Col Sud dei romanzi fiume e dei film tutti più o meno sono familiari; ma c'è tanto di mito e di finzione romantica in codesto cavallesco Sud a cui vanno le simpatie del pubblico medio, che vien quasi fatto di ricordarsi dei lontani tempi medievali in cui i vinti Troiani erano esaltati al di sopra dei perfidi Greci. È soprattutto in questa regione che si è venuto a poco a poco creando per l'America un passato leggendario che rappresenta quello che per noi europei sono le epopee, Omero, Artù e Carlamagno. Poiché l'America è stata così poco soddisfatta della sua beata assenza di passato magnificata da Goethe (che inneggiava all'America come a Terra Promessa, sgombra da rovine del passato, non turbata da inutili ricordi e futili contese: «E se una volta i vostri figli comportaranno poesie», concludeva, «li guardi una sorte benigna delle storie di cavalieri, di briganti e di fantasmi! »), che appena ha avuto uno spunto nazionale per creare leggende di cavalieri e di fantasmi, si è buttata avidamente sopra questa Schauerromantik: la Guerra di Seccessione è stata la sua leggenda americana, e ne ha tratto ispirazione non solo l'autrice di *Gone with the Wind*, ma lo stesso Faulkner. Forse, quando l'avrà abbastanza assimilata di passato, l'americano non sentirà più l'eco della sua voce in quella gran camera vuota che è stato fino a ieri il suo continente, e non sarà più roso dal tardo della solitudine. Le rovine e i ricordi possono essere una zavorra che talora conviene buttare, ma che d'altronde è indispensabile al volo.

C'è dunque il Sud dei romanzi di Faulkner in cui echeggiano squilli lontani dell'epopea della Guerra di Seccessione; ma in cù c'è pure tanto del vero Sud squallido e poetico: sentonch'è Faulkner vi ha poi tessuto sopra e intorno l'aggrovigliata allucinazione del suo stile, e anche quel Sud lì è finito per diventare irriconoscibile, come un relitto caduto in fondo al mare e rivestito da successive stratificazioni di fauna e di flora marina. Poi c'è il Sud sfabesco e per verso di Truman Capote, il Sud isterico di Tennessee Williams,

Chi, avendolo letto, può dimenticare il racconto di Eudora Welty 1, The Petrified Man, della contara che identifica nell’uomo pietrificato e che fa mostra di sé in un baraccone, un criminale ricercato dalla polizia, e guadagna la taglia, con gran dispetto dell’armata che le ha prestato un vecchio giornale dav’era la fotografia che è servita all’identificazione? L’humour del racconto ha qualcosa di

1 Sulla Welty ha scritto tra noi Angela Bianchini Bales, in Letteratura 8-9 (marzo-giugno 1954): "Le cittadine tranquille di Eudora Welty".
uncanny, di sinistro e di grottesco insieme (è anche un gioco di parole sul nome del criminale, che questo petrified man si chiamava effettivamente Mr. Pritch); e nella stessa vena sono episodi di altri racconti: The Key, con la coppia di sordomuti che si recano alle cascate del Niagara, la cui infermità è rivelata dal cadere d’una chiave che fa volare tutti gli altri viaggiatori in una sala d’aspetto, finorché loro; Clytie, la povera zitella mezzosoprano ossessionata dalle facce che incontra, che finisce per annegare in un serbatoio d’acqua piovana dove ha visto riflesso il suo volto; Lily Daw, una ragazza deficiente che sul punto d’essere internata in una casa di cura risulta provvista d’un innamorato pronto a sposarla... Ambienti e personaggi che sconfinano continuamente dalla realtà nella leggenda, dal particolare minutamente osservato all’allucinazione, con un’aria di famiglia, come d’una strana cugina transatlantica, con Yeats e Virginia Woolf. L’accoglienza entusiastica della critica a The Curtain of Green si è andata attenuando nei libri successivi, via via che l’autrice, ricalcando i suoi temi, fissava la sua maniera. Ecco per esempio ciò che Theodore Hoffmann osservava a proposito dell’ultimo libro della Welty nella Partisan Review dell’autunno 1955:

*Her themes are familiar by now...* Miss Welty is always delineating the character of the empty, or the insane. In another story, two Southern ladies, made for nothing but ante-bellum life, hang themselves grotesquely when Sherman burns their home, but this one is that old Faulkner tale with the hot-house atmosphere, the compulsive but agonizingly deliberate action that is supposed to take on the significance of eternity, and was very good the first eight times Southern writers did it².

