O Brother, Where Art Thou?

Prewriting: question and freewriting

To Dylan’s “Man of Constant Sorrow” (1962)

Importance of title

Old Timey, like the music, but old, old timey

Thou

An old version of you – connoting informality

Does thou exist anymore? Survives in religious writing – the Bible and hymns

Therefore, Brother . . . ?

“Crossroads Minstrel” scenes

Feature race, religion, politics – all the things we’re not supposed to discuss in polite society

is the society depicted in the film polite?

Religion

Everett calls “redemption” a “ridiculous superstition”

Refers to Pete and Delmar as “dumber than a bag of hammers” for believing in baptism

Tommy has sold his “soul to the Devil . . . to play this here guitar real good”

partial lyrics from “Man of Constant Sorrow” can be traced back to a hymn “Christ Suffering” (1807)

Politics

Pappy O’Daniel makes his appearance (another historical figure)

In the film, he’s fond of calling people “sumbitch”

Notice Everett calls Pet and Delmar “sons-a-bitches”

Is there a connection to their leadership?

Uses radio – new media – for “mass communicatin’”

comp. Trump and Twitter

Walker, “Before Trump, There Was Pappy”

Other potential topics

Class

Culture clash (:26)

The Soggy Bottom Boys meet Pappy O’Daniel’s boys

Notice the costuming

Dirty overalls for the Soggy ones

Clean suits for Pappy’s gang

Compare eating at Hogwallop’s (:10) with fine dining (:48)

Delmar’s hair is combed

Everett’s dialogue: “city manners” vs. “barnyard language”

Stresses “civilized conversation”
(but note: cut to Pappy’s harangue)
Costuming: overalls vs. suits and ties (and napkins)
But who wears a napkin like Everett and Pete?

Friendship
Unfriendly in the beginning
Montage sequence (:40) shows a developing comradery over time
   Soundtrack: “I’ll Fly Away” (Brumley)
   Most covered songs of all time according to NPR
   Genre: Southern Gospel
But by the end, they’re back where they started (1:19)
   Pete again asks: “Who elected you leader of this outfit?” [motif]
   Everett implores them: “just stick with me”
Then cut to Homer Stokes and his “disgrace”
   Is this important to maintaining the friendship? Solidarity in the face of opposition