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FAULKNER'S THEORY OF RELATIVITY: RELATIVE CLAUSES IN "ABSALOM, ABSALOM!"

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro PH.D. 1983

FAULKNER'S THEORY OF RELATIVITY: RELATIVE CLAUSES IN ABSALOM, ABSALOM!

by

Karen McFarland Canine

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The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to show that William Faulkner used relative clauses (RC's) to shape the style of Absalom, Absalom! to fit the meanings he wanted to communicate, and in doing so built in a level of meaning beyond the "story;" second, that linguistic analysis of literature can illustrate precisely how style and meaning are interrelated, and in doing so can provide data about linguistic performance, in this case about the uses of RC's. Faulkner's own comment that "the theme, the story, invents its own style," justifies this study of Absalom, Absalom! as a speech act, or communicative event involving the interaction of writer, reader, text, and unspoken "rules" governing language use and interpretation. Within this framework, it is assumed that Faulkner chose to write this novel in the particular style he did for some meaningful purpose that readers would infer from that form. Critics have noted that the structure of the book is that of a story re-told from multiple perspectives; that the themes include the impossibility of discovering definitive "truth," the difficulty of communication, and the effects of events over time that relate otherwise unrelated people; and that the complex syntax of the novel, with its accumulations of modifying clauses, attempts to simulate the flow of speech or thought. In Absalom, Absalom! Faulkner uses "stacked" RC's, cumulative series of two or more RC's referring to the same antecedent, in a number of patterns--chronological and cause-effect, for example--which correspond to the discourse situation in each chapter, as do other RC constructions and relative pronouns. Also, Faulkner's use of RC's

challenges the traditional reliance on punctuation as a defining feature of non-restriction. Consequently, many of the RC's in Absalom, Absalom! are ambiguous in both form and meaning; this ambiguity mirrors the theme of not knowing whose version of the Sutpen tale is "authoritative." In short, Faulkner's use of different kinds of RC's not only reflects but reinforces his themes that the identity of "truth" is "relative" or constantly modified by context and perspective over time, and that the process of relating this story is recursive.

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CHAPTER I

RELATIVE TRUTH, RELATING A TALE, AND RELATIVE CLAUSES

" . . . it had gone like a fire in dry grass--the rumor, the story, whatever it was."[1]

This image from "Dry September" reflects William Faulkner's attitude about language, one that is found over and over in his works. An experience always has more than one perspective, making any attempt to transmit the experience through words into something that is one step removed from the true experience and which has a life of its own. That "whatever" is also indicative of Faulkner's preoccupation with conditions and experiences which are not easily described, explained, or translated by words. In his effort to use language most effectively and to minimize its communicative inadequacies, Faulkner often employs a multiple-narrator technique. Readers are thereby given the opportunity of seeing an experience from more than one point of view, and are able to arrive at a relative "truth" of that experience from their own interpretation of the given facets.

In addition to the technique of multiple point of view, Faulkner has often put into the mouths of his characters a philosophy about language in which words are not only mistrusted as a means of transmission, but are viewed, in fact, as barriers to true communication. In this context we go from Addie Bundren in As I Lay Dying (" . . . I learned that words are no good; that words don't ever fit even what they are trying to say at."[2]) to Ike McCaslin's comments on the Bible in "The Bear":

> What they were trying to tell, what He wanted said, was too simple. Those for whom they transcribed His words could not have believed them. It had to be expounded in the everyday terms which they were familiar with and could comprehend, not only those who listened but those who told it too, because if they who were that near to Him as to have been elected from among all who breathed and spoke language to transcribe and relay His words, could comprehend truth only through the complexity of passion and lust and hate and fear which drives the heart, what distance back to truth must they traverse whom truth could only reach by word-of-mouth?[3]

Here Faulkner has set forth the ultimate problem of the writer as artist: how can an experience or a feeling be transmitted by words so that others can share that original thing and not just a re-enactment? Benjy in The Sound and the Fury is constantly "trying to say." Quentin in Absalom, Absalom! at first thinks Miss Rosa has sent for him to tell him the Sutpen tale "because she wants it told," but he later realizes that there is more to it than the relating of known information; indeed, Quentin himself re-creates the tale with Shreve. In short, Faulkner was concerned with the relative truth of relating a tale--with the paradoxical nature of language as a vehicle for communicating experience while simultaneously distorting truth.

Considering the importance of the story-tellers in his works and the attitudes towards words and language evident in his novels and short stories, and considering the notice that critics have given to these tendencies, it is indeed amazing that few studies have been made of Faulkner's use of language in his works. The irony of a writer using words to create characters who bemoan the inadequacy of language to communicate, and situations in which language obstructs relating true feeling, could not have been lost on an artist who was a relatively prolific producer and whose many works each exhibit a different perspective

on "the old verities of the heart." That is, Faulkner's works themselves, with their questions about the significance of words, would alone tend to justify a linguistic analysis of his writing. Yet Faulkner's own comments about the artistic challenges of a writer--whose medium is language--also demand that a closer look be taken at the ways he uses language in his work.

