the “full and fair picture of the United States” to the world. He went so far as to promise that “the bad in American democracy would be shown along with the good” and to insist that the role of the government was “to fill the gaps”, which are “important and often crucial,” to gaining a better understanding of the U.S.<sup>34</sup>

Ronald Rubin argues that regardless of its methods, the origin and thus the purpose of the USIS was clear; he states that “the United States was forced to undertake a concerted information program following World War II in response to the falsified internal and external propaganda disseminated by the Communists,”<sup>35</sup> From this point of view, the USIS was a defense mechanism; it was necessary due to “acute international tension”.<sup>36</sup> In short, the USIS of the 1950’s was a compromise between a mere information agency and a full-fledged instrument of psychological warfare. Henderson says that the USIS was “concerned with the advancement of U.S. foreign-policy interests; it functions by informing and persuading”.<sup>37</sup>

Regardless of the ideological battles that occurred regarding the USIS’s function, the fact remains that it brought forth a new, very different and very successful idea: breaking nations down to individuals, and international relations into personal relations in order to better U.S. relations abroad.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 37-38

<sup>35</sup> Rubin, *The Objectives of the U.S. Information Agency*, 39

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 40

<sup>37</sup> Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 62

## Chapter 3: Faulkner in Global Perspective

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### U.S. Perspective on Faulkner

To understand William Faulkner's affect in Japan requires understanding why the USIS chose him and what they hoped to accomplish. William Faulkner was not the stereotypical "American" that the international community expected. He was not wealthy, and what wealth he gained he immediately used to sponsor childhood education and to supplement his hobby of breeding horses. He led a simple life and did not have a high opinion of himself or his literature, which would be refreshing in the face of continuously expanding American consumerism and obsession with vanity<sup>38</sup>. The USIS used these aspects of Faulkner to contradict negative stereotypes of a wealthy intellectual nation in an effort to better international relations and ultimately to end the spread of Communism. Understanding how he was received at home and abroad is very telling in the context of these efforts.

The first critical discussion of Faulkner's literature in the U.S. began in the 1930s. The early assessment on his work was negative. In his early thirties at the time, Faulkner had already penned *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), and *Light in August* (1936), but to no significant positive response. Frederick J. Hoffman summarizes that:

From the beginning of the 1930's, therefore, he [Faulkner] was classified as a writer who had ignored the largest demands upon social taste and moral discretion (sic). His work...exploited obscenity and horror for their own sake or as a 'cheap idea'; he did not wish for a 'better world' but hated the present and brooded over the collapse of the past; he was abnormally fond of morons, idiots, perverts, and nymphomaniacs. He was,

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<sup>38</sup> Joseph Blotner. *Faulkner: A Biography*. (New York: Random House, 1974) page 141

in short, the leading member of a 'cult of cruelty' school of modern writing.<sup>39</sup>

American distaste with Faulkner's work came from several different angles. Alan Reynolds Thompson commented in his 1932 essay "The Cult of Cruelty" that unlike the works of Oedipus and Lear, Faulkner "failed to transmute the raw material in such a way as to give his readers a purely aesthetic effect; his appeal was not to the mind but to the viscera,"<sup>40</sup> In other words, Faulkner attempted to mimic the greatness of tales that employ provocative and explicit material, yet to produce a true story worthy of acclaim. His contemporaries characterized Faulkner not only as a lazy writer, but also an individual that did not fully understand his craft.

Another theory of the 1930s suspected Faulkner of deliberately writing his novels to be unintelligible to most people in order to gain some sense of personal satisfaction. Critics of American Literature in the 1930s and 1940s such as Camille J. McCole and Granville Hicks proposed that Faulkner wrote in his characteristic fashion in order to lord his intelligence and ingenuity over his readers, and that he in actuality was writing his novels "in the regular form and then recasting them in some distorted form", which afforded "reviewers an opportunity to complain about and to mock the style, as well as to excuse their own bewilderment."<sup>41</sup> Historian Lawrence H. Schwartz does not find this negative reaction to Faulkner's works at all surprising. Considering specifically Faulkner's reputation in the 1930s, Schwartz suggests that because he was writing "in a decade dominated by social realism in both fiction and criticism, Faulkner was rejected, not just by the leftists, but by all who wanted fiction to address the humane tradition of

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<sup>39</sup> Frederick J. Hoffman. *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1960) Page, 2

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 2-3

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 3

naturalism.”<sup>42</sup> In the following decades, the majority of the criticism of Faulkner became less negative and more introspective as he rose to fame both within his country and internationally, although the strictly negative views remained.<sup>43</sup>

### **The Emergence of American Interest in Faulkner**

Though positive American literary views on Faulkner before his trip to Japan exist, they were scarce and riddled with misgivings and personal slights. According to Hoffman, "Favorable criticism of Faulkner...began in 1939," with a series of essays on Faulkner and his work such as Warren Beck's *American Preface*, and George Marion O'Donnell's *Faulkner's Mythology*. O'Donnell's view of Faulkner was perhaps the most positive; "Faulkner is really a traditional moralist, in the best sense...[he is] a traditional man in a modern world,"<sup>44</sup> His appeal as a "traditional moralist" to the Japanese people will be further discussed in chapter four.

Harlan Hatcher, author of "Creating the Modern American Novel", published in 1935, describes Faulkner's work with a mixture of bewilderment and grudging respect. Regarding Faulkner's unique style, Hatcher admitted "that Faulkner defines the farthest limits to which the innovations and revolts that were at one time necessary to the continued well-being of our literature can be carried without final self-defeat."<sup>45</sup> Over time, reluctant reviews such as Hatcher's transitioned into legitimately optimistic points of view.

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<sup>42</sup> Tanya T. Feyen. *In Search of the Latin American Faulkner*. (Maryland: University Press of America, Inc. 1995)  
Page 83

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 85

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 8

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*

George Snell, writing in the early 1940s, put a more positive spin on Faulkner's work by portraying him as a pioneer on the fringes of socially accepted literature; "for once, we have seen an American writer emerge from the wild miasmal depths where Brown and Poe and Melville were at home, into freer attitudes where a view of humanity in its workaday aspects is possible."<sup>46</sup> By connecting him to well-known, successful writers of the past, Snell attached a sense of legitimacy to Faulkner's work. After all, Poe's unique style was never as appreciated in his lifetime as it was in later years.

Concerning these contrasting opinions, in which the negative easily outweighed the positive, Hoffman offers some perspective on the strength, variety, character and validity of the many criticisms of Faulkner: "These judgments, however varied and original they may individually have been, [demonstrated] a common preconception with respect to what Faulkner's work should have been, a standard, or a variety of standards, to which it largely did not succeed in conforming."<sup>47</sup>

In other words, in explaining the multitude and intensity of criticisms of Faulkner's work in the 1930s through the 1950s, Hoffman points to the fact that Faulkner quite voluntarily and knowingly stepped outside of the proverbial box set in place for literature at that time. His writing style, characters, and subject matter all balked at the standard norm of his colleagues, which led to a considerable amount of largely negative criticism in the United States. However, this very criticism and the lack of American support helped to mold Faulkner into the artist that international critics found so captivating.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 5

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 6

## Faulkner's Reception Abroad

While he failed for years to gain a dedicated following in the U.S., Faulkner's literary work was heralded as not only successful but as progressive and daring upon its arrival on the international level. Most universally positive of these opinions came from France, where existentialism was high in fashion among critics. Several variations of Faulkner's positive characteristics have been cited as the source of his popularity in France. In the 1940s, Smoular described Faulkner as an "artist devoid of any propaganda bias and any prejudices."<sup>48</sup> French critic Sartre wrote three critical essays from the late 1930s to early 1940s on Faulkner's work and praised his novels' "silence and the fact that nothing happens".<sup>49</sup> Film director Jean-Luc Godard quoted Faulkner's piece "The Wild Palms" in his film *Breathless* (1960) and confessed to a strong fascination with Faulkner's impressive command of the double plot within his novels.<sup>50</sup>

Fascination with Faulkner's work remains present in France today. In March 2009, John Dugdale, journalist for the British newspaper *The Guardian*, examined the positive acclaim that Faulkner received in an article entitled "France's strange love affair with William Faulkner". In it he cited a 2009 poll held by a magazine in France which asked French writers to name their favorite books and their authors, and the results showed that Faulkner was the second most-cited, coming in below only Proust in popularity.<sup>51</sup> French columnist Agnes Poirer explains, "we love Faulkner because we consider him a revolutionary novelist – he experiments with narration like no other."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Smoular, Alfred, "On William Faulkner" *Paris Match*, 1955. Print. np.

