

Linda Snopes Kohl as a Single Woman in Faulkner's Fiction

Nobuyo Unagami¹

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to look into the characterizations of "single" women in Faulkner's fiction. Within the frame of Faulkner's patriarchal Southern community, the female characters are expected to follow traditional gender roles based on a family system. As if challenging their societies, Faulkner makes many of the female characters attractive all the more because of their secret or open disregard for the traditional sense of values and their unrestricted behaviors. After examining the changing significance of being "a single woman" in America from the 30s to the 70s, this study focuses on the modern aspects of the female character in the later works of Faulkner, Linda Snopes Kohl.

If we look back to unmarried female characters in the early phase of Faulkner's works, then we can recognize Faulkner comes to give a more positive meaning to women's independence and free but responsible behavior. In the later works, Faulkner gives his female characters their own will and ability to grasp better living conditions. If they are evaluated based on the traditional sense of values, they just look unordinary and appear to deserve criticism. However, the fact that Faulkner describes them favorably and gives them exceptional attraction must reflect the change in the times. In this paper, I would like to conclude that the modern side of their characterization partly lies in their own choice of being a single woman.

Keywords: William Faulkner, gender, single

I. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to look into female characters who are "single women" in Faulkner's fiction. The history of criticism of Faulkner's works shows the tendency to evaluate his works from *Sartoris* (1929) to *Go Down, Moses* (1942). Accordingly, female characters in the works of this period like Caddy, Addie and Narcissa gain attention and are often criticized in the respect of gender. Although they live in a backwardness peculiar to the Southern community, this aspect draws our attention to the characterizations of these female characters in Faulkner's earlier works. It is worth considering the fact that Faulkner chooses these women, who would not become housewives, as central and attractive characters.

In this paper, I would like to re-evaluate Linda Snopes Kohl, who appears as a peculiar woman who does not conform to her society in *The Mansion* (1959) and compare her with the above-mentioned characters. Linda's viewpoint and lifestyle reminds us of some types of women living in the present time, who are free from a traditional family structure that is often based on a nuclear family and try not to have a spouse and a family.

II. The works where Linda appears and the precedent studies.

¹ Dept. of Monozukuri, T.M.C.I.T.

One of the female types who Faulkner adores is Eula Varner Snopes, who is Linda's mother and is described as an unintellectual woman who is almost close to a female mammal with excessive generative power. In *The Hamlet* (1940), she is a woman who transcends worldly matters and should not be viewed in the light of her intelligence. Although some changes and contradictory parts among the trilogy from *The Hamlet* to *The Mansion* are often pointed out, Faulkner accepts these contradictions affirmatively. In *The Hamlet*, Eula is animal-like and is not given a chance to speak properly. On the other hand, in *The Town* (1957) she thinks about her daughter and herself profoundly enough to not be called "lacking in intelligence" and is dissatisfied with her husband, Flem and has an illicit affair with de Span. Eula tries to bargain with Gavin over making him her daughter's guardian. Considering these aspects, Eula turns into an ordinary woman and her uniqueness as a female is not recognized any more.

In *The Hamlet*, Linda is still an infant and in *The Town*, she is a young girl who needs Gavin's protection and is even thought of as his possible fiancée. But Linda is a girl who needs someone's protection in *The Town*. In spite of her characterization in these two works, in *The Mansion* she suddenly comes back as a modern woman who betrays readers' expectations as "Eula's daughter" and turns out to be a politically and socially radical woman. Years have passed between the publication of *The Town* and *The Mansion*, but her transformation is almost perplexing.

"Patricide", support for communism, and going to the front with the army are mentioned as her masculine parts and frequently discussed in terms of gender. This is discussed by deliberating Faulkner's views in the 50s, when he pays attention to women's advances into society and regards them highly. Among Faulkner's later works, *The Mansion* gains comparatively high evaluations partly because of the characterization of Linda.

In this paper, I would like to re-evaluate Linda as "a single women" and other female characters who show this tendency.

III. "Single women" in Faulkner's works

Faulkner's description of a conservative Southern society mainly in the 1920s and 1930s has often been commented on and the conservative image of his fictional world has established itself firmly. Nevertheless, many of the female characters Faulkner creates with a strong attachment show no need to have "a husband" or show their hope for an absence of a husband even if they have a husband.

