

(De)Formation of “Southern Female Habit”—A Case Study of William Faulkner’s *Snopes Trilogy*

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is twofold. The first part of the paper discusses the notion of “Southern female habit”—formal and informal women education—as it appeared in the U.S. South in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. Its analysis in the paper relies upon the following factors: the “necessity” of formal education, gender-discriminatory job distribution, prescribed skills and features, the role of reproduction, and the importance of home as woman’s private sphere. The second part of the paper shows how William Faulkner approached this typically Southern phenomenon in his *Snopes* trilogy. Three generations of the Varner-Snopes women characters—Mrs. Varner, Eula Varner Snopes, and Linda Snopes Kohl—foreground three different comprehensions of the idea of the “Southern female habit”: Mrs. Varner lives it; Eula Varner Snopes balances between accepting and subverting it; Linda Snopes Kohl subverts it.

Key Words: William Faulkner, the *Snopes* trilogy, the Southern female habit