<sup>49</sup> John Dugdale. "France's strange love affair with William Faulkner." *The Guardian: Books Blog*. (March 2009): n. pag. Web. 27 Dec 2011., np.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

However, Dugdale holds that the British, himself included, view this phenomenon as the French making “an assertion of an ability to spot qualities missed by the less discerning Anglo-Saxons.”<sup>53</sup> He goes on to explain Faulkner’s appeal, or lack thereof, in England:

Faulkner would come very low down in a similar British poll, and you can gauge how little he’s read here by how long it took for anyone to point out the similarity of Graham Swift’s Booker-winner Last Orders to Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying – almost a year from publication, and not by a Brit, but by an Australian academic.<sup>54</sup>

In saying this, he suggests that the French were trumpeting an author whose worth was less than they claimed for the simple ability to assert that they could see talent that the Americans (and the British) could not. Evidence of this view of things can be found in Alfred Smoular’s assertion that Faulkner was a “well-known writer whose original qualities were much appreciated in France” and in Europe in general before he was awarded the Nobel Prize and received acknowledgement in his own country.<sup>55</sup> He claims he, and his fellow Frenchmen, saw Faulkner’s success before anyone else, and notes that even the American officials who invited him to participate in the Nagano Seminar in Japan were surprised at his acceptance, and even more surprised by the appeal he had to the Japanese people.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps Dugdale’s theory that the French heralded Faulkner as a great visionary merely because of the American distaste for his work has some legitimacy. However, regardless of their motives for embracing Faulkner, Dugdale notes that “they seem to have allowed Sartre and others to recruit him as an honorary French author, avant-garde and cinematic.”<sup>57</sup> This rather generous compliment from French literary circles shows that unlike his relatively negative

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Smoular, “On William Faulkner”, np.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Dugdale, “France’s strange love affair with William Faulkner”

reputation among readers in the U.S., readers from different countries viewed Faulkner's style in the light of the growing avant-garde movement and respected his work for what it was, rather than judging it for what it was not.

While France may hold claim as one of the strongest supporters of Faulkner's literature, it is not alone in its interest in and study of the elusive author. In fact, Faulkner's trips abroad dramatically increased the attention his work was receiving in international circles. In an article in *Paris Match*, Alfred Smoular, correspondent for the French news agency and long time student of Japanese culture, commented on the general shock in the U.S. that William Faulkner had been chosen to attend the Nagano Conference:

It is a well-known saying that nobody is a prophet in his own country. But it is always a source of wonder for Europeans to see how much the Americans ignore the best of their country-men (sic) in the field of culture when they wander out of established conformism. Such is the case of William Faulkner.<sup>58</sup>

This brief comment neatly summarizes the French view of Faulkner at the time of his trips abroad by referencing both the French interest in Faulkner's work and the American inability to find it accessible. By stating his own interest in Faulkner's work, Smoular is passively accusing the American population of not only ignoring what he considers an author of note, but also in general of being too well set in "established conformism" to notice talent should it appear in other forms.

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<sup>58</sup> Smoular, "On William Faulkner", np.

## Latin America

“William Faulkner, outstanding novelist, accompanied by John W. Campbell and delegates to the International Congress of Writers visiting the American exhibit in the Palace of Nations, Ibirapuera Park. Source: USIS.”<sup>59</sup>

This brief note sent to Washington in 1954 from Sao Paulo, Brazil, is the first official Department of State record of William Faulkner’s participation in the USIS’s Exchange of Persons Program. Predating his trip to Japan by only one year, Faulkner’s USIS-sponsored trip to Latin America spanned three countries (Brazil, Peru and Venezuela) and “fulfilled the wildest dreams—and, of course, the hidden agenda—of the government that sponsored his travels by ‘further[ing] understanding and good will’ between the U.S. and Latin America.”<sup>60</sup> However, much of what Faulkner accomplished in Latin America was shaped by the critiques and opinions that preceded his arrival. Historian Tanya T. Fayen cites the difficulty of truly understanding these opinions, explaining that “a thorough study of Faulkner’s Latin American reception is limited by unavailability of the many small literary reviews that flourished in Buenos Aires and other major cities of Latin America.”<sup>61</sup> Even with this difficulty, Fayen compiled a remarkable amount of information regarding the Latin American view of Faulkner upon his arrival in Brazil. Despite a weak impression during the 1930s, Faulkner enjoyed a surge of popularity in the 1940s characterized by articles from Latin American, North

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<sup>59</sup> File 55-13306; Sao Paulo, Brazil. Specialists Division: International Educational Exchange Service; Unclassified Records of Department of State, Record Group 250; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

<sup>60</sup> Deborah Cohn. “William Faulkner’s Ibero-American Novel Project: The Politics of Translation and the Cold War.” *Southern Quarterly*. Vol. 42, no.2, 5-18.

<sup>61</sup> Tanya T. Fayen. *In Search of the Latin American Faulkner*. (Maryland: University Press of America, Inc. 1995) Page 83

American and French critics on his literary work.<sup>62</sup> This led to a revision in the way of thinking about Faulkner's work, as Fayen explains:

Faulkner has done something with the art of narrative that requires a new type of reader: he has dispensed with the classical model. The reader can no longer passively approach narrative and expect traditional plot development wherein his own role is confined to waiting passively for the answer. Faulkner does not provide an answer nor does he present his own philosophy. In stead (sic) he gives an objective presentation of effects, not causes...Faulkner does not present a view of life, but life itself.<sup>63</sup>

With this new outlook in the minds of his Latin American readers, a positive reception awaited him in Brazil. In addition, the USIS provided Faulkner with a fairly strict schedule, and this produced what the State Department considered a successful trip. Keeping Faulkner busy, and surrounding him with the handlers that facilitated such a tight schedule, kept Faulkner engaged in the talks, active in his job, and out of the whiskey. The highly structured nature of the trip also translated into the great amount of documentation present in the U.S. archives today. The objectives of this particular trip are clearly outlined in a declassified dispatch from July 9, 1954. It lists them simply and succinctly as follows:

Objectives:

1. To strengthen the traditional spirit of friendship between Brasil (sic) and the U.S. and further understanding of U.S. democracy.
2. To convince Brazilians that their national progress and security may best be attained through cooperation with the U. S. and through inter-American and United Nations organizations.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 94-95.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 108

<sup>64</sup> File 511.323/7-954; Sao Paulo, Brazil. Department of State Foreign Service Dispatch Declassified. *The Exchange of Persons program contributes toward achieving the following Country objectives*. Unclassified Records of Department of State, Record Group 250; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

What is interesting outside of the basic manner in which these objectives were stated is the language in which they were expressed. Instead of saying 'to strengthen the ties between Brazil and the U.S.' it was phrased using "traditional spirit of friendship between Brasil (sic) and the U.S."<sup>65</sup> This word choice suggests to the reader a positive effort to further an already amiable, stable relationship, which was not necessarily the case. In fact, had that been the case the trips themselves would have been unnecessary. At every turn the USIS took the chance to portray its mission in a positive, almost gallant way in hopes of being received in a positive light both abroad and at home in the States.

These goals were the groundwork for the objectives presented for Faulkner's later trip to Japan. Though each was tailored to the U.S.'s concerns in a given area, the trips Faulkner made all were in the pretext of a personal, non-political agenda. Historian Deborah Cohn agrees, stating that "Faulkner's trip to Latin America was made to cultivate goodwill towards the US through cultural channels during a period of significant anti-American political sentiment in the region".<sup>66</sup>

Faulkner was sent to Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1954 to attend a writers' conference known as the International Congress of Writers, but it was not a frivolous trip for literary discussion.<sup>67</sup> Latin America was an area of concern for the U.S. because of Communist sympathies. Cohn elaborates: "Even before the Cuban Revolution of 1959, Latin America had begun to experience a surge in leftist activism that brought it into conflict repeatedly with the US, which was, of course, firmly under the sway of Cold War politics at this point. The US had long supported repressive regimes and neocolonial

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> Cohn, *William Faulkner's Ibero-American Novel Project*, 396.

