

# **Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!***

**Spring 2021 – Ten Sessions**

**Stephen Senturia**

**Assignment for Session 9**

## **Reading:**

> Chapter 8 of *Absalom, Absalom!*, pp. 235-287

## **Selection of Passages (yes, still, again):**

Identify at least one passage that strikes you of deserving attention in class:

Note the page, line number, the first few words of the section, and where it ends.

Email your selections to me at [sds@mit.edu](mailto:sds@mit.edu). I will assemble them into an agenda for the day of the session.

## **Discussion Topics:**

Chapter 8 moves us entirely into the realm of myth, the attempted reconstruction of unknown events by Quentin and Shreve, shivering in their ice-cold room at Harvard, forty-six years removed from last of the events they are attempting to reimagine.

We will address the following topics in some order, guided by how the text-supported discussion goes:

- > What are Shreve and Quentin trying to do – is this just a freshman bull session, or is it deeper than that? How do you know? Cite text.
- > Which of the events described here are documented, and which invented? (This is not an easy question, and we may spend considerable time on it.)
- > Is there textual support (here or in earlier chapters) for the claim, attributed to Bon, that it was the miscegenation rather than the incest that caused Henry to shoot Bon?
- > How do you react to the young men's description/reconstruction of Ellen's and Judith's roles in the relationship with Bon?
- > Faulkner uses many visceral words throughout the book: meat, flesh, blood. In several places in this chapter, he also adds intense sexual imagery. Does it work?