Regarded in the light of "single women" or "women hoping to be single", their characterizations lead to the current trend to remain single across the globe. Literally "single" women in Faulkner's works are Rosa Coldfield in *Absalom, Absalom!* and Emily Grierson in "A Rose for Emily." In fact, from their behaviors we can read their secret hope for marriage and they are often regarded as "victims." However, their persistence in being a lady prevented their possible marriages. It is true that their families and communities are a hurdle to their marriages, but their sense of respectability limits the choices in their lives. As a result, they console themselves by being accompanied by some partners they can manage, such as twenty-year-old Quentin Compson and Homer Barron. Surely they are "victims" of their times, but they can cherish their pride by keeping some partners they can control rather than leading ordinary married lives in the real world.

Here I would like to look over their views and attitudes shown in the texts. While Rosa narrates the process in which she is engaged with Thomas Sutpen, the husband of her dead sister who she feels hostile toward, she secretly sticks to marriage to satisfy her desire to remain a lady and have a spouse who can support her and himself economically. In the end, she remains single and peacefully passes away as if she had had some satisfaction in narrating her life to Quentin at length and taking him to see Henry

together.

So the natural thing would have been for her to go out and live with Judith, the natural thing for her or any Southern woman, gentlewoman. She would not have needed to be asked; no one would expect her to wait to be. Because that's what a Southern lady is. (AA 87)

Jason Compson, father of Quentin, thinks of Rosa as a Southern lady. The following citation also suggests that Rosa has an identity as a Southern gentlewoman and is persistent in getting married.

...an environment where at best and even lacking war my chances would have been slender enough since I was not only a Southern gentlewoman but the very modest character of whose background and circumstances must needs be their own affirmation since had I been the daughter of a wealthy planter I could have married almost anyone but being the daughter merely of a small store-keeper I could even afford to accept flowers from almost no one and so would have been doomed to marry at last some casual apprentice-clerk in my father's business;
-(AA 172)

While she declares her possible spouse is a man who matches her family, her talk discloses that a marriage with an ordinary man would not please her. In the next citation, readers are informed that Rosa ends her life in peace after she and Quentin find Henry, who hides in Sutpen's Hundred in contrast with her painful life after being insulted by Sutpen.

My dear son,

Miss Rosa Coldfield was buried yesterday. She remained in the coma for almost two weeks and two days ago she died without regaining consciousness and without pain... (AA 177)

As for Emily, her failure to get a respectable spouse must be humiliating and her pride is not hurt by being with "a man" who is completely under her control. "We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will." (CS 124) People around her keep observing Emily as if not to make her deviate from being "a Southern lady" and virtually push her to breaking point.

...a foreman named Homer Barron, A Yankee – a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face. (CS 124)

"Of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer." (CS 124)

But there were still others, other people, who said that even grief could not cause a real lady forget *noblesse oblige* – without calling it *noblesse oblige*. (CS 124-125)

Then some of the ladies began to say that it was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people. The men did not want to interfere, but at last the ladies forced the Baptist minister – Miss Emily's people were Episcopal – to call upon her. (CS 126)

Not only her father but people in her community also narrow her choices in life, forcing her to be "a real lady" and avoid "disgrace" and being a "bad example." For her, to be with a man in a public place is

difficult. It must be her last resort to settle the conflict between others' interference and her pride by keeping a man in a closed space, a room in a house by killing him. It is presumed that their times indiscriminately label a single woman an old maid.

Here I would like to introduce a study on single women in America. The change in viewing single women is read from the study. The book entitled *Singles* by Leonard Cargan and Matthew Melko (1982) provides us with records showing the actual situation of single women. They conduct surveys focusing on 13 points but I would like to take up some of them related to the topic of this essay. The following citations are on the changes in the image of singles.