<sup>67</sup> Ann J. Abadie; Annette Trefzer, *Global Faulkner*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009.).

enterprises such as the United Fruit Company in Latin America, and had toppled those regimes whose politics leaned too far to the left.”<sup>68</sup> With such concerns in the area, Faulkner’s trip was made with purposeful timing and distinct motivations on the part of the State Department. Cohn explains:

Both of Faulkner's trips to the region were, in fact, couched-and urged-by State Department officials as public relations moves designed to offset criticism of the US in the local press and to improve the US's relationship with the Latin American nations, and its image in general... Faulkner's visits helped to ease tension in international relations by bringing tremendous positive publicity to the US and its accomplishments. He was warmly welcomed by intellectuals who, though often anti-American, were receptive to his work and had themselves been influenced by him; their stamp of approval may not have won over the hostile journalists who several times sought to ambush the writer, but it did neutralize their effects, while Faulkner's charm won the public over.<sup>69</sup>

As noted above, in every situation in which he found himself, Faulkner managed to go beyond the basic goals assigned to him and make a personal, positive impression on those countries he visited. Cohn continues on to say “On his trips he taught, spoke about his work, and commented on race relations in the US. Both his words and his very presence testified to American achievements in nations hostile to the US, and his visits were instrumental in tempering this sentiment”.<sup>70</sup> In fact, during his trips abroad Faulkner’s reputation in the U.S. improved to some degree. His international travel and, more importantly, his international success, gave Faulkner a reputation “as a nonpolitical, modernist writer who addressed “universal truths”, which was highly attractive to the State Department in choosing goodwill ambassadors [for future trips].”<sup>71</sup> Other such “modern individuals” chosen to travel to Latin American on behalf of the

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<sup>68</sup> Cohn, “William Faulkner’s Ibero-American Novel Project”, 5

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> Cohn, “Combatting anti-Americanism”, 397

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

USIS included renowned author Robert Frost, who attended the same writers' conference in Sao Paulo in 1954, and Hilton Hanna, Special Assistant to Secretary Treasurer Patrick Gorman of the Butcher Workers Union. Regarding Hanna's trip in particular, historian John Britton explains "American officials were especially delighted when the black U.S. labor leader Hilton E. Hanna visited Brazil. Not only did he read his speech in Portuguese, but he also answered questions about racial prejudice in the United States with ease, citing the activities of other black leaders throughout the United States."<sup>72</sup>

In summary, the USIS, historians, U.S. and foreign press and critics all agreed that this method of sending individuals abroad to talk, teach and connect with foreign nations in a more personal way was a successful one, and more importantly served to lessen tension between the countries involved. Whether militaristic, economic or political, every country that the USIS was involved with had some sort of tense relation with the U.S. that had to be addressed. During the 1950s, these tensions were most often related to real or perceived Communist threat and the task of containing it, which was yet another goal of the USIS abroad.

### **Cold War Concerns**

If Faulkner first appears as an unlikely candidate for citizen diplomacy, it is important to remember that Faulkner's unique 'non-American American' persona was highly effective in the U.S. government's goal of stanching the spread of Communism. Despite his unique writing style and his widely disliked characters, Faulkner was writing

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<sup>72</sup> John A. Britton. *Molding the hearts and minds: education, communications and social change in Latin America*. (Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, MD, 1994.) Page 216.

in a time of fierce competition on an international scale, and 'modernism,' a category in which Faulkner's work was eventually placed, was prized by scholars and U.S. officials as a weapon against Communism. Here, Cohn summarizes: "Faulkner's rise to fame in the US was directly related to a "cold war cultural project that promoted modernism as an instrument of anti-communism and discredited prewar realism and naturalism as attained by an overt political orientation and ties to international communism and support of the soviet union."<sup>73</sup> So what is this 'cold war cultural project'?

Basically, it refers to a shift in international diplomacy several decades in the making that was being used to do damage control in areas already heavily influenced by Communist propaganda. Historian Giles Scott-Smith explains the broad context of the project:

Psychological warfare operations during WWII and the early Cold War placed great hopes in the ability to change the attitude and political opinion of individuals, and this way of thinking inevitably fed into exchange programme (sic) operations...Exchange programmes, in contributing to the constant transatlantic traffic in people and ideas, were thus a prime tool for facilitating alliance management during the Cold War.<sup>74</sup>

Thus the USIS utilized Faulkner in efforts to facilitate "alliance management", or, more to the point, he was used to create a better understanding of American and of Americans as a population, which would hopefully strengthen any existing pro-American sentiment in the region of focus. The State Department had more in mind than simply having Faulkner speak about his works at international conferences; hidden agendas specified the desired outcomes for these trips, which eventually led the USIS to choose the modernist, reclusive author from the South for diplomacy in Japan.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 396

<sup>74</sup> Giles Scott-Smith. 2008. *Networks of empire: the US State Department's Foreign Leader Program in the Netherlands, France, and Britain 1950-70*. Bern: P.I.E. Peter Lang, Page 24.

This chapter has analyzed the international response that Faulkner's literary work has received, which provides the framework for understanding Faulkner's reception in Japan. However, as the next chapter will address, understanding Faulkner's international reputation does not automatically translate to an understanding of Faulkner's reputation in Japan. While this chapter has focused on how the U.S. and various other countries have viewed Faulkner's international standing and his travel abroad, chapter three will cover a more in-depth insider's perspective of Faulkner's trip to Japan from the Japanese perspective.

## Chapter 4: Japanese Impressions of Faulkner

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This chapter will describe Faulkner's reputation in Japan before and during his USIS – sponsored trip in 1955. Understanding how the Japanese were first introduced to Faulkner and his literature is key in understanding the reception that met the author upon his arrival in Japan. Similarly, it is important to examine Faulkner's participation in the Nagano Seminar, and how his actions and opinions as portrayed through lectures, press conferences, or interviews affected the trip. Finally, this chapter explores what Faulkner's regional identity and heritage meant to him, to the Japanese, and how it framed broader U.S.-Japanese relations.

### **Nagano Seminar**

A State Department publication printed in 1955 describes the Nagano Seminar briefly: “a seminar will be held in Japan by prominent American lecturers and specialists. Five hundred Japanese educators and government officials at both the national, prefectural, and municipal levels will participate in this seminar.”<sup>75</sup> This conference, held in August of 1955, played host to a number of American authorities on literature including Walt Whitman scholar Gay Wilson Allen and of course, award winning modernist author William Faulkner. However, the Japanese authors connected to the conference showed a particular interest in Faulkner's participation. To encourage his attendance, they extended a personal invitation to Faulkner through the embassy

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<sup>75</sup> *Partners in International Understanding*, 59.

requesting his presence.<sup>76</sup> Harold Howland, an employee for the USIS and one of Faulkner's many handlers during his work abroad, explained this personal interest in Faulkner's involvement: "Mr. Faulkner, of course, is one of many Americans sent out under the program. He is a prominent American, twice Nobel Prize winner, and is loved and respected abroad, especially in Japan where his writings are the most popular of any of those contemporary American writers."<sup>77</sup> The Japanese were enthusiastic about the prospect of Faulkner's presence at the conference, and this translated to a sustained and eager attendance to everything Faulkner did or said during his three-week stay in Japan. From the moment he landed at Haneda Airport in Tokyo, Faulkner instantly made an impression as he was whisked from one interview or conference to another. During these interviews, scholars, critics and students asked him questions about "his writings, literature in general, American life in general, and the South in specific", and his "quick wit and pleasant personality earned for him, and for USIS, wide coverage on the very first day [of his visit]."<sup>78</sup> Despite the quick pace of his schedule, Faulkner managed to successfully convey his unique point of view to every questioning individual present.