Faulkner was clearly aware that the writer must use words so that he does not just retell a story but tries to create an experience which can be shared by the reader through the story, as this passage indicates:

> To a writer, no matter how susceptible he be, personal experience is just what it is to the man in the street who buttonholes him because he is a writer, with the same belief, the same conviction of individual significance: 'Listen. All you have to do is write it down as it happened. My life, what has happened to me. It will make a good book, but I am not a writer myself. So I will give it to you . . . . You won't have to change a word.' That does not make a book. No matter how vivid it be, somewhere between the experience and the blank page and the pencil, it dies. Perhaps the words kill it.[4]

It is not the words themselves or even the story itself which distinguishes the writer, but it is how those words are chosen and arranged so that the story conveys more than itself, conveys experience beyond its shape: the whole is somehow more than the sum of the parts. Although some of Faulkner's characters would like to dispense with words, his use of multiple point of view and stream-of-consciousness techniques indicates a belief that language can be manipulated by the writer to approximate the total context of an experience, at least as much as the reader can gather from what the writer presents and how he presents it. Part of the manipulation or shaping of language in literature consists of the form--the word choices and syntax--of the material. Faulkner's view of his

artistic control of language is hinted at in his comment that he "tried to crowd and cram everyting, all experience, into each paragraph, to get the whole complete nuance of the moment's experience, all of the recaptured light rays, into each paragraph."[5]

These attitudes, taken along with his statement that "the theme, the story, invents its own style . . . a novel compels its own form,"[6] indicate that Faulkner worked at his craft, that he was aware of the importance of word choice and usage in transmitting total meaning. Not only that, but Faulkner claimed that his works are not really "complete" until the reader provides his own perspective. Yet when compared with the criticism of a contemporary like James Joyce--whose style, in a cannon smaller than Faulkner's, has been and continues to be linguistically analyzed--examination of Faulkner's use of language and style has been inadequate. Until the last ten or fifteen years much of the Faulkner criticism has centered on themes such as his treatment of the South and racism or his use of myth. In the late 50's Faulkner presented evidence in interviews, lectures, and articles that his perspective on life was shaped by philosopher Henri Bergson's view that life is motion and that endurance results by stopping time in some way; but the criticism has barely scratched the philosophical surface of Faulkner's better works. There is much more scholarly work that needs to be done with Faulkner's writing before the true extent of his genius as an artist can be recognized.

One aspect that has been explored as part of the study of narrative structure is the relationship between form and matter, or style and theme, in Faulkner's writings. A sub-category of this aspect is a

consideration of the language Faulkner uses to effect the form of any novel. My work will contribute to Faulkner's language studies by examining a particular grammatical construction--the relative clause--as it relates to the structure and themes of Absalom, Absalom! The minimum justification for this kind of study, as has been shown above, is evident in Faulkner's attitude about language as exhibited in both his work and his comments, and in the lack of linguistic criticism.

In fact, linguistics--in its search for a grammar of language use reflecting the abstract rules included in linguistic theory--has currently posited theories about the nature of literature in relation to other kinds of speech. In Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse, Mary Louise Pratt contends that literature is a speech context containing not only surface grammatical properties but also readers' expectations and the interaction between reader, writer, and text.[7] Basing her theory upon the work of H. P. Grice[8], Pratt discusses a set of unspoken rules governing all rational human behavior in relation to literature as a speech act, or a kind of linguistic behavior. In any speech act, the unspoken rules include assumptions that we will use various calculations in order to make sense of what we hear or read, and that there is a level of implied meaning in addition to the literal and conventional meanings of the words a speaker or writer uses. Of course, the context in which the speech act takes place--the situation, the relationship between and attitudes of the participants, the purpose, etc.--has an effect on not only the content of the discourse and the style the speaker or writer employs (word choices, syntax, arrangement, tone), but also on the number and importance of the implications or implied meanings the hearer or reader chooses to recognize and interpret.

In the context of literature, the assumptions that we, as readers, are intended to make sense of what we read, and that what an author is implying is a part of the meaning of a text, take on even larger proportions. Because we as readers know that novels are deliberately written down, revised, edited, and published for a public audience, we can assume that, whenever we encounter either a repetition or emphasis or a discrepancy of some kind in a novel's style or content, or whenever there is something in a novel that just does not seem to make sense, we are supposed to interpret this by resorting to "implicature"--by considering what the author is intending or implying through such disruptions of the storytelling.

We can make this assumption to resolve literary inconsistencies through a process of implicature because we know that, in the literary speech context especially, it is acceptable for writers to play a game with language. Writers of fiction are allowed to flout the underlying rules that designate communication through language as a cooperative act. They are allowed--through narrators or characters--to withhold information from the reader, to lie to the reader, or to be unnecessarily digressive, unreliable, irresponsible, hypocritical, insincere, biased, inconsistent, and/or irrelevant. In a non-literary speech act, any of these kinds of "violations" of how we expect speakers to cooperate and behave would be grounds for us to feel angry or hurt or alienated, or to refuse to allow the exchange to continue further. But we know that literature is not supposed to be taken as "real," and so when we are faced with linguistic rule-breaking in fiction we know that contrary to forcing us to stop reading completely, the author is intending that we

figure out the meaning implied in his violation of the rules of communication. In fact, in the literary speech situation, flouting can be the point of the utterance, enabling us, through the "safety" of a novel, to explore that most threatening of experiences--the collapse of communication itself. This is precisely the underlying theme of much of Faulkner's work--the inadequacy of language as a means of communication.