The 70s

There has been a tremendous change in the image of singles in the early 1970s. In the late sixties they were perceived as lonely and unfortunate; now they are seen as swinging and enviable. (55)

The 50s

The perception that the image of singles is changing is strong in the article by the woman. The "stigma" of being single is disappearing; it is now all right for women to work and a variety of possibilities are opened to them that had not been in the past. (56)

The 30s "A Spinster I"

The perception of change in image from the past is just as strong or even stronger than it was to be in later years, despite the anonymity of the article. "At present spinsterhood needs no apology.... The very terms of obloquy have almost faded out." The conveniences of the new small apartments eliminate the dinginess of boarding houses and render men "unnecessary." Yet she feels that this is not enough and that a more positive image is needed. Singles are invisible; they are not there as a market or a political force - a loss all around... (57-58)

During World War I

("Why I Am an Old Maid": On a 45-year-old woman who uses a pen name, Marge Milton)

There is an underlying aura of melancholy about her article. (59)

There is no sense that any change is taking place. The term "old maid" is seen as cruel, but no other is proposed. Yet, economically and educationally, Marge Milton was not inferior to the women who wrote in later periods. (60)

The book shows how the images associated with single women changed between the times like the 70s, the 50s, the 30s and the time of World War I: the articles in magazines reflect their self-image as single women.

In the 70s, single women are affirmatively described as free and "enviable." In the 50s, when *The Town* (1957) and *The Mansion* (1959) were written and published, people gradually took women in work as natural and they have more opportunities. Tracing back to the 30s, we can find women's anxiety at being single was not wiped out yet. During World War I, single women were cruelly called "old maids." The painful situations where Rosa and Emily lived as single women overlap with the loneliness of being an old maid during World War I.

Here I would like to look into the characterizations of Addie Bundren and Caddy Compson as women who have initiative and hope to be single. The following citations are from Addie's monologues.

I knew that it had been, not that my aloneness had to be violated over and over each day, but that it had never been violated until Cash came. Not even by Anse in the nights. (*AILD* 172)

My aloneness had been violated and then made whole again by the violation: time, Anse, love, what you will, outside the circle. (*AILD* 172)

I even held Anse refraining still, not that I was holding him recessional, but as though nothing else had ever been. (*AILD* 175)

In *As I Lay Dying*, Addie Bundren is married, but before her marriage with Anse, she worked as a teacher and her family was not in a financially difficult situation. Although in *Faulkner in the University* he comments that Addie marries under pressure from her family, she marries not for financial reasons and does not feel a special attachment to Anse. Seen in the above citation, she feels isolated from her husband even after her marriage. She believes violating her loneliness is beyond his reach and her death physically isolates her from him. Her last words make him go on a burial trip to her hometown. Ironically Anse decides to remarry even before finishing her burial and would not look back on his first marriage. However, Addie does not feel connected with him and shown in the citations, she keeps her isolation, in other words, some distance from him. Her hope for the absence of her husband is evident and her comments deserve attention as a sort of “desire to stay single.”

In a more modern society, Caddy Compson and Narcissa Benbow Sartoris stay single and their characterizations reflect women’s willingness to be single. Caddy gets married only to avoid being an unmarried mother and later gets divorced. Her remarriage and second divorce make readers think she would not establish her own family. Even if proposed to by a man, Narcissa, who becomes a widow, will not remarry. The two show no interest in having a husband after losing one.

The following citations are from “Caddy” in “Appendix” of *The Sound and the Fury*, which introduces us to an episode which gives us hints to guess how she lives in the latter half of her life. In it, she looks unrealistically young and somehow is not in a financially difficult situation like a heroine in popular culture, which reflects Faulkner’s working experience in Hollywood. One of the men Caddy marries and divorces from is described as “a minor moving picture magnate, Hollywood California” (*TSAF*, 230). Moreover, the single woman, Caddy’s former classmate, is characterized as “the county librarian, a mousesized and -colored woman who had never married...” (*TSAF* 231). Her viewpoint in which Caddy is narrated, puts an emphasis on Caddy’ youth: “..., an open powerful expensive chromium/rimmed sports car, the woman’s face hatless between a rich scarf and a seal coat, ageless and beautiful, cold serene and damned; beside her a handsome lean man of middleage in the ribbons and tabs of a German staff general—” (*TSAF* 231). Her description of her photo is virtually the last figure of Caddy and it shows that if she does not settle down and have a family, she will live without any trouble.