Because nearly every day of his stay in Japan was filled with meetings, interviews, and press conferences, Faulkner made time to relax and enjoy Japan in his own way. He began his day at 6:30 AM with a solitary walk around the Buddhist Zenkoji Temple grounds and a quiet breakfast. On the rare occasion that he had an afternoon or an evening free, he spent it visiting Lake Nojiri and, more than once, joining the

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<sup>76</sup> File 511.943/8-2455

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> File 511.943/9-2255; D.J. Herget, G. Lewis Schmidt. September 22, 1955; Specialists Division: International Educational Exchange Service; Unclassified Records of Department of State, Record Group 250; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

participants in watching the native bon odori dance performed.<sup>79</sup> During his time at Nagano, Faulkner spent one day visiting the Abbess of the Zenkoji Shrine, where the two conversed about the history of the shrine, the relationship of Buddhism and Christianity, and the similarity of the hot weather to the climate of Faulkner's home in Mississippi.<sup>80</sup> The three weeks passed quickly for the author between the local travel, constant interviews and public speeches, and yet his time in Japan left small marks of its presence in Faulkner's life. For example, by the end of the three weeks Faulkner had written a few short papers on his views and his message for Japan, become adept at using chopsticks, and come to prefer sake the way he preferred whiskey.

### **General Impressions**

The interest and attachment that the Japanese people, officials, critics and public alike, had for William Faulkner prior to his arrival in Japan is curious given Faulkner's unimpressive reputation in the U.S. and his unwillingness to promote himself. Most often the question arises as to how a reclusive southern writer commanded such an international reception. The two core influences in shaping Japan's reception were: the way in which Japan was introduced to Faulkner, which was through the French existentialist critics, and the unique mode of writing that Faulkner employed in his literature.

During the Occupation, the U.S. lifted the media censors put in place by the Japanese government during the war years, igniting a wave of interest in many kinds of literature from abroad. Notably, this thirst for publications within the Japanese public

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Robert A. Jelliffe. *Faulkner at Nagano*. (Tokyo: The Kenkyusha Press, 1956.) Pages 133-136.

was not limited to the realm of English literature; according to SCAP's records between November 1945 and April 1948, some 1,367 foreign language works had been translated into Japanese and made available to the general public. American authors constituted a mere 7.6 percent of the total, while French authors boasted translation of 26 percent.<sup>81</sup> The Japanese interest in French literature and existentialism can be traced to the years before the war, and was largely renewed upon the re-opening of Japan during the Occupation.

In the United States, Faulkner was not widely celebrated in the 1940s-50s. In France, however, authors and critics such as the French existentialists highly appreciated both Faulkner and his work. In fact, in the early 1940s renowned French philosopher and literary critic Jean-Paul Sartre was quoted as saying that "for young people in France, Faulkner is a God,"<sup>82</sup> and that he was admired as "the brightest star in the new constellation" in post-war France.<sup>83</sup>

That Faulkner was so egregiously overlooked in his home country in the 1940s was shocking to the French, as journalist Alfred Smoular wrote,

It is a well-known saying that nobody is a prophet in his own country. But it is always a source of wonder for Europeans to see how much the Americans ignore the best of their country-men in the field of culture when they wander out of established conformism. Such is the case of William Faulkner.<sup>84</sup>

In short, Faulkner was well-known and well-liked among French literature circles, and he was a widely discussed topic among French authors. During the publication

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<sup>81</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 182

<sup>82</sup> Aaron Moore. *Faulkner and Humanity's Desire to be as Solid as a Thing*. MA Thesis. Florida State University, 2009. Page 12

<sup>83</sup> "William Faulkner will visit Japan." *Mainichi Daily*. [Tokyo] July 20, 1955. Print.

<sup>84</sup> Smolar, "On William Faulkner", np

boom in Japan after the end of World War II French publications held first place in the amount of works translated at over 26 percent, or 350 publications in a matter of years. This figure supports the argument of Kiyoyuki Ono makes that Japan's information about Faulkner was gathered through French channels, and thus had a certain positive spin on Faulkner due to his popularity in France. She states "Faulkner was first introduced to Japan by way of France rather than directly from America, mainly by Japanese scholars of French literature, who were influenced by Jean-Paul Sartre's and Albert Camus's high estimation of Faulkner's fiction,"<sup>85</sup>

Unfortunately, during the war the Japanese government stifled any interest in Western literature, so the budding group of Faulkner fans quickly dissipated. However, as soon as 1946 a student published a critical paper on Faulkner in Japan. The author studied French Literature and had read French translations of Faulkner's work; his publication placed Faulkner back in the interests of the Japanese public. Other channels promoted interest in Faulkner as well. In 1949, when Faulkner received the news that he had won the Nobel Prize in literature, Dr. Hideki Yukawa received news that he, the first Japanese citizen to do so, would be awarded a Nobel Prize as well, in this case in physics. This connection of Faulkner and Japan through the 1949 Nobel Prize created a considerable amount of interest in Faulkner, in his works and in his background as an individual.<sup>86</sup> Following the war, the Japanese publishing industry was one of the first large businesses to recover, despite the lack of paper and the wide-spread destruction, and they used the new-found interest in Faulkner to their advantage, translating and publishing eight of his most popular literature works between 1950 and

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<sup>85</sup> Kiyoyuki Ono. "Triple-Cross of Reception: William Faulkner and Japanese Modernists." *Modernity in East-West Literary Criticism*. Ed. Yoshinobu Hakutani. (London: Associated University Presses, 2001.) Page 181.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 182-183

1955.<sup>87</sup> Because the Japanese were introduced to Faulkner through the lens of French perspective, the Japanese press could view Faulkner as an international individual and as separate from the United States, which may explain his impressive popularity in a country to which he had never previously been nor written about.

Ann Abadie takes a different approach to the question of Faulkner's popularity in Japan. She argues that because Faulkner writes about man in history, about internal questions, that the small-town Mississippian's voice can transcend the national and cultural boundaries between the U.S. and Japan. This was discussed in detail and agreed to at a 1982 "international perspectives" conference in Oxford, Mississippi that included scholars from nine nations, including Japan.<sup>88</sup> The significance of Faulkner's unique point of view for the Japanese in 1940s-1950s Japan is that after the atomic bombs, the death, disease and poverty, the Occupation and having the international community shun them, suddenly here was this American writing about a point of view that they understood, who wrote honestly about mankind as a whole. Charles Baker agrees with this point, adding that Faulkner's interest in the suffering of people as a reminder of their mortality makes his works accessible to a variety of people because it is a very well-known and widely understood concept around the world.<sup>89</sup>

### **Japan and Faulkner's South**

One of the ways in which the Japanese related to Faulkner was through a common sense of family and clannish tradition, which the Japanese got from their history of customs and Faulkner got from his life in the American South. In 1955 Shio

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 183

<sup>88</sup> Abadie, *Global Faulkner*, ix.

<sup>89</sup> Charles Baker. *William Faulkner's Postcolonial South*. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2000) Page 2.

Sakanishi, a social critic writing for The Mainichi Daily, wrote about Faulkner that “His devotion to the south and to his own clan made this genius so endearing to us. If his south is a repository of a great frustrated tradition and memories, so is Japan. Our writers felt that there was a common bond,”<sup>90</sup> Much of the Japanese press’s response to Faulkner followed along the lines of Sakanishi’s point of view; Faulkner was very popular in Japan from the time it was announced he would make the trip, and gained even more popularity as his stay continued. Faulkner most often referred to himself in his interviews in Japan as a simple farmer, and specifically he would announce, “I am not a literary man, I am a writer. No, I’m a farmer who writes off and on,”<sup>91</sup> Thus, Faulkner placed himself in direct contact with his land and in so doing his heritage; he projected the image of a very quiet, family-oriented individual.

This unique self-image was also a main source of his modesty, which was a major player in his reluctance to interact with those whom he determined ‘literature men’. Faulkner had never finished school, neither grade school nor college due to spotty attendance, and some felt that this lack of education led to his feelings of inferiority in relation to men such as fellow Nagano Conference speaker Gay Allen Wilson, who was a professor and published scholar.<sup>92</sup> In his biography of the author, Joseph Blotner explains that Faulkner “felt increasingly bored with the world of the schoolroom that fall of 1911, even though he now moved from one room and teacher to another for seventh-grade English, history, and mathematics. The curriculum was

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<sup>90</sup> Shio Sakanishi. “Faulkner’s Impression.” *The Mainichi* [Tokyo] August 16, 1955.

<sup>91</sup> Shoichi Saeki. “Wonderful Feat of Will: William Faulkner’s Literature.” *The Tokyo Shinbun*. July 31, 1955. Print.