In particular, Absalom, Absalom! revolves around the question of the usefulness of language for communicating across barriers such as race, sex, time, or prejudice. The structure of the novel generates an underlying theme: the retelling of a family's tragic history by people who did not witness all of the events being related demands a piecing-together of handed-down facts and legends from various sources; this process gives the impression that a definitive "truth" is almost impossible to sort out, that each individual person experiences life in an isolated way that can never be translated, pure and intact, for another. This attitude about language justifies an examination of the syntax in Absalom, Absalom! because language is not only the basis of cultural heritage or relation here (it is ultimately through speech that the tales have been transmitted), but it is also the vehicle by which that cultural bond is broken, leaving isolated, incompatible perspectives and misunderstandings. In other words, Absalom, Absalom! is a novel about telling stories, but literary critics have often noted how the kernel story is not related in a conventional chronological sequence: crucial information is sometimes only hinted at, often withheld only to reappear out of sequence, and almost always modified by the perspective of the narrator. Such flouting of storytelling's rules compels readers to search for the style's implicated meanings.

Furthermore, the density of the grammar and the difficulty of cursory-reading comprehension have often been noted about this novel. The complexity of the long sentences lends itself to close analysis in order for the meaning to be more precisely understood. More specifically, close consideration of the grammar can add meaning to a basic interpretation. Some critics have noted the complex style of Absalom, Absalom!, especially the syntax, and have commented on its possible connection with the substance of what Faulkner is saying in this novel. Olga Vickery gives one theory about this relationship:

> The number of alternative explanations and unresolved ambiguities in the three accounts of Sutpen suggest the immense difficulties attendant upon the effort to arrive at the truth. Adding to this difficulty is the fact that truth must eventually be fixed by words, which by their very nature falsify the things they are meant to represent. This distortion inherent in language is the reason for the tortuous style of Absalom, Absalom! The characters themselves are engaged in the frustrating attempt to capture truth and then to communicate it. . . . Whoever the speaker, the long sentences bristle with qualifications and alternatives beneath which the syntax is almost lost. And what is true of the sentence is also true of the paragraph, of the chapter, indeed of the total structure. Hence the style is more closely related to the creation of the legend of Sutpen and to the common effort to fix reality and formulate truth than it is to the characters who retell the story.[9]

Some of these same ideas are reiterated by Edmond Volpe when he notes that:

> The diction, the syntax, seem designed to obfuscate, not communicate . . . . And the long sentences are difficult to follow, with clauses that proliferate, developing not from the main subject or verb of the sentence, but growing out of preceding clauses. As a result, the main thought is often lost in the mass of amplifying or qualifying ideas.[10]

These critics have tried to describe, in an impressionistic way, how the complexity of the grammar in Absalom, Absalom! has a connection with

the meanings of the novel. These are my concerns also, but I will be examining particular patterns of language use and pointing out their significance in relation to themes. The underlying theme concerns the difficulty of arriving at truth, which brings into focus the isolation inherent in individual perception. That we never know whose version of the tale we should accept as "authoritative" is a result of the constant qualification in Absalom, Absalom! The language parallels the technique: ideas, descriptions, events, and characters are continually modified and qualified with certain lexical choices as well as with syntactic choices. The linguistic construction which seems to contribute the most qualification as well as adding the most bulk to the sentences is the relative clause.

Critics have noted the prevalence of relative clauses in Absalom, Absalom! and Robert Zoellner's assessment of what Faulkner is doing with this construction is a good example of critical attempts to find the relationship between the use of relative clauses and the interpretation of themes:

> . . . Absalom, Absalom! is saturated by Faulkner's conception of time as a cumulative continuum--the present moment, its quality and tone, is the sum of all past moments. . . . This cumulative chain-effect is best illustrated by Faulkner's habit of piling which clauses one on the other. . . . The key to the way in which he manages to endow abstractions with such an unwonted air of substantiality lies in his peculiar use of the which clause. . . . it is not the meandering abuse of good English that it might at first appear to be. Instead, there are two or three precisely limited control points about which all the apparently unrelated elements in the sentence pivot. The result is that the abstractions, the tonal qualities of the prose pattern, loom up in the foreground with a unique immediacy and relevancy, while the mere physical facts, normally so prominent, fade into the background. In this Faulkner's prose style becomes a direct and aesthetically efficacious reflection of the ontology of Absalom, Absalom![11]

These particular uses of relative clauses (RC's)--piling them up on each other, and using them to focus on details so that we can no longer distinguish between essential and parenthetical information--will be discussed in more detail in the next two chapters about stacked and non-restrictive RC's. The contention of this paper, too, is that Faulkner's use of RC's in Absalom, Absalom! was a deliberate choice made to reinforce the potential meanings of the sentences. In fact, Pratt's speech act theory of literature can be used to support readers' impression that Faulkner is using relative clauses to project a meaning that is mirrored in the recursivity of the larger structures of the book.

The seemingly large number of RC's in Absalom, Absalom! is the most obvious reason for choosing this construction for analysis. It seems probable, and speech act theory would justify such a claim, that the RC was used so often for some purpose, not just coincidentally--especially considering Faulkner's belief that each novel compels its own form. Although it may at first appear that there is nothing meaningful in Faulkner's abundant use of this construction, the great number of RC's in Absalom, Absalom! reflects a choice among syntactic alternatives. That is, the ideas and modifications of them could have been expressed in sentences using verbals, shorter descriptive phrases, adjectives, constructions where punctuation replaces relative pronouns, or constructions other than RC's. Frequency of use of RC's therefore has some kind of significance: it determines the style of the novel, which in turn contributes to the novel's meaning. The purpose of my analysis is to define that significance of use of RC's in Absalom, Absalom!