Although Caddy was born as a daughter of a Southern lady, Caroline, she does not mind the generally accepted idea that “I was taught that there is no halfway ground that a woman is either a lady or not” (*TSAF*, 63). For her, settling herself in a family is not considered as important. On the other hand, Caddy often reminds us of maternity, for example she cares for her father, Jason and her idiot brother, Benjy, “will you look after Benjy and Father.” (*TSAF*, 70) Although readers find maternity in the figure of Caddy rather than in that of her mother, Caroline, they expect she does not follow the socially accepted idea and will choose the single life.

At first glance, Narcissa Benbow Sartoris is a hypocritical Southern lady. Contrary to her superficial obedience to the conventions in her society, however, she has strength and ability to judge like a single

woman. After having been the second wife of Bayard Sartoris, her husband kills himself and she becomes a widow without hoping to marry again. Because of her beauty and being comparatively young, some men approach her and her brother and mother-in-law wonder why she would not marry again. From her choice of being a widow and avoiding remarriage, we can read her decision to stay single.

One of Faulkner's short stories, "There Was a Queen" has a scene where Miss Jenny talks about the possibility that Narcissa would remarry and she insists that Narcissa has the right to remarry. Nevertheless, Narcissa denies the possibility and takes remarriage as "bad." (CS738)

"If it's marriage, I told you. I told you five years ago that I wouldn't blame you. A young woman, a widow. Even though you have a child, I told you that a child would not be enough. I told you I would not blame you for not doing as I had done. Didn't I?"

"Yes. But it's not that bad." (CS738)

Her words show her view of blaming things her society would consider "unusual" for ladies. In *Sanctuary*, she rejects the proposal of a university student, Gowan, saying "...one child was enough for her." (S165)

"He asked Narcissa to marry him. She told him that one child was enough for her."

"I said she has no heart. She cannot be satisfied with less than insult."

"So he got mad and said he would go to Oxford, where there was a woman he was reasonably confident he would not appear ridiculous to: something like that. Well." (S165)

Feeling insulted, Gowan takes out a female university student, Temple, and it ends in his leaving her in a place where her rape takes place.

In the above-mentioned short story, "There Was a Queen", as Elnora, a female "black" servant of the Sartoris family shrewdly comments, Narcissa's strong resistance to remarriage can be taken partly as her attachment to the status of a widow in a renowned family. The following citations are from Elnora's words.

When she worked for five years to get herself married to Bayard? Working on Miss Jenny all the time Bayard was off to that war? I watched her. Coming out here two or three times a week, with Miss Jenny thinking she was just coming out to visit like quality. But I knowed. I knowed what she was up to all the time. (CS734)

"Her marry? What for? Give up what she got here? That ain't what it is... (CS734)

Narcissa chooses to stay single and in both "There Was a Queen" and *Sanctuary*, she avoids attracting people's attention but acts so boldly that she is almost unqualified to be called a lady.

As I have pointed out so far, neither Caddy nor Narcissa needs to find a spouse to gain financial support and to marry again from financial necessity. As a result, compared with married women, their acts are not limited by other family members than a husband.

The characterization of Caddy tends to emphasize her extraordinary parts. The unnatural way of focusing on her love affairs with wealthy men and her superficially wealthy life sounds unrealistic. Such an exceptional female character is almost a precedent case of the more unrealistically radical woman, Linda Snopes Kohl.

From here, I would like to look into the characterization of Linda and refer to another study on single women: *Bachelor Girl* (2002) by Betsy Israel. This work, *Bachelor Girl* is an apt material to grasp the atmosphere of the time when Linda lives. It describes some new types of women who went into their

society at the beginning of the twentieth century, in brief, bohemians and bachelor girls. Their characteristics are free behaviors outside their homes in stark contrast to commonly accepted ideas of gender roles associated with the classical concept of “a family.” They like to visit Greenwich Village, care less about the age when they should marry and openly enjoy their own lifestyles ignoring the unsaid restrictions of gender roles. The book also points out the appearance of women called “New Woman” and it is suggested that their avoidance of marriage makes them well-known. The following citations are from the book.