<sup>92</sup> Gay Wilson Allen. *With Faulkner in Japan*. From *American Scholar*, 31 (Autumn 1962), pp. 566-71. Reprinted by permission. Copyright © 1962 by the Phi Beta Kappa Society. Print. Pages 569-572.

below his level, for one thing.”<sup>93</sup> Despite his intelligence, or perhaps because of it, Faulkner never fit well into the school system and by the time he was supposed to be in the eleventh grade his “relations with school were mainly athletic.”<sup>94</sup> There was a brief stint at the University of Mississippi which ended much the same way his high school education did, and then he travelled to New York and went out of his way to lie about who he was in order to enlist in the Royal Air Force. Why all the trouble? He liked to Royal Air Force uniforms better than the U.S. equivalent.<sup>95</sup>

As one might guess from the example above, Faulkner may not have been the most patriotic American, but he was fiercely loyal to what he referred to as ‘his country’, the South. While in Japan, he made numerous comments about the fact that he was a simple southern man,<sup>96</sup> and often referred to his home as “my country, the South”.<sup>97</sup> He, and others since, also spoke often of the similarities that the post-civil war south had with post-WWII Japan; similarities that put Faulkner in a unique position to empathize with his Japanese contemporaries. After the Civil War, the North ‘occupied’ the South, which mirrors the relationship that the United States, representing the victorious North, had at that time with Japan, the defeated South.<sup>98</sup> In one interview, Faulkner described the similarities with the following statement: “A hundred years ago there were two cultures, two economies in my country, the United States, and ninety-five years ago we fought a war over it and my side were [sic] whipped. We were invaded, we went through something of your own experience, only our invaders made

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<sup>93</sup> Blotner, *Faulkner, A Biography*, page 38

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 47

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 59-62

<sup>96</sup> “William Faulkner: Author.” *Sangyo Keisai Shinbun* [Tokyo] August 18, 1955.

<sup>97</sup> Baker, *William Faulkner’s Post-Colonial South*, 2

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 4

no effort to help us.”<sup>99</sup> Author Takao Tanaka agreed with this viewpoint, adding that “Japan and the U.S. South are two cultures that share the trauma of modernization and the burden of patriarchy,” and goes on to point out several more similarities. For example, both societies relied on patriarch and the legitimate succession of authentic blood. Both Japan and the American South acted as victimizers to conquered peoples and slaves respectively, and both were victimized by the U.S. government. Even in decline the two societies were joined in the loss of traditional society and culture; at roughly the same time the Southern plantation system and the Tokugawa Shogunate collapsed.<sup>100</sup>

Even before the wars Faulkner found similarities in the two cultures; “We had at one time a tradition of an aristocracy something like the Japanese samurai, and also a peasantry which was somewhat like the Japanese peasantry.”<sup>101</sup> Utilizing this common ground, Faulkner was able to connect with the Japanese people in a way that his American contemporaries could not. In fact, Faulkner was so consistently asked for his opinion of the future of Japan and for his message to the youth of Japan that in the final days of his trip he sat down and composed a piece called *Nihon no seinin e* or *To the Youth of Japan*, which was widely translated and distributed in Japan upon its release.<sup>102</sup> In this work Faulkner explained in simple terms how his country, the South, had come to be conquered by the very same nation that had conquered Japan, and how out of that disaster came some of the best literature minds of the time. How else, he argues, would a country man such as himself become so widely known throughout

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<sup>99</sup> James B. Meriwether; Michael Millgate. *Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner*. (New York: Random House, 1980) Page 180.

<sup>100</sup> Abadie, *Global Faulkner*, xii

<sup>101</sup> Meriwether, *Lion in the Garden*, 136

<sup>102</sup> File 511.943/9-2255

the world? As in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Faulkner highlighted the ability of man to endure and the positive outcomes of negative events. He said, “I believe that something very like that will happen here in Japan within the next few years – that out of your disaster and despair will come a group of Japanese writers whom all the world will want to listen to, who will speak not a Japanese truth but a universal truth.”<sup>103</sup> By relating his own experience and accomplishments to the folly and destruction of the past, he gave new hope to a generation of Japanese students who were growing up in the confusing and ever-changing post-war era.

Faulkner’s name appeared prominently in the Japanese newspapers before he even set foot on Japanese soil; excitement over his agreement to attend the Nagano conference spawned article after article in preparation. The standard for these pre-arrival pieces was to announce Faulkner’s imminent arrival and then pose the question, ‘who is this man?’, before going on to describe his childhood, adult life, literary works and finally, international acclaim at receiving the Nobel Prize. For example, an article entitled “William Faulkner will visit Japan”, published in July 1955, examines Faulkner’s career, provides a brief biography, and even goes on to comment on the general American distaste for his work in contrast to the French acclaim he receives.<sup>104</sup> However, this article stands out in that it delves more deeply into his literary work than others, which took a cursory view of Faulkner’s stories; in particular, the article examines his two works *Soldier’s Play* and *Body Snatchers* by not only explaining the plot of each, but going on to discuss the underlying themes and ideological breakdown

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<sup>103</sup> William Faulkner. “Nihon no seinin e/To the Youth of Japan.” *Asahi Evening News*. September 9, 1955.

<sup>104</sup> “William Faulkner will visit Japan.” Mainichi Daily.

of each piece.<sup>105</sup> Even rarer still, rather than portraying Faulkner as a one-dimensional ‘modern writer’ from America, this article provides a more human picture of the author, claiming that his literary life was a “succession of loneliness and poverty”.<sup>106</sup>

### Interviews with Faulkner

Many of the questions that interviewers asked Faulkner while he was in Japan were in regards to his personal life and opinion of general topics; a fair number of the press commented on his short stature, sun-burnt complexion and prominent nose.<sup>107</sup> In the press’s fascination with him, we see more of a celebrity figure than a foreign writer attending a conference. The Japanese took to him due to his quiet, honestly modest, and straightforward yet polite nature, a combination that fit well within Japanese society, which is highly structured on a basis of polite, humble and familiar language in relation to the social hierarchy.<sup>108</sup>

Of course, the journalists and educators were also interested in Faulkner’s literary works; the most often asked question Faulkner received was on the origin and meaning behind his difficult style of writing. The common request was to have the style, as well as Faulkner’s fondness for it, explained. To this he often responded that “I think it is because I have not had the regular school education as conceived here in Japan. In the United States, even an uneducated farmer can become a writer,”<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> “William Faulkner will visit Japan” Mainichi Daily.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Katsuji Takemura. “Mr. Faulkner in Nagano After Attending American Literature Seminar.” *The Nippon Dokusho Shinbun* [Tokyo] August 15, 1955.

<sup>108</sup> Baker, *William Faulkner’s Post-Colonial South*, 1

<sup>109</sup> Hirayama. “Interview with Faulkner.” *The Yomiuri* [Tokyo] August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1955. Print.

In other words, he found that the way to get all of his words and thoughts out most succinctly was to write the way that he did. He apologized a number of times to his interviewers and to those listening to his lectures for the obscure nature of his work, but he often reminded his interviewers that he was a “farmer before a writer” and that his works were a reflection of that.<sup>110</sup> His near unreadable style was perhaps the sole backbone to the negative assumptions of Faulkner among the Japanese populace. This issue cleanly and politely explained and even apologized for, solidified Faulkner’s favor in the eyes of the Japanese public.

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<sup>110</sup> “I am a Farmer before I am an Author: A Discussion meeting with Mr. Faulkner at Nagano.” *The Asahi Press*. Nagano Edition, pg. 8. August 16, 1955. Print.

## Chapter 5: Results and Conclusions

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In his book on U.S. Foreign Policy, historian Charles A. Thomson outlines USIS concerns regarding the state of U.S.-Japan relations and the need for action as follows:

Among the most critical problems in our relations with Japan are those of a cultural nature. In respect to the language barrier a massive effort is required, promoted by both governments, to increase knowledge of Japanese by Americans and of English by Japanese. Paralleling it is the need of educational and artistic exchanges to promote better mutual understanding, in order to reinforce the cooperation of our governments in the world community. Most kinds of cultural relations, with the exception of technical assistance, are of vital importance for the attainment of our foreign policy objectives in Japan.<sup>111</sup>

Thomson's description of USIS concerns in Japan can be described as a focus on "cultural relations", "educational and artistic exchanges" and "better mutual understanding." However, these concerns and the programs that arose to solve them were not restricted to the scope of diplomacy; great efforts were made to overcome the language barrier so that exchange between the Japanese and Americans could occur more smoothly and efficiently. Thompson said that this would require a "massive effort", and the U.S. saw fit to put forth such an effort. This supports the thesis of a "Second Occupation", which utilized cultural methods of infiltration and control, because in size and in impact the U.S.'s involvement in Japan in the mid to late 1950's was nothing short of an exercise in creating a large impact through means disguised as education. Not only were there official diplomatic efforts, but the U.S. also issued radio broadcasts, created and ran information centers, distributed videos and pamphlets describing American life, pushed English and educational studies, and sent private individuals

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<sup>111</sup> Charles A. Thomson. *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963) Page 163.