A relative clause is a dependent-sentence construction containing a relative pronoun (that, which, who, whom, whose), and its function is to restrict or to add to the identity of a noun in the main sentence. A RC includes two concepts: reference, because the relative pronoun is a substitute for and thereby refers back to the noun that the clause relates to, and modification, because the clause contains a separate idea embedded into the main sentence in order to qualify a noun in that matrix sentence. Taken together, the properties of reference (referring back) and modification (giving more information, taking the identity of the referent further) constitute what I mentioned earlier as recursivity. In formal linguistic terms, "A sentence embedded (in surface structure) as modifier of a Noun Phrase, the embedded sentence having within it a WH-pronominal replacement for a deep structure NP which is in some sense identical with the head NP, is a relative clause."[12] By considering the meaning of the word relative itself--that is, relating one part to another--especially in conjunction with the concepts of reference and modification, it seems natural that the RC should be used so often in Absalom, Absalom!. All thoughts as well as each of the characters in this novel are related because no act is isolated in time but reverberates into the future, and the tale is related (or retold) by referring to these acts whose original premises as well as effects are constantly modified by point of view. In another light, all the parts--all the separate narrations--relate to help specify a whole, just as the function of a restrictive RC is to specify or pinpoint by qualification its referent. Because of this modification factor, each clause presents only a relative perspective, one that is dependent upon linguistic and literary context for its full impact.

In other words, the overall meanings of Absalom, Absalom! will be more completely understood through an examination of how the RC is used in the novel. Linguists are not unaware of the importance their insights can have for the study of literature, as Jacobs and Rosenbaum have suggested in Transformations, Style, and Meaning:

> Although one of the major thrusts of modern literary criticism has been toward the study of the effect of particular word choices, little effort has been made in criticism to work out methodically the individual areas of meaning represented by crucial word choices. . . . that there can be an important correlation between syntactic form and thematic content is undeniable.[13]

That is, as I will show in the following chapters, syntax or sentence structure is involved with meaning just as the context of words determines the whole meaning of individual words: sentence form can be manipulated to convey meaning beyond denotation or connotation.

Besides adding a dimension to the meaning of a work, a linguistic analysis of literature can provide data for linguistic hypotheses. The current thrust of transformational-generative theories of language is a concentration on finding the "deep" or abstract or underlying structures (inherently understood patterns of thought) which are governed by systematic rules of grammar to produce verbal expression--the surface structure. Most data are taken from actual speech or hypothesized speech. Literature, however, provides concrete evidence of the relationship between competence (the innate knowledge about language that a speaker possesses) and performance (the actual way in which the innate knowledge is formulated and expressed by the speaker). The relative clause is a particularly good choice for analysis because there is currently debate about the nature of its origin in abstract structure as well as how it

should be represented in surface structure. Furthermore, Pratt's speech act theory of literary discourse tries to go beyond this kind of illustration of how grammar works, assuming that written words are the result of conscious thought, if indeed not deliberate choice, of the author, which means that a linguistic analysis of literature can provide evidence of how meaning is dependent on or controlled by surface structure of sentences--style, or how language is used within a specified speech context.

In summary, there are many reasons that justify an analysis of the RC as it is used in Absalom, Absalom! More studies are needed on Faulkner's use of language, particularly his syntax, especially considering his views on language as expressed in both his comments and in his works. Absalom, Absalom! itself, through its narrative structure, posits attitudes about language and communication. The dense syntax with its accumulations of modifying clauses compels examination in order for the meaning of each sentence as well as the overall meanings of the novel to be more fully understood. Further investigation of the nature of RC's is needed in light of the current theories being presented. Linguistic studies of literature can provide a better understanding of the relationship between competence and performance. But the most compelling argument for studying RC's in Absalom, Absalom! is that such an analysis, premised on seeing literature (writing and reading) as a speech act, can uncover the precise relationship between the form and the matter of the novel--not just what is said, but how it is said: the mechanics of conveying "meaning" not just through but beyond individual words.

Notes--Chapter I

[1] William Faulkner, "Dry September," in Selected Short Stories of William Faulkner (NY: Modern Library, 1962), p. 62.

[2] William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying (NY: Random House, 1930; Vintage Books ed., 1964), p. 163.

[3] William Faulkner, Go Down Moses (NY: Random House, 1940; Vintage Books ed., 1973), pp. 260-1.

[4] William Faulkner, "Review of Remarque's The Road Back," New Republic, May 20, 1931. Rpt. in Essays, Speeches and Public Letters of William Faulkner, ed. James B. Meriwether (NY: Random House, 1965), p. 186.

[5] Robert A. Jelliffe, Faulkner at Nagano (Tokyo: Kenkyusha Ltd., 1956), p. 37.

[6] Nagano, p. 39.

[7] Mary Louise Pratt, Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1977).

[8] H. Paul Grice, "Logic and Conversation," in Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 3 - Speech Acts, ed. Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (NY: Academic Press, 1975), pp. 41-58.

[9] Olga W. Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner (Louisiana State U. Press, 1964), p. 86.

[10] Edmond L. Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner (NY: Farrar, Straus and Co., 1964), pp. 38-39.

[11] Robert H. Zoellner, "Faulkner's Prose Style in Absalom, Absalom!" American Literature, 30 (1959), pp. 492, 497, 500.

[12] Robert P. Stockwell, Paul Schachter, and Barbara Hall Partee, The Major Syntactic Structures of English (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 421.

[13] Roderick A. Jacobs and Peter S. Rosenbaum, Transformations, Style, and Meaning (Waltham, Mass.: Xerox College Publishing, 1971), pp. 136, 138.