But there was an identifiable strain of “new girl” who appeared at the turn of the century, an intense, dramatic type who’d consistently reappeared in the years to come: the bohemian. Typically our bohemian was a high school or college dropout who had tried but could not *live within the structures of the bourgeois society she had only narrowly escaped.* (107)

The bohemian had a less deeply poetic, slightly less intense, kind of younger cousin. That was the Bachelor Girl. “The B.G.,” as she was known, had come to the city not so much to escape, but to work and send money home. Which she did. But she also developed a taste for rushing after work or whenever possible to Greenwich Village, at that time the city’s premiere “artistically inclined place of residence.” (108)

Wandering the Village, bohemian and bachelor girls could, to borrow from their own overly dramatic phrasebook, create themselves anew. (108)

But as bachelor girl Olga Stanley wrote back in 1896: “Probably the thing which first appeals to us is our absolute freedom, the ability to plan our time as we will...bound by no restrictions, except those imposed upon us by a due regard for priorities.” (112)

So let’s clarify and state that the new woman, an essential character in the history of single female life, belonged to a group of women considered “individualized” (roughly translated, self-aware and unconventional) that the press began to cover at the start of the twentieth century. (114)

But the new woman was most famous for her refusal or, rather, polite disinclination, to marry. (And when new women did marry, the unions were almost unconventional. Margaret Sanger, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Jane Addams, Edna St. Vincent Millay - all had marriages that involved living apart, sometimes continents apart, “with an understanding.” (115)

After their appearance, World War II took place and resulted in a shortage of labor resources. Then, if women hoped to work, they were more easily employed. It was the time when a large number of women worked in the defense industry, which reminds us of Linda’s work as a riveter in *The Mansion*. In the 50s, marriage was regarded as a sole and absolute choice for women again. The book mentions some women who found it difficult to marry and left their homes to go to New York. *Bachelor Girl* is one of many related works but concretely spotlights single women of the time who greatly overlap with the character of Linda.

(During World War II)

Millions of suddenly essential female workers took over male positions such as cabdriver, elevator operator, bus driver, and security guard. In one year, the number of female defense-

factory workers increased by 460 percent, a figure that translated into 2.5 million women assigned to the unlikeliest tasks. (165)

Suddenly it was glorious and patriotic to be single. (165)

There she was, the one singular female icon to arise from this antisingular period: Rosie the Riveter, industrial pinup, her hair back in a snood or kerchief, her body swimming inside overalls, one hand holding the signature blowtorch. (166)

In 1944, one radio executive had publicly predicted, "For nearly every man returning to his former job, there will be a woman returning to her former (or future) occupation - caring for the home." [...] The president of TWA reiterated what was fast becoming common knowledge: Most women in business had been there only temporarily. "They intended, and rightfully, to return home after the war or marry and make new homes." (170)

Simply stated, marriage in the 1950s was the absolute norm. (183)

The roots of the 1950s marriage mania reached back into the postwar culture:... (186)

Others left home for New York and jobs in theater, dance, publishing, or just to cut themselves off from suffocating fiancés, dull jobs, or like Holly Golightly in Truman Capote's novella, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, lives so desperate and dreary one can only guess at the details. (186)

From these descriptions, we can recognize that some figures of women represented mainly in popular culture are projected onto that of Linda.

In the category of Faulkner's female characters, Linda is close to Caddy and Narcissa, who actually find it comfortable not to have a spouse. Superficially, untamed Caddy differs greatly from "lady" Narcissa, but both of them have an interest in men and get married, in short, lead sexually active lives. Linda shares this aspect.

In the second book of Snopes' Trilogy, *The Town*, Linda is a teenage girl but already attracts Gavin. In the third book, *The Mansion*, Gavin devotedly cares about Linda, who marries another man. After Linda is widowed, Gavin takes another widow, Melisandre, as a wife not choosing Linda. Before her marriage, Linda cohabits with the man and does not cling to the marriage system at all. Gavin avoids marrying Linda considering the difference in their ages although her mother, Eula asks him to marry Linda. Looking more like a father and daughter, Gavin and Linda have the feeling of being in love but exude negative attitudes toward the marriage system. In *The Mansion*, Gavin talks about how Linda got married: "He wanted them to marry,' Lawyer says. 'It's Linda that wont. [...]" (M161)