L’ultima parte del racconto Clytie, nella prima raccolta, può dare un’idea del tipo d’ambiente e di personaggi che la Welty ama de-

---
² Il critico conclude con queste considerazioni personali: «I don’t much enjoy Miss Welty’s work. She keeps evoking things as if I had experienced them and relish them. I tire of her endless descriptions of clothing and furniture. I enjoy the talky dialogue only to a point. I don’t find passionate people as incomprehensible as she does, nor do I go for the unshakeable quiet frustration her characters are inflicted with. In short, like doesn’t seem as difficult to get at as all that». Anche il recensore del Times Literary Supplement dell’11 novembre 1955, p. 669, osserva nell’ultimo libro una decadenza «particularly sad because Miss Welty’s talent showed us so plainly fresh and original in her early work.»
scrivere, e insieme della sua virtù evocativa, e delle sue limitazioni:

At nine Mr. Bobo, the barber, knocked at the front door.

Without waiting, for they never answered the knock, he let himself in and advanced like a small general down the hall. There was the old organ that was never uncovered or played except for funerals, and then nobody invited. He went ahead, under the arm of the tipped male statue and up the dark stairway. There they were, lined up at the head of the stairs, and they all looked at him with repulsion. Mr. Bobo was convinced that they were every one mad. Gerald, ever, had already been drinking, at nine o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Bobo was short and had never been anything but proud of it, until he had started coming to this house once a week. But he did not enjoy looking up from below at the soft, long throats, the cold, repelled, high-reliefed faces of those Farrs. He could only imagine what one of those sisters would do to him if he made one move. (As if he would!). As soon as he arrived upstairs, they all went off and left him. He pushed out his chin and stood with his round legs wide apart, just looking around. The upstairs hall was absolutely bare. There was not even a chair to sit down in.

"Either they sell away their furniture in the dead of night", said Mr. Bobo to the people of Farr's Gin, "or else they're just too plumb mean to use it".

Mr. Bobo stood and waited to be summoned, and wished he had never started coming to this house to shave old Mr. Farr. But he had been so surprised to get a letter in the mail. The letter was on such old, yellowed paper that at first he thought it must have been written a thousand years ago and never delivered. It was signed "Octavio Farr", and began without even calling him "Dear Mr. Bobo". What it said was: "Come to this residence at nine o'clock each Friday morning until further notice, where you will shave Mr. James Farr".

He thought he would go once time. And each time after that, he thought he would never go back — especially when he never knew when they would pay him anything. Of course, it was something to be the only person in Farr's Gin allowed inside the house (except for the undertaker, who had gone there when young Henry shot himself, but had never to that day spoken of it). It was not easy to shave a man as bad off as Mr. Farr, either — not anything like as

3 Si tratta di un bronze cast of Hermes holding up a gas fixture, probabilmente una riforma riproduzione del Mercato di Giambologna.

4 Pese del Sud che non contava più di centocinquanta abitanti, compresi i negri.
easy as to shave a corpse or even a fighting-drunk field hand. Suppose you were like this, Mr. Bobo would say: you couldn’t move your face; you couldn’t hold up your chin, or tighten your jaw, or even bat your eyes when the razor came close. The trouble with Mr. Farr was his face made no resistance to the razor. His face didn’t hold.

«I’ll never go back», Mr. Bobo always ended to his customers. «Not even if they paid me. I’ve seen enough».

Yet here he was again, waiting before the sickroom door.

«This is the last time», he said. «By God!»

And he wondered why the old man did not die.

Just then Miss Clytie came out of the room. There she came in her funny sideway walk, and the closer she got to him the more slowly she moved.

«Now!» asked Mr. Bobo nervously.

Clytie looked at his small, doubtful face. What fear raced through his little green eyes! His pitiful, greedy, small face — how very mournful it was, like a stray kitten’s. What was it that this greedy little thing was so desperately needing?

Clytie came up to the barber and stopped. Instead of telling him that he might go in and shave her father, she put out her hand and with breath-taking gentleness touched the side of his face.

For an instant afterward, she stood looking at him inquiringly, and she stood like a statue, like the statue of Hermes.

Then both of them uttered a despairing cry. Mr. Bobo turned and fled, waving his razor around in a circle, down the stairs and out of the front door; and Clytie, pale as a ghost, stumbled against the railing. The terrible scent of bay rum, of hair tonic, the horrible moist scratch of an invisible beard, the dense, popping green eyes — what had she got hold of with her hand! She could hardly bear it — the thought of that face.

From the closed door to the sickroom came Octavia’s shouting voice.