CHAPTER II

FAULKNER'S STACKED RELATIVE CLAUSES[1]

"A part of the full meaning of any sentence is communicated by the form chosen for the sentence. As the old maxim goes, 'It's not just what you say; it's how you say it.'"[2] Of course, this saying applies to larger units of discourse as well. For Absalom, Absalom!, for this particular Faulkner novel, it is difficult to talk about the "meaning" of individual sentences because the sentence style itself, as noted before, is protracted and recursive, looping back on the meanings of previous sentences and clauses. Yet to understand such an impressionistic assessment, it is necessary to examine smaller grammatical units, and in this chapter I will investigate how Faulkner uses RC's within larger passages--specifically, how he uses series of RC's all modifying the same referent.

Grammarians generally agree that the basic meaning of a sentence is found in the abstract or underlying structure (although there are different views concerning the nature of that abstract representation), and that transformations which render a surface structure from a deep structure of a sentence do not change meaning.[3] The abstract structure of RC constructions, however, has not been definitively agreed upon. There is basic agreement that RC's are sentences which modify a Noun Phrase (NP): "restrictive"(R) relatives provide "essential" information which restricts or specifies the identity of the NP; "non-restrictives" (NR) modify the NP by providing additional information not necessary to identify the NP.[4] The differences between R and NR RC's, especially as

they are found in Absalom, Absalom!, will be examined further in the next chapter. But these two examples from Chapter VIII illustrate the main distinction between R and NR RC's.[5]

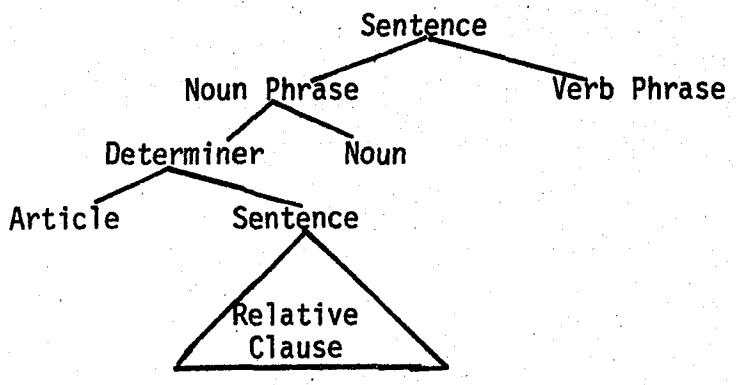
RESTRICT. 1. Maybe he knew there was a fate, a doom on him, like what the old Aunt Rosa told you about some things that just have to be whether they are or not . . . . (p. 325)

NR 2. Quentin had not even put on his overcoat, which lay on the floor where it had fallen from the arm of the chair where Shreve had put it down. (p. 345)

It is generally assumed that restrictive and non-restrictive relatives have two different functions and meanings reflected in their abstract structures. Since NR's give added information, it has been suggested that they are derived from underlying conjoined sentences.[6] But various theories have been presented concerning the exact modification relation between the NP and its restrictive RC. Consider again this definition of a RC: "A sentence embedded (in surface structure) as modifier of an NP, the embedded sentence having within it a WH-pronominal replacement for a deep structure NP which is in some sense identical with the head NP."[7] The property of co-referentiality between head NP and relative pronoun is not questioned. The modification property of restrictive RC's, however, has prompted two different configurations for abstract or underlying structure representation. One analysis proposes that restrictive relatives identify the NP in a way similar to articles--"Namely, to delimit the potential domain of reference of the head noun." (Stockwell, p. 424) The relative clause sentence is therefore represented as being part of the determiner constituent:

Figure 1

Art-S Analysis of RC's

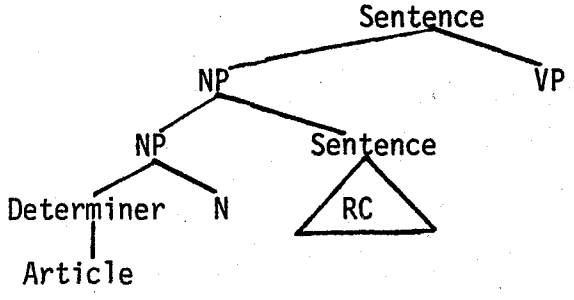


This "Art-S" analysis is not recursive; that is, it does not allow for more than one RC modifying the NP.[8]

A second analysis depicts the RC as directly modifying the NP, separate from the determiner:

Figure 2

NP-S Analysis of RC's



On a broader scale this "NP-S" analysis provides for the possibility of "stacked" RC's, which must be accounted for in a syntax of English since some dialects accept such a pattern of more than one RC modifying the same NP but without coordinating conjunctions.[9] With the NP-S analysis an infinite number of modifying clauses can be attached to the same NP.

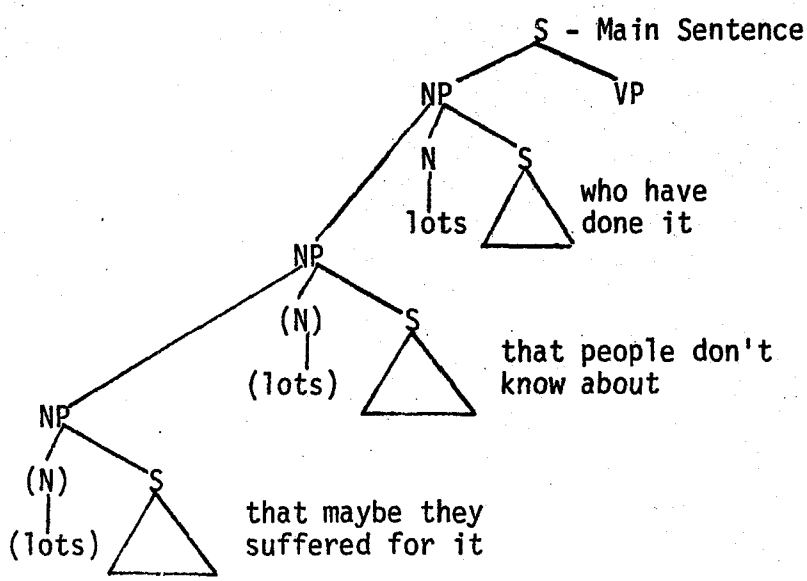
Consider this sentence from Chapter VIII of Absalom, Absalom!:

> 3. There must have been lots in the world who have done it that people don't know about, that maybe they suffered for it and died for it and are in hell now for it. (p. 343)

The basic modification relationships of the RC's could be generally diagrammed this way under the NP-S analysis:

Figure 3

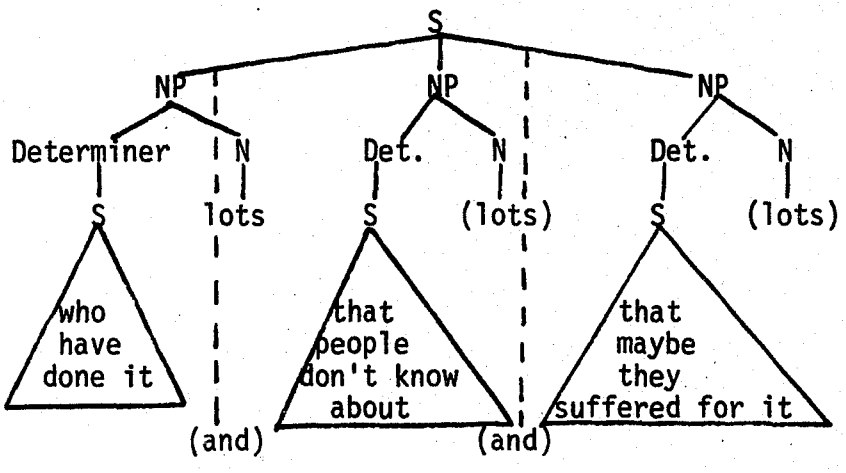
NP-S Analysis of Example 3



It can be seen from this diagram that the modification of lots is successive, since the NP is repeated in the diagram only to show domination and not because each RC modifies only the NP: that the third RC has been dominated by the second and first clauses, and the second has been dominated by the first, indicates that each clause after the first one modifies the whole unit--NP and S--of what has come above it. But under the Art-S analysis, the NP would have to be repeated laterally, meaning that progressive subordination could not be accounted for:

Figure 4

Art-S Analysis of Example 3



One recent theory concerning the modification factor of restrictive RC's places the abstract structure origin of the clauses in two separate sentences; that is, the main sentence and each RC are seen as separate sentences of equal importance--they are coordinate structures. In the example above there would be four sentences--the main sentence and three RC's, each joined by and. Sandra Annear Thompson's analysis further maintains that RC's are not embedded in underlying structure (they are conjoined with the main sentence there), but are "only superficially embedded."[10] There is no representation of which sentence idea is subordinate in this analysis; instead, subordination and/or embedding of a RC depends upon "a speaker's decision about how to present to the hearer information already present in the underlying presentation." (p. 87) Basically, then, if transformations from abstract underlying structure to surface structure do not change meaning, the RC is always conjoined to, rather than embedded in, the main sentence under this analysis. "Stacked" series of RC's cannot be accounted for here because conjunction is seen

as the basis for RC structures, hierarchical modification is not represented, and co-referentiality of an NP with a relative pronoun is not assumed until the surface form of the sentence is realized.

The evidence from Absalom, Absalom! points up the inadequacy of this "conjoined" theory about RC's for the very reason that Faulkner seems to be piling RC's one on top of another in this novel, in series or sets rather than in conjoined lists. Basically, some dialects will admit sentences where the RC's are "stacked": each modifying clause qualifies not only the head noun but all other preceding modifying clauses as well. Other dialects find a "stacked" pattern ungrammatical, preferring to consider the clauses coordinate even in the absence of coordinating conjunctions. Stacking patterns are based on a hierarchy of some kind, while "coordination" implies that the ideas are of equal or parallel importance. Dialects that admit stacking of RC's also recognize conjoined RC's, maintaining that there is a difference in meaning between the two kinds of patterns; dialects that admit only conjoined RC's disregard the possibility of cumulative meanings.[11] The data from Absalom, Absalom! indicate that Faulkner's dialect (at least his literary dialect, if not also his speaking one) did include stacking patterns for RC's.

These current theories about RC's are attempting to represent how a NP is modified--how different sets of information relate to each other. Absalom, Absalom! presents situations showing how a story and people's lives can be modified: the "deep structure" of Faulkner's representation is the language he uses. Although some of the studies of Faulkner's style have focused on his use of language, even the most linguistically oriented

of these have not gone beyond examining language as a surface signal for meaning.