(such as Faulkner) to Japan all toward the same goal: to carefully create in Japan an atmosphere favorable toward the U.S. so that not only the infrastructure, but the hearts and minds of the Japanese would be aligned with America.<sup>112</sup> In this way, the U.S. could most effectively stave off the spread of Communism from China into Japan, and by protecting Japan it was protecting itself from the Communist threat.

The USIS had to be cautious in implementing this plan due to the tense nature of U.S.-Japan relations in the early 1950s. When the two nations signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, many Japanese were critical of the privileges America retained in Japan; remarks of John Foster Dulles on the treaty that it “amounted to a voluntary continuation of the Occupation” did nothing to help matters.<sup>113</sup> The two countries were further estranged by their shifting national goals; while the U.S. was ramping up military spending and thinking defensively, Japan was focusing on the rebuilding of industry-for-export. These goals led to different views internationally: Japan saw China and its market as an economic opportunity, while the U.S. saw it as a military danger.<sup>114</sup> As Japan continued to chafe under U.S. control, the U.S. sustained its ethnocentric view of Japan. In 1952 Senator Everett Dirksen of Rhode Island explained his understanding of the Japanese by stating “Every ethnic argument is on my side when I say they [the Japanese] are Asiatics and they will be Asiatics.”<sup>115</sup> He was describing the negative view of the U.S. that the Japanese began to adopt during and following the Allied Occupation of Japan, a view that was aggravated by continuing U.S. nuclear production and the sudden desire of the U.S. government to re-arm Japan.

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<sup>112</sup> Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 80.

<sup>113</sup> Walter LaFeber. *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1997) Page 297.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid* 296.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid* 297.

The fear was that the U.S. was planning on using the newly increased Japanese forces to control and re-enforce U.S. interests in East Asia.<sup>116</sup> This fear, distrust of motives, and constant exposure to U.S. racialized rhetoric created an atmosphere in Japan that the USIS had to carefully navigate in pursuit of achieving its many goals.

Now, with these concerns in mind, we turn to the results of the trip. These results can be divided into three categories: the results that the USIS officially intended to occur, the results that the USIS officially recognized afterwards, and the results that occurred outside of departmental planning.

### **Intended Results**

As mentioned in chapter two, the USIS had very specific goals for Faulkner's trip to Brazil in 1954 which were outlined in an official document housed in the State Department's records in the Archives in Washington D.C. However, in light of the lack of a comparable document relating to the Nagano Conference, we are left to infer at least the basic framework of the goals based on the objectives of the previous trip.

Returning to those, there are definite themes that could carry over:

Objectives:

1. To strengthen the traditional spirit of friendship between Brasil (sic) and the U.S. and further understanding of U.S. democracy.
2. To convince Brazilians that their national progress and security may best be attained through cooperation with the U. S. and through inter-American and United Nations organizations.<sup>117</sup>

Although the "traditional spirit of friendship" between the U.S. and Japan may have been slightly strained given their history, the reasoning holds as well as it does for

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid 298.

<sup>117</sup> File 511.323/7-954; Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Brazil. The second half of the first objective, to “further understanding of U.S. democracy”, also translates well to concerns for Japan; the U.S. was trying to stem the flood of Communism on all sides, and in the east Japan was a vital bulwark that the U.S. needed to remain pro-American in order to do that successfully. This transitions seamlessly into the second objective, which in this case would be to “convince Japanese that their national progress and security may be best attained through cooperation with the U.S. ...” It was essential that the Japanese hearts and minds be won over to American intentions before they strayed to the ideals of Communism. This could not be done by force alone, and as already discussed the shift in tactics utilized in this “Second Occupation” was vital to the future amicable relations between the U.S. and Japan. Takao Tanaka agrees, stating that given the Communist North Korean and People’s Republic of China’s influence on the Asian continent, both Japan and the U.S. would have benefitted from a good relationship following the Occupation years.<sup>118</sup>

Faulkner was a great choice for attaining these goals when you consider his personal political views; although soft-spoken and adverse to political argument, Faulkner was strongly anti-Communist and staunchly against the creation and use of nuclear weapons.<sup>119</sup> The latter point composed the majority of Faulkner’s acceptance speech for his Nobel Prize:

Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart...<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Abadie, *Global Faulkner*, 116.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, Page 4.

<sup>120</sup> “William Faulkner - Banquet Speech”. Nobelprize.org. 10 Apr 2012  
[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1949/faulkner-speech.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1949/faulkner-speech.html)

Historian Anne J. Abadie argues that the State Department decided to use these qualities, and that Faulkner's sentiments were the driving force behind his decision to go abroad again and again; "The travel-averse Faulkner must have regarded the threat of atomic annihilation very seriously to have agreed to trips sponsored by the U.S. State Department..."<sup>121</sup> And he did; Faulkner truly believed that despite his discomfort and his distaste of travel, he was making a positive difference in the world by doing what was asked of him.<sup>122</sup>

### **Actual Results**

The actual results of Faulkner's trip were largely in line with what the State Department expected, though there were slight deficiencies and impressive unexpected positive results in addition to the intended outcome. The discrepancies between the goals and the results of the trip will be discussed in this section. These effects, or lack thereof, involved not only the opinions of the Japanese and changes in Japan, but in the opinions and coverage in the United States as well.

One area that had neither a positive nor a negative reaction to Faulkner's trip was the American Press. Despite his new description as a "modern writer," Faulkner remained largely disliked or dismissed in U.S. public and critic opinion. Coverage of Faulkner's trips abroad on behalf of the USIS is scant, most notably, his trip to Japan. Considering the positive influence that his trips had on US relations abroad, it would follow that at least a small article would appear in the major American newspapers describing his work with the USIS, but such was not the case. Only two articles were

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, page 5

<sup>122</sup> Blotner, *Faulkner, A Biography*, 61.

published regarding William Faulkner's travels abroad in the *New York Times* in 1955, each no longer than 126 words. The first, entitled "Lecturer off to Japan: N.Y.U. Expert on Whitman to Speak at 14 U.S. Centers", mentions Faulkner's involvement only in passing; of the 126 words of the article, Faulkner is referred to in only 19. This article, dedicated to fellow Nagano Seminar lecturer Gay Wilson Allen, mentioned Faulkner only as its closing sentence, "Mr. Faulkner also is to attend."<sup>123</sup>

While this article may seem sparse in mentioning Faulkner's trip to Japan, it is the only *New York Times* article to do so. The second article in 1955 that referred to Faulkner's travels abroad only mentioned his being in Rome when he stated in an interview, "I am not a writer, I am a peasant – even if I do write books and people read them." At the time he was explaining to a reporter why he had given his Nobel Prize money to "advance the education of Mississippi Negro children".<sup>124</sup> This was a hot topic in the U.S. at the time, and Faulkner had a track record for sharing his views on the situation without censor, which made his interview newsworthy. However, this 57-word article reported on race and education, and the fact that Faulkner was in Rome at the time of the interview is a passing detail that is neither explored nor explained.

### **Local Newspapers**

A handful of articles about Faulkner's international travel can be found in local papers from smaller towns throughout mainly the southeastern United States, but even these either refer only to Faulkner's writings of his impressions of Japan or view his trips abroad as a threat. Articles in small newspapers with headlines such as "Faulkner

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<sup>123</sup> "Lecturer off to Japan: N.Y.U. Expert on Whitman to Speak at 14 U.S. Centers." *The New York Times*. Sunday, July 17, 1955.

<sup>124</sup> "Faulkner calls self 'peasant'." *The New York Times*. Monday, August 29, 1955.