With her husband killed in the Spanish War, Linda herself becomes physically handicapped and returns to Jefferson. Being a communist, she has to leave Jefferson and gets a job as a riveter, which Gavin finds and works in Pascagoula, a little far away from Jefferson. Linda mentions her acceptance of sexual intercourse with Gavin, but he refuses. Linda has the idea that she can be responsible for her sex life and determine the style, which shows a close analogy to Caddy and Narcissa. Seemingly being protected by Gavin, Linda openly accomplishes her plan to make Mink murder Flem, her "father." She also involves Gavin in the plan without trying to conceal her intention. Her plan of avenging her "father", who makes her mother commit suicide goes on while some episodes describe romantic love between Linda and Gavin. Linda has to give up her plan to kill her "father" if she cannot expect Gavin to act as she likes. This shows Linda's shrewdness is comparable to Narcissa's.

Here, it is worth considering the difference between Gavin's wife, Melisandre Backus and Linda. The characterization of Melisandre shows some influence of popular culture like Caddy because Faulkner makes her first husband "a New Orleans underworld big shot" (195). Before Linda's appearance, Gavin gets close to Melisandre and regularly spends some time with her as if he were her teacher in the same way as Linda's, such as recommending some books and talking about the books. Linda almost replaces Melisandre, but Melisandre acts as a woman who conforms to norms in society, pretending not to notice anti-social aspects of her husband. As a result, her society accepts her, separating her from her husband. In the end, Linda asks Gavin to marry someone and Melisandre agrees to marry Gavin; "I want you to marry. I want you to have that too. Because then it will be all right. [...] Will you promise?" (M252)

The latter half of *The Manson* discloses her main interest is not marriage but her murder of her "father." If Linda has a husband at the time to carry out her plan, the presence of her husband inevitably prevents the plan like persuading her not to or limiting her free time.

The absence of a husband enables her to carry out the murder. On the other hand, Melisandre does not have things she wants and her children are now grown-ups. She can prepare herself for taking Gavin as a husband. By behaving like a lady and ignoring her husband's antisocial behavior, Melisandre can marry Gavin, a lawyer. Linda can be put in the position of Melisandre, but she does not hope to be. In a sense, Faulkner regards radical Linda as a mismatch for Gavin and does not make them marry, considering the patriarchal side of their society.

I'm thinking now of Melisandre Backus naturally, before my time and Linda Snopes's too. That is, Melisandre was twelve and thirteen and fourteen several years before she vacated for Linda to take her turn in the vacuum, Gavin selecting and ordering the books and poetry to read to Melisandre or anyway supervise and check on, which was maybe how by actual test, trial and error, he knew which ones to improve Linda's mind and character with when her turn came, or anyway alter them. (M194)

...as Linda had already displaced Melisandre Backus probably before Melisandre even knew she had been dispossessed. (M198)

After the death of Flem, Linda leaves Jefferson. Even if the reader does not have enough evidence to point out that Linda loses interest in Gavin, he or she knows that Linda does not need to live close to where Gavin lives. Gavin himself knows about it; "He could have written *I have everything. You trusted me. You chose to let me find you murdered so-called father rather than tell me a lie.* He could, perhaps should have written *I have everything. Haven't I just finished being accessory before a murder?*" (M425) Because she does not marry to get a partner who supports her financially, Linda is not expected to remarry any other man than Gavin under the marriage system. The ending of her plot makes us think that she would choose her partner, thinking how much freedom she can keep.

Even if a woman thinks about her lifestyle and considers the chance of having a spouse and her own family, a spouse is likely to force her to give up her freedom. Facing this possible disadvantage, some women simple-mindedly think about being with a man only when they want and hope for the absence of "a husband." This is hard to categorize but can be considered as one cause of the non-marriage tendency. Here I would like to introduce a work related to non-marriage tendency: *Marriage and Family: Perspectives and Complexities* by H. Elizabeth Peters and Claire M. Kamp Dush. Published in 2009, this book warns about the tendency of individualistic marriages.