For instance, John Stark's study deals with Faulkner's skill in switching parts of speech so that his sentences refer rather than describe.[12] Using P. F. Strawson's criteria for distinguishing between expressions that refer and those that describe, Stark analyzes the first sentence of Absalom, Absalom! to show that the effect of Faulkner's prose is to force readers to "master the context, thereby forcing them to think deeply and often." (p. 276) Here is that sentence:

> 4. From a little after two o'clock until almost sundown of the long still hot weary dead September afternoon they sat in what Miss Coldfield still called the office because her father had called it that--a dim hot airless room with the blinds all closed and fastened for forty-three summers because when she was a girl someone had believed that light and moving air carried heat and that dark was always cooler, and which (as the sun shone fuller and fuller on that side of the house) became latticed with yellow slashes full of dust motes which Quentin thought of as being flecks of the dead old dried paint itself blown inward from the scaling blinds as wind might have blown them. (p. 7)

This effect on readers, mentioned above, is achieved by Faulkner's "disproportionately high percentage of references," which include, according to Strawson's criteria, combinations of adjectives and nouns, context (including narrative point of view and setting), use of demonstratives like this and that, use of substantives like the, and use of pronouns. Stark shows that these kinds of surface constructions "which point to things but do not reveal information" are almost always used to refer rather than describe. (p. 276) Even Faulkner's descriptions, Stark maintains, border on being references. For example, "closed and fastened" is a description of the blinds in the office, but the

construction Faulkner uses--"with the blinds closed and fastened"--is more referential than the conventional form of descriptions using to be: "the blinds were closed and fastened." Stark furthermore contends that this sentence's length is a result of such choices, the length making referring more likely "because it makes predicate adjectives less likely and noun and adjective combinations that refer more likely." (p. 278) He continues that "Faulkner easily could have begun a new sentence" by adding It was to a dim hot airless room, which would have changed dim hot airless room into a description, "and probably would also have forced Faulkner into creating a string of descriptions instead of references." (p. 278) Instead, "Faulkner's long sentences have a much more subtle effect on the reader than merely sending him on a hunt for the main verb. They create references, which in turn force the reader to pay more careful attention to the context of each expression." (p. 278) In fact, this complex interaction of reference and context has a syntactic base in the form the RC takes and how it modifies a referent that has a specified function in the main sentence, as I demonstrate in the Appendix. This kind of syntactic looping--referring and then modifying--results in a style that has the effect of broadening the perspective of any sentence.

Stark's conclusion about the "referential" style of Faulkner's prose in Absalom, Absalom! reinforces the thesis of my analysis as well--that Faulkner was striving to shape his style to reflect the themes of the novel in a way that would make the reader an active participant in the relating of the tale. But Stark was examining only the surface level of the language used. That is, he was interested in those characteristics of English which appear only in surface structure--those which are highly

derivative, far removed from the abstract structure (which includes the most basic meaning) of the sentence. Relative clauses, however, by their very nature are representative of a deeper level of grammar than just the surface structure. Relative clauses, in both underlying and surface structures of the sentence, are representative of the presence of some idea besides the main idea of the sentence. Not only that, but the RC is directly related to the main-idea sentence since the relative pronoun must replace some NP that is in that main sentence. That is, the form of the RC is inherently referential. Because it is referential, the idea that the RC provides as separate from the rest of the sentence becomes a modification of that "main" idea. Both these traits of RC's--coreference and modification--are found in the underlying structure level as well as in speech or on the printed page. While Stark was dealing with surface signals for referentiality, I will be dealing with deeper forms.

According to one theory, in fact, relative clause forms play more of a part in underlying structure than what the surface <u>which</u> clauses reveal: pre-noun adjectives (as they appear in surface structure) may be derived from underlying structure RC's.[13] For example, each of the adjectives in this string from the opening sentence of <u>Absalom, Absalom!</u> could have had its origin in a prototype of a RC, which became a RC, which was then reduced and changed in position by transformations.

<u>a dim hot airless room</u>
Underlying Structure: a room (room is dim) (room is hot) (room is airless)
WH-Replacement: a room (which is dim) (which is hot) (which is airless)
WH-Reduction: a room (dim) (hot) (airless)
Pre-noun Fronting: a dim hot airless room

In short, according to this view, the RC form is an underlying structure form which enables a speaker to modify NP's in two different ways in surface structure: as RC's after (to the right of) the NP--and there is no prohibition on the number of RC's that can be added, and as pre-noun adjectives (to the left of the NP)--and, as Faulkner demonstrates so well, there is no prohibition on the number of adjectives that may be used before an NP. In this way it is easy to see the overwhelming importance of the relative clause for Absalom, Absalom!

This study will not examine the aspect of relative clauses as the form from which pre-noun adjectives are derived. And in general I will not be dealing with "reduced" RC's: those where to be and/or the relative pronoun have been deleted but the remainder of the clause keeps its position after the modified NP in surface structure. Examples of reduced relative clauses are abundant in Absalom, Absalom!, such as:

> 5. yellow slashes (which were) full of dust motes which Quentin thought of as being flecks of the dead old dried paint (which was) blown inward . . .
>
> 6. There was a wisteria vine (which was) blooming for the second time that summer on a wooden trellis before one window into which sparrows came . . .
>
> 7. Miss Coldfield (who was) in the eternal black which she had worn for forty-three years now, . . . (who was) sitting so bolt upright in the straight hard chair that was so tall for her . . .

As can be seen from these few examples, again from the first page of Absalom, Absalom!, there are enough RC's apparent in surface structure to provide data for analysis even without consideration of reduced RC's.

For this chapter, each full RC in Absalom, Absalom! was placed into one of four categories: stacked, coordinated, ambiguous, or isolated.

Each RC and its classification (with its indicating symbol) was keypunched on a computer card. The computer was programmed to stop at each classification symbol (*=stacked, &=coordinated, /=ambiguous, and #=isloated) as well as at each relative pronoun (that, which, who, whom, and whose) and then to print the context of the text on either side of the stopword. The distinction between R and NR relative clauses, which will be discussed in the next chapter, was not originally a consideration for computer classification. The purpose of the four categories was to see if Faulkner did use multiple RC's according to some pattern. Consequently, the basic distinction within the categories was between RC's that are stacked and those that are non-stacked.