«Clytie! Clytie! You haven’t brought Papa the rain water! Where in the devil is the rain water to shave Papa?»

Clytie moved obediently down the stairs.

Her brother Gerald threw open the door of his room and called after her, «What now? This is a madhouse! Somebody was running past my room; I heard it. Where do you keep your men? Do you have to bring them home?». He slammed the door again, and she heard the barricade going up.

Clytie went through the lower hall and out of the back door. She stood beside the old rain barrel and suddenly felt that this object,
now, was her friend, just in time, and her arms almost circled it with
impatient gratitude. The rain barrel was full. It bore a dark, heavy,
penetrating fragrance, like ice and flowers and the dew of night.
Clytie swayed a little and looked into the slightly moving water.
She thought she saw a face there.
Of course. It was the face she had been looking for, and from
which she had been separated. As if to give a sign, the index finger
of a hand lifted to touch the dark cheek.
Clytie leaned closer, as she had leaned down to touch the face of
the barber.
It was a wavering, inscrutable face. The brows were drawn to-
gether as if in pain. The eyes were large, intent, almost avid, the nose
ugly and discolored as if from weeping, the mouth old and closed from
any speech. On either side of the head dark hair hung down in a
disreputable and wild fashion. Everything about the face frightened
and shocked her with its signs of waiting, of suffering.
For the second time that morning, Clytie recoiled, and as she did
so, the other recoiled in the same way.
Too late, she recognized the face. She stood there completely sick
at heart, as though the poor, half-remembered vision had finally be-
trayed her.
«Clytie! Clytie! The water!» came Octavia’s monumental voice.
Clytie did the only thing she could think of to do. She bent her
angular body farther, and thrust her head into the barrel, under the
water, through its glittering surface into the kind, featureless depth,
and held it there.
When Old Lethy found her, she had fallen forward into the
barrel, with her poor ladylike black-stockinged legs up-ended and apart
like a pair of tongs.

Se molta letteratura degli Stati Uniti è sotto il segno puritano
della Nuova Inghilterra, quella del Sud si dirrebbe sotto il segno d’una
Nuova Irlanda: un’Irlanda tropicale, dove la natura è melanconica
ma calda e lussureggiante, e i coboldi sono negri, e in ogni famiglia di
bianchi (bianchi di solito decaduti) c’è lo scheletro nell’armadio; un
clima dove il surrealismo non è più una pianta di serra, ma cresce
naturalmente all’aria aperta. Di questa Irlanda dei Tropici Flannery
O’Connor è una delle voci più originali. Nulla in lei dell’esspera-
zione frenetica di Faulkner, che adatta a personaggi spesso rudimen-
tali il delicato movimento d’orologia d’una psicologia deca-
dente, non diverso in questo da Robert Penn Warren, un altro
scrittore del Sud, che in *Brother to Dragons*, che ha per argomento il dilemma di Jefferson dinanzi all’uccisione di un negro perpetrata da un suo congiunto, ha sofisticato sotto una superstruttura lirico-psicologica un motivo da cronaca nera; e tutt’è duc, Faulkner e Warren, lontanamente imparentati col Browning dell’*Anello e il libro* per questa tendenza che si potrebbe chiamare di psico-elefantiasi, intesa a trasfigurare complicandoli e lirizzandoli i dati d’una realtà elementare, sovente bruta; tendenza a cui mi pare si possa contrapporre il metodo semplice e diretto, molto più aderente al vero, della Beatrice Cenci di Moravia.