Reflects on Japan – Finds Music in the Language”<sup>125</sup> and “Faulkner would have Commies Visit America”<sup>126</sup> show the variation taken in the few articles written, but they also avoid the fact that his trips were State sponsored and the impact he made abroad. Instead, he is treated as an individual with an interesting opinion on something foreign; as if he were no more than a tourist in Japan who came back to share his thoughts. This disinterest with the reason and method of his international travel holds with the general lack of news articles on Faulkner in the U.S. in comparison to similar authors of his time.

In his hometown of Oxford, Mississippi, the local paper published articles on the author with higher word counts but that still placed the issue of the how and why of his being abroad beneath that of what he had been quoted as saying. In one article entitled “Faulkner Sees Negro ‘Merger’ In 300 Years”, the first half of the article is dedicated to examining Faulkner’s claim that though a merger between the races in the south would occur, it would have to be “up to the Negro to have tolerance, intelligence, patience and be sensible in solving the segregation problem...not the white man, because the white man is frantic; he’s afraid; he’s fighting.”<sup>127</sup> While it is easy to see how such a quote from one of their own would have been newsworthy, it received more attention than the positive effects that this same man, a humble southerner, was having on international relations.

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<sup>125</sup> “Faulkner Reflects on Japan – Finds Music in the Language.” *The Bee*. Danville, Virginia. Thursday, October 20, 1955.

<sup>126</sup> “Faulkner would have Commies Visit America.” *The Laurel Leader-Call*. Laurel, Mississippi. Tuesday, May 21, 1957.

<sup>127</sup> “Faulkner Sees Negro ‘Merger’ In 300 Years.” *The Oxford Eagle*. Thursday, August 4, 1955. Print.

These positive effects were eventually mentioned in the article, more here than in any other article published in the United States at the time of his trip. It is explained that he arrived in Japan that Monday for a tour sponsored by the State Department, and that he was to give many interviews and lectures, but after this small note the remainder of the article is dedicated to Faulkner's documented opinion of the United States as writers, readers, and critics. Rather than being interested in the possible outcomes of a famous author from their own town's visits abroad, the editors seem to only have had eyes for Faulkner's words when they are directly related to them. Even in mentioning France, the topic immediately returned to the U.S.: "Asked why his books are so much more popular in France than in his native land, the pipe-smoking author drawled: 'That's because everyone in the States writes – no one reads. Our culture is based on production and success...the only people in the States who read are women.'<sup>128</sup>"

The only article in the local newspaper, *The Oxford Eagle*, to directly mention Faulkner's State Department-sponsored travels abroad free from any reported comment or grievance against the U.S. appeared in September of 1955, when he was in Rome and his tour was nearing its end. The article, entitled "Faulkner Slated For Panel Talks" and coming in at roughly 100 words, makes no mention of his trips to Japan nor his rather impressive reception and impact in that country.

Although they were familiar with Faulkner's opinions on Communism and the nuclear arms race, it was not until after his trip to Japan that anyone at the USIS drew the parallels between Japan and Faulkner's South. As discussed in chapter three, the two societies shared strong histories of tradition, patriarchy and a certain clannish dimension to them, but what affected Faulkner's time in Japan most immediately was

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<sup>128</sup> "Faulkner Sees Negro 'Merger' In 300 Years."

the shared experience of having been defeated by the United States. During the Civil War, the South, renamed the Confederacy, was politically and culturally separated from the North, which retained the status of the United States. Thus upon the Confederacy's defeat, despite the fact that it was reintegrated into the U.S., it was officially a conquered nation under the United States. The South's similarity to Japan and Faulkner's deep affinity with the South ultimately served to create a uniquely personal relationship between Faulkner and the individuals he came into contact with. Even more impressive is the personal feeling that the Japanese public associated with Faulkner without actually meeting him. The interaction of Faulkner and so called "mind makers" of Japanese society, such as critics and academics, and then the subsequent interactions of these individuals with the rest of Japanese society facilitated this widespread effect.<sup>129</sup>

A second result was a long-ranging impact on Japanese literary trends as evidenced by several authors and literary works. In *A Graduation Thesis Entitled 'Faulkner and Nagano'* by Hashiguchi Yasuo, the author notes such trends that Faulkner was instrumental in influencing. For example, Hashiguchi contends that Faulkner's encouragement to the "Youth of Japan" in 1955 was not mere complement, and that his trip and subsequent study of his work produced two future Nobel Prize laureates for literature in Yasunari Kawabata and Kenzaburo Oe.<sup>130</sup> Faulkner's visit also influenced a generation of modernist writers that wrote novels that bear a strong resemblance to Faulkner's fiction through use of prose and the topics addressed. Examples include Jun'ichiro Tanizaki's *The Key* and the *Makioka Sisters*, as well as

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<sup>129</sup> Yasuo Hashiguchi. *A Graduation Thesis Entitled 'Faulkner at Nagano.'* The Faulkner Journal of Japan. Ed. 9, October 2007. The William Faulkner Society of Japan. Page 180.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 184.

Kenji Nakagami's *The Cape*, *The Sea of Kareki*, and *The End of the Earth the Supreme Time*.<sup>131</sup>

### **Officially Recognized Results**

In the end, the USIS' official statement on the efficacy of Faulkner's trip to Japan was laid out in a previously classified document. It was comprised of notes and memos from individuals working for the USIS both in Washington and Tokyo, a detailed synopsis of the entire month of Faulkner's stay, and an official foreign dispatch detailing in the most simplistic manner the numbered reasons that Faulkner's trip to Japan in particular had such special significance. Beginning with this list, the first example of success outlined by the USIS is that "This [was] the first time that a single individual of such stature and appeal has been sent, through the Exchange Program, to Tokyo."<sup>132</sup> This comment alone clearly speaks to the status that Faulkner enjoyed among select circles at home and, more importantly, abroad at this time, considering his general reputation in the states as an eccentric writer.

The next reason given is interesting, because it no longer refers only to Faulkner's trips or specifically to Japan. Instead, it reads: "The Mission is convinced that the Nobel Prize Winner's contribution to USIS efforts will be among the most lasting contributions ever made by any one individual in any given country."<sup>133</sup> The importance of this statement is threefold. First, it places the impact of Faulkner's presence in Japan above that of his other trips and of every other individual, including Robert Frost, to every other country. Secondly, like the statement above it recognizes that Faulkner as

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 185

<sup>132</sup> File 511.943/9-2255

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

an individual greatly impacted Japan, as opposed to the concerted movements and posed appearances characteristic of a groomed organization. Finally it describes the lasting property of Faulkner's contributions, and in doing so speaks to the quality of influence that he had on the country that it should still apply to later generations.

Thirdly, the statement notes "It was possible, through Mr. Faulkner's cooperation and the concerted efforts of USIS-Tokyo, to produce a truly coordinated all-media program, incorporating the best facilities available to Press-Publications, Radio, Books, Exhibits, and Information Centers."<sup>134</sup> In other words, the USIS was able to persuade Faulkner to cooperate in the many organized interviews, conferences, and appearances, and because of this they were able to make as much out of his time in Japan as possible. However, it was not the USIS' instructions alone that proved successful for Faulkner. The list goes on to say "Through the attendance of Mr. Faulkner, the Nagano Seminar on American Literature has risen in prestige to unexpected heights."<sup>135</sup> This alludes to the important role that Faulkner's own quirks and personality played in the Japanese approval he received, but the statement continues with even more directness on this point: "Mr. Faulkner's own personality and charm were quickly recognized by the Japanese newsmen and critics, who in turn have given the Japanese people one of the most favorable pictures of the American."<sup>136</sup> Ultimately this was the USIS' ultimate goal for Faulkner's trip to Japan: the willing alignment of Japanese sentiment with American ideals and concerns. Other reasoning aside, this statement alone should justify Faulkner's trip as successful, at least in the eyes of the USIS, but that is not the goal here. The more important note to be drawn from this is that the USIS' standard for

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

success for Faulkner's trip was to achieve this receptive positivity in Japan based on this "favorable picture of the American".<sup>137</sup>

Other memos attached to this file spoke to Faulkner's unique talent. D. J. Herget, Director of the American Cultural Center at Kyoto, commented:

Because of his universal appeal, transcending the crust of intellectuals, Mr. Faulkner's contribution to USIS efforts has been outstanding. From time to time, as further results of his visit become available, the Mission will forward them for the information of the Department of State and the United States Information Agency.<sup>138</sup>