(*Marriage and Family* "Institutional, Companionate, Individualistic Marriage")
Despite the widespread acceptance of individualistic marriage, there is no society-wide

consensus at the moment on the ideal form of marriage. [...] For example, consider a wife who has affection for her husband and experiences little overt conflict with him. Nevertheless, she comes to the conclusion that her husband is not her true soul mate, and that the marriage is not meeting her expectations for personal growth. Although the marriage is not bad, she feels that something important is missing from her life, that opportunities are passing her by, and she would be happier with an alternative partner. If the wife adopts an individualistic scheme, she will be motivated to leave the marriage to meet her needs with a new partner. But if she shifts to a companionate or institutional schema, she is likely to be concerned about the consequences of divorce for her children, her husband, their extended families, and the community in general. (82)

(Marriage and Family) The General Social Survey 1974-2004

Taken together, these data suggest that since the mid-1970s, many middle-class individuals have shifted away from an individualistic view of marriage and toward a more companionate or institutional view. In contrast, less educated individuals appear to have increasingly accepted an individualistic model of marriage - a model that is linked with higher levels of divorce as well as nonmarital births. (86)

As we expect, while there are movements to promote marriage as part of government plans, people eligible for marriage balance their own sense of value and changing senses of values in their society. According to the book, from the mid-1970s, well-educated people incline to institutional or companionate marriage. It is evident that the female figure of the time is projected onto the characterization of Linda. The setting makes Linda live through the 40s and 50s in America and choose "individualistic marriage." The citations show some women's lifestyles reflect their desire to live like Linda.

The figure of Linda Snopes Kohl tends to overemphasize the modern aspects of women in modern societies but shares some points with the other above-mentioned other female characters in Faulkner's works, who are virtually "single" or hope to be "single." The female character like Linda appears in the final phase of Faulkner's works, which is closely connected with the advancement and independence of women who try to be single. It is highly suggestive that Faulkner would not portray the later days of Caddy Compson, Narcissa Benbow Sartoris and Linda Kohl Snopes in detail. Faulkner isolates them from the images associated with women's "weakness" in a financial sense. It is difficult for readers to imagine their miserable figures after the last scenes. Faulkner does not disclose the later days of such new-type women whose later life readers are concerned about. In *Faulkner in the University*, Faulkner comments on Caddy Compson, "...it is best to leave here where she is. If she were resurrected there'd be something a little shabby, a little anti-climactic about it, about this." (1) From Faulkner's words we can read his expectation, limiting the number of "single women" with such strength as theirs as exceptional cases.

IV. Conclusion

When we re-consider the figure of Linda Kohl Snopes from the angle of "being single" and "desiring to be single", it is obvious that she thinks of marriage as a formalistic system her society expects women to follow and hopes to live free from the bondage of her "spouse" whether she marries or not. The modern aspects of her figure are recognized in respect of gender role in a family system as well as social aspects and political aspects.

Note

The early version of this paper is based on my presentation at the 71th general meeting of society of English Literature on November 19, 2016.

Key to Abbreviations

- AA* William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
AILD William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
CS William Faulkner, *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*. New York: Vintage International, 1995.
M William Faulkner, *The Mansion*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.
S William Faulkner, *Sanctuary*. New York: Vintage International, 1993.
TSAF William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987.

Selected Bibliography

- Cargan, Leonard. and Matthew Melko, eds. *Singles: Myths and Realities*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982.
Faulkner, William. *Absalom, Absalom!* New York: Modern Library, 2012.
---. *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
---. *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*. New York: Vintage International, 1995.
---. *Sanctuary*. New York: Vintage International, 1993.
---. *The Mansion*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.
---. *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987.
---. *The Town*. New York: Vintage Books, 1957.
Heath, Melanie. *One Marriage Under God: the campaign to promote marriage in America*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.
Israel, Betsy. *Bachelor Girl: The Secret History of Single Women in the Twentieth Century*. New York: William Morrow, 2002.
Kartiganer, Donald M. and Ann J. Abadie, eds. *Faulkner and Gender*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994.
---, eds. *Faulkner and Ideology*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995.
Kinney, Arthur F., ed. *Critical Essays on William Faulkner: The Sartoris Family*. G.K.Hall & Co: Boston, 1985.
Peters, H. Elizabeth. and Claire M. Kamp Dush, eds. *Marriage and Family: Perspective and Complexities*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.