La O’Connor, piuttosto che nello psicologismo, potrebbe cadere in un altro diffetto, nel macchiettismo, nell’aneddoto regionale, ma non ha nulla della compiaciuta e superficiale bravura d’un macchiettista, sebbene meglio che nel romanzo riesca nella novella che, come è risaputo, è un genere che si presta a una costruzione epigrammatica. Anche il suo romanzo, *Wise Blood*, si risolve in episodi, quegli episodi che come racconti esemplari sono stati pubblicati nelle riviste; Enoch Emery, il giovinetto solo al mondo e randagio, che invano elemosina umana simpatia, e ruba la spoglia di gorilla in cui si maschera un artista da baraccone, e recatosi nella foresta, seppellisce i suoi vestiti da uomo, indossa la pelle di scimmia, e sembra ritrovare la felicità in quel grottesco ritorno alla natura; e l’altro episodio di Emery e Hazel Motes che incontrano un propagandista evangelico cieco, e Hazel è combattuta tra impulso sacrale e fanaticismo religioso; e nella presentazione di questa tormentata psicologia la O’Connor rivela la sua origine irlandese: si pensa a certe pagine del *Ritratto dell’artista giovine* di Joyce. A questo stesso mondo ci richiama l’episodio di torbida sensibilità che la *Partisan Review* pubblicò nel 1949 col titolo *The Heart of the Park*, con quei giovani, Enoch e Hazel, che vanno nel parco per spiare le donne che fanno il bagno. Predomina in tali episodi e nei racconti un’atmosfera pesante e melanconica, non priva d’una certa sua disperata poesia: l’atmosfera che, per quel poco che vi sostiamo, ci parve di respirare a Savannah nella Georgia, patria della O’Connor, città di decadute eleganze ottocentesche, di casu-
pole di negri, di afa, di grandi e lugubri alberi drappeggiati di «muschio spagnolo», e di zanzare innumerevoli. I personaggi sono vagabondi, poveri bianchi, ragazze sciote, discolti, e la gente più ordinaria possibile, l’uniale plebe insomma d’una terra in parte ancora rozzamente agricola, in parte contaminata dalla civiltà industriale. 

A Circle in the Fire: in una campagna remota tre ragazzacci s’installano in una fattoria e terrorizzano la proprietaria, una maniaca, e la figlia di costei, una brutta ragazza occhialuta che vorrebbe sterminarli; finalmente dan fuoco al bosco. The Life You Save May Be Your Own: un vagabondo monaco capita nella fattoria d’una donna che ha una figlia secerma e sordomuta, e la donna lo alletta a sposare questa disgraiziata, e quello, rimessa in sesto una vecchia automobile, parte per il viaggio di nozze e poi pianta la sposa, una bambola di carne, a un posto di ristoro, e si reca in città, non senza aver prima provocato, con il suo sermoneggiare di persona che crede d’avere «un’intelligenza morale», la violenta reazione d’un ragazzo a cui ha dato un passaggio:

The next day he began to tinker with the automobile and that evening he told her that if she would buy a fan belt, he would be able to make the car run.

The old woman said she would give him the money. «You see that girl yonder?» she asked, pointing to Lucynell who was sitting on the floor a foot away, watching him, her eyes blue even in the dark.

«If it was ever a man wanted to take her away, I would say, ‘No man on earth is going to take that sweet girl of mine away from me!’ but if he was to say, ‘Lady, I don’t want to take her away, I want her right here’, I would say, ‘Mister, I don’t blame you none. I wouldn’t pass up a chance to live in a permanent place and get the sweetest girl in the world myself. You ain’t no fool’, I would say.»

«How old is she?» Mr. Shifflet asked casually.

«Fifteen, sixteen», the old woman said. The girl was nearly thirty but because of her innocence it was impossible to guess.

«It would be a good idea to paint it too», Mr. Shifflet remarked, «You don’t want it to rust out».«We’ll see about that later», the old woman said.

The next day he walked into town and returned with the parts he needed and a can of gasoline. Late in the afternoon, terrible noises issued from the shed and the old woman rushed out of the house,
thinking Lucynell was somewhere having a fit. Lucynell was sitting on the kitchen crate, stamping her feet and screaming, "Burrrrdttt! bddurrrttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttt
A body and a spirit», he repeated. The body, Lady, is like a house; it don’t go anywhere; but the spirit, Lady, is like a automobile: always on the move, always...

Listen, Mr. Shiflet, she said, my well never goes dry and my house is always warm in the winter and there’s no mortgage on a thing about this place. You can go to the courthouse and see for yourself. And yonder under that shed is a fine automobile. She laid the bait carefully. «You can have it painted by Saturday. I’ll pay for the paint.»

In the darkness Mr. Shiflet’s smile stretched like a weary snake waking up by a fire. «Yes, sir;» he said softly.

After a second he recalled himself and said, «I’m only saying a man’s spirit means more to him than anything else. I would have to take my wife off for the weekend without no regards at all for cost. I got to follow where my spirit says to go.»

«I’ll give you fifteen dollars for a weekend trip», the old woman said in a crabbed voice. «That’s the best I can do.»

«That wouldn’t hardly pay for more than the gas and the hotel», he said. «It wouldn’t feed her.»

Seventeen-fifty,» the old woman said. «That’s all I got so it isn’t any use you trying to milk me. You can take a lunch.»

Mr. Shiflet was deeply hurt by the word «milk». He didn’t doubt that she had more money sewed up in her mattress but he had already told her he was not interested in her money. «I’ll make that do», he said and rose and walked off without treating with her further.