In an attached statement entitled "William Faulkner's Visit to Kyoto", Faulkner was described as "eccentric and paradoxical" with a "trigger like response to all questions posed to him." Dr. Kakuichi Ohshino, president of Doshisha University, added his opinion that "Faulkner is truly a giant among thinking men and persuasive writers," and labeled the reclusive author "the most un-American American to visit Kyoto."<sup>139</sup>

Thus, Faulkner successfully left the impression of America upon Japan that the USIS had hoped for; the very idea of what an "American" was or what it meant to be "American" was now being questioned by Japanese critics, intellectuals, and public alike. Having a more positive view of American individuals such as Faulkner would ideally lead Japan to a more positive and optimistic view of America in general, and this would hopefully translate into easier relations between the two nations. This was a small step in the direction of the larger goal of the USIS for the Second Occupation of Japan, which was to better relations between the two countries through methods carefully couched in educational communication and cultural understanding.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, documented by G. Lewis Schmidt: Acting Chief Public Affairs Officer.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

## Epilogue

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The ramifications of William Faulkner's time and influence in Japan as a part of the "Second Occupation" are still present today. *New York Times* journalist Edwin McDowell wrote about the lingering effects of Faulkner's trip three decades after it occurred, stating "that enthusiasm has endured in Japan...there have been four Japanese translations each of 'The Sound and the Fury,' 'Sanctuary' and 'Absalom, Absalom!' and a translation of the complete works of Faulkner is under way."<sup>140</sup>

As Faulkner grew prominent in the international literary world, so did his place of origin. This brought many aspects of American, and specifically Southern, life to the forefront of international interests and inspired many scholars from Japan to travel to the U.S. to further their studies of the author. Kiyoyuki Ono, associate professor of English at Chiba University, gives the following example: "since 1974, it has been both a strange and a familiar scene at the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia that all year round one Japanese scholar, and sometimes as many as three or four, sits reading Faulkner's manuscripts," and goes on to explain that these scholars' research has resulted in the publication of many books and articles.<sup>141</sup>

In Japan, articles about Faulkner continued long after his return to the United States, and can be found today as well. For example, in the November 2004 edition of the Japanese magazine *Esquire*, the cover story was titled with a loose translation of Faulkner's novel (*Sanctuary*) as "Inside the Sanctuary of the American South" and features several cities, customs and people across the American South, including

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<sup>140</sup>Edwin McDowell. "Publishing: Japanese Study Faulkner." *The New York Times*. Section C; Page 26, Column 3; Weekend Desk. April 12, 1985. Print.

<sup>141</sup> Ono, *Triple-Cross of Reception*, 189.

William Faulkner. In a section of the article focusing on Faulkner's hometown of Oxford, Mississippi, the author describes the town as easily recognizable as the model for Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha. Further, it depicts Oxford as a picturesque southern town that set the stage for Faulkner's stories of secret violence and deception beneath the surface of society civility.<sup>142</sup> In describing Faulkner's home of Rowan Oak, the article in translation notes the following:

William Faulkner lived in his old home, which he bought because it grabbed his attention, and is surrounded by forests of oak and cedar, for thirty years until his death. His home is large but frugal, and was the polished setting for Faulkner to work out the themes of race conflict, gender, economic stratification, the Civil War, plantation life, and the anguish of the Native American race.<sup>143</sup>

This article also features photographs of Faulkner's study, the grounds of Rowan Oak, and a full-page photo of his bedroom. It wraps up the section on Faulkner and Oxford by describing the annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference held at the University of Mississippi. The author explains that the conference is held every year in Mississippi, and that at the time of the publication (2004) it was the 31<sup>st</sup> conference, which was themed "Faulkner and Material Culture" and boasted 200 participants. More importantly, many of these participants were fans and researchers from other states or from overseas whose interest in Faulkner prompted their attendance. The article goes on to mention that during this particular conference, an academic inquiry was begun on

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<sup>142</sup> "Slip Inside the Deep South." *Esquire* Nov 2004: 64-113. Japan Ed. Print. Page 103.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. Translated from: ウィリアムは、オークと杉の林に囲まれたこの古い家を気に入って購入し、死ぬまで30年間住んだ。大作家の家としては質素だが、ここが、人種、ジェンダー、経済階層内の葛藤、南北戦争、プランテーションの生活、ネイティブアメリカン苦悩といったテーマを練り上げる舞台である。

Faulkner's contribution to 'creating Oxford' as it exists today, and many attendees brought papers to present about their work on Faulkner.<sup>144</sup>

Scholarly publications on Faulkner continue to grow; professor Ono later collaborated on a project that compiled selections from the more than 3,000 essays and articles written on Faulkner in Japan into a comprehensive book entitled Faulkner Studies in Japan. While explaining the reasoning behind the publication and the surge in translations of Faulkner's books, Ono neatly sums up the general relations between Faulkner and Japan: "Faulkner's world is well known and deeply appreciated in Japan, not merely as another example of literature in English studied by specialists and read by enthusiasts but also as universal art and human expression that has touched the lives and work of Japanese literary artists."<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> McDowell, "Publishing: Japanese Study Faulkner.", 26.

## Faulkner Sees Negro 'Merger' In 300 Years

TOKYO, Aug. 2 (Tuesday).—(INS)—Novelist William Faulkner predicted Monday the Negro race in America will "vanish" in 300 years by merger with the rest of the United States population.

The famed Oxford, Miss., author said that, in the meanwhile, it is up to the Negro to have "tolerance, intelligence, patience and be sensible" in solving the segregation problem.

"Not the white man," he said, "because the white man is frantic; he's afraid; he's fighting."

The Nobel Prize-winning chronicler of life in America's Deep South made his remarks at the Tokyo Foreign Correspondent's Club. He arrived in Japan Monday for a three-week tour sponsored by the State Department.

Newsmen sat on the floor in a semi-circle around Faulkner as he declared in his modulated Mississippi accent that only women read the better novels in America.

Asked why his books are so much more popular in France than in his native land, the pipe-smoking author drawled:

"That's because everyone in the States writes—no one reads. Our culture is based on production and success . . . the only people in the States who read are women."

Faulkner said he felt that "all" American authors should get the Nobel Prize because it would be difficult to name any single American creative writer ranking after himself and Ernest Hemingway.

He called Thomas Wolfe the "finest" literary "failure" in America, then judged himself "the second finest failure, (John) Dos Passos third and Hemingway last." He dismissed John Steinbeck as merely "a reporter."

The white-haired novelist said he believed human life is "a tragedy," but added:

"I do believe in man and in his capacity for folly . . . I believe that man will some day end war. It will take a long time, but he will."

In reply refer to  
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March 2 1955

Dear Mr. Faulkner:

Here we are calling on you again. I have just received a request from our Cultural Affairs Officer at Tokyo for an American writer to take part in a seminar on American literature to be held at the city of Nagano, Japan, this summer, and would be delighted if you found you could be available for the program there for two, three or four weeks. The date has not yet been fixed but it will probably be during August.

This same type of seminar has been held for several summers and usually consists of morning sessions five days a week and a total of four afternoon sessions. The morning sessions consist of a lecture by some one participant lasting about an hour and a half, after which the participants divide into three groups of ten each for informal discussions. You would no doubt be asked to participate in discussion groups or perhaps give an informal talk or two. Other extra lectures especially requested by the participants and various sessions of poetry reading and listening to poetry recordings are also held. In other words, it is all quite informal and leisurely. The participants consist of approximately 30 comparatively young Japanese professors of English and American literature, selected in an open competition and from all parts of Japan. One tangible result of past seminars has been the organization, completely on the initiative of the Japanese, of a nation-wide alumni association of those who have attended the seminars. The purpose of this association is the furtherance of studies in American literature and civilization. This we feel is truly important and we believe that you could contribute a great deal, not only to the seminar but to better Japanese-American relations as well.

I shall look forward anxiously to an answer from you. With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Harold E. Howland  
Specialists Division  
International Educational Exchange Service

Mr. William Faulkner,  
Oxford,  
Mississippi.

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SENT TO: Mr. William Faulkner  
Oxford, Mississippi

Embassy at Tokyo and Department most anxious have you participate  
Nagano Seminar. Embassy advises no other American writer could  
possible have greater impact in Japan. Anxiously await your reply.

*Martha G. Geesa*

Martha G. Geesa, ~~xxxxxx~~  
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