On Saturday the three of them drove into town in the car that the paint had barely dried on and Mr. Shiflet and Lucynell were married...

He had painted the car dark green with a yellow band around it just under the windows. The three of them climbed in the front seat and the old woman said, «Don’t Lucynell look pretty? Looks like a baby doll». Lucynell was dressed up in a white dress that her mother had uprooted from a trunk and there was a panama hat on her head with a bunch of red wooden cherries on the brim. Every now and then her placid expression was changed by a sly isolated little thought like a shoot of green in the desert. «You got a prize!» the old woman said.

Mr. Shiflet didn’t even look at her.

They drove back to the house to let the old woman off and pick up the lunch. When they were ready to leave, she stood staring in
the window of the car, with her fingers clenched around the glass. Tears began to seep sideways out of her eyes and run along the dirty creases in her face. «I ain't ever been parted with her for two days before», she said.

Mr. Shiflet started the motor.

«And I wouldn't let no man have her but you because I seen you would do right. Goodbye, Sugarbaby», she said, clutching at the sleeve of the white dress. Lucynell looked straight at her and didn't seem to see her there at all. Mr. Shiflet eased the car forward so that she had to move her hands.

The early afternoon was clear and open and surrounded by pale blue sky. The hills flattened under the car one after another and the climb and dip and swerve went entirely to Mr. Shiflet's head so that he forgot his morning bitterness. He had always wanted an automobile but he had never been able to afford one before. He drove very fast because he wanted to make Mobile by nightfall.

Occasionally he stopped his thoughts long enough to look at Lucynell in the seat beside him. She had eaten the lunch as soon as they were out of the yard and now she was pulling the cherries off the hat one by one and throwing them out of the window. He became depressed in spite of the car. He had driven about a hundred miles when he decided that she must be hungry again and at the next small town they came to, he stopped in front of an aluminium-painted eating place called The Hot Spot and took her in and ordered her a plate of ham grits. The ride had made her sleepy and as soon as she got up on the stool, she rested her head on the counter and shut her eyes. There was no one in the Hot Spot but Mr. Shiflet and the boy behind the counter, a pale youth with a greasy rag hung over his shoulder. Before he could dish up the food, she was snoring gently.

«Give it to her when she wakes up», Mr. Shiflet said. «I'll pay for it now».

The boy bent over her and stared at the long pink-gold hair and the half-shut sleeping eyes. Then he looked up and stared at Mr. Shiflet. «She looks like an angel of Gawd», he mumbled.

«Hitch-hiker», Mr. Shiflet explained. «I can't wait. I got to make Tuscaloosa».

The boy bent over again and very carefully touched his finger to a strand of the golden hair and Mr. Shiflet left.

The Artificial Nigger, uno dei racconti più belli, narra di un nonno che conduce in città il nipotino per la prima volta, e lui pure non conosce la città bene, ma vuole conservare il suo prestigio
davanti al ragazzo che lo sfida, e finisce per umiliarsi agli occhi di lui smarrendo il cammino e rinegando il nipote quando questo s'è cacciato in un guaio facendo cadere in terra una donna. Qui e altrove si sente che l'antenato di tutta questa narrativa grotescop-patetica, e in fondo assai pessimista, è l'autore di *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain. Ciò che della O’Connor s’indugia nella memoria del lettore, oltre alle situazioni e all’atmosfera, son certe sue istiche precisazioni d’uno stato d’animo, d’un ambiente. La ragazza scema: «Di tanto in tanto la sua espressione placida si mutava per un piccolo, isolato, furioso pensiero, come un filo d’erba nel deserto». Il riso d’un cieco: «La risata risonava come se venisse da qualcosa legato dentro un secco». Lo sguardo del ragazzo già stanco alla soglia della vita: «Lo sguardo del ragazzo era antico, come se egli già sapesse tutto e desiderasse dimenticarlo». Un paesaggio serale: «Dinanzi a loro il cielo era grigio, ed essi eran rivolti verso una luna grigia, trasparente, poco più marcata del segno d’un polline, e completamente priva di luce». Gli editori italiani, così sollevati a tradurre i vari Steinbeck e Caldwell, non hanno ancora pensato a darci i racconti della Welty e della O’Connor. Ray B. West, nella sua rassegna del *Racconto in America, 1900-1950* (versione italiana pubblicata da Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1955) chiama la Welty «la migliore scrittrice della sua generazione». *Nuzze sui Delta*, pubblicato da Longanesi nel 1954 in versione italiana, non è certo la sua cosa migliore.