Three of the four categories (stacked, coordinated, and ambiguous) were designated for series of RC's--those in sentences containing more than one RC referring to the same head noun. While the relativization process seems to be present in some form in most languages, and although not all speakers of English recognize or utilize stacking patterns, any adequate syntax of English must account for stacked RC's. "RC's are said to be stacked if a structure exists such that the first clause modifies the head noun, the second modifies the head noun as already modified by the first clause, the third modifies the head noun as already modified by the first clause as in turn modified by the second clause, and so on." (Stockwell, p. 442) My original criteria used to label RC's as stacked were these:

1. the 2 or more RC's must refer to the same NP
2. the second RC of the series must modify the head NP as already modified by the first RC of the series rather than the head NP

alone. There must be some pattern indicative of progressive embedding of clause within clause--that is, a buildup or accumulation of meaning with each successive RC.

3. the coordinating conjunction and cannot be easily inserted between the clauses without changing the relationship of the clauses.

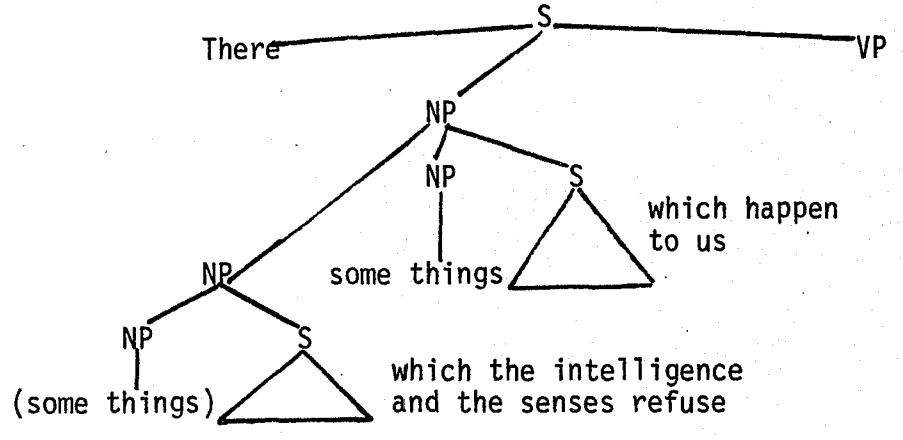
These were the minimum requirements for assigning a stacked classification. An example of a stacked RC is this one from Chapter V:

> 8. There are some things which happen to us which the intelligence and the senses refuse just as the stomach sometimes refuses what the palate has accepted but which digestion cannot compass . . . (p. 151)

The relationship of the stacked RC's could be diagrammed this way:

Figure 5

Diagram of Relationship of Stacked RC's in Example 8



Both which happen to us and which the intelligence and senses refuse modify--help to specify or identify--the same NP, some things. The second clause builds its meaning on the first clause: which the intelligence and the senses refuse qualifies the entire unit some things which happen to us.

This is not an arbitrary decision. If and were inserted after the first RC, the meaning of the sentence would be changed: the first part of this passage would contain two ideas with no clear relationship between them. If the two RC's were conjoined, the idea that the things happen to us would be given an equal place with the idea that our intelligence and senses refuse the things. But the example of the digestion process in the second half of the passage indicates that which the intelligence and senses refuse is meant to be a further modification of those some things embedded into the idea of some things which happen to us. That the two clauses are not of parallel importance can also be seen if the sentence were changed to read There are some things which the intelligence and the senses refuse . . . . Without which happen to us, the meaning would be changed: some things could be action that is only observed or heard about rather than experienced, as the rest of the passage indicates. In other words, the second clause does not modify just the head NP alone, but some things as already modified by the first RC. In short, these two RC's seem to meet the criteria for being stacked.

The second category consists of coordinatd RC's. Any two or more RC's having the same head noun that are connected by and, and in some cases by but or or, were put into this category. While a series of RC's all modifying the same NP and connected by coordinating conjunctions can provide as much modification as a stacked series, the coordinated series differs in function. The difference between stacked and coordinated series relates back to the difference between recursive and conjoined abstract structure configurations. Here is an example of a coordinated series of RC's from Chapter V:

> 9. Yes, found her standing before that closed door which I was not to enter (and which she herself did not enter again to my knowledge until Jones and the other man carried the coffin up the stairs) . . . (p. 150)

Although the designation of and as indicator of conjunction is not absolute, all sets of RC's joined by and were marked as coordinated. Other conjunctions posed more of a problem. Consider

> 10. a small plain frightened creature whom neither man nor woman had looked at twice, whom he had not seen himself in four years and seldom enough before that but whom he would recognize if only because of the worn silk which had once become his mother . . . (V/141)

Each RC in this set of three RC's modifying creature was originally classified as coordinated because of the but present before the third clause. This is the same classification procedure I used for series of more than two RC's with and present before the final clause: each RC was classified as coordinated. But, however, has a different function than and--but is used to contradict what has come before; even so, as a conjunction, the function of but is to indicate that the clauses it joins are of equal or parallel importance. Yet upon closer examination of this passage it seems that a stacked classification should not be ruled out: the introduction of but (and would make little sense here) makes the third clause seem more important than the other two; but indicates that despite the great odds against recognizing his Aunt Rosa, Henry would be able to. In fact, but could be replaced with yet with little change in meaning. The comma between the first and second clauses was originally taken as indicating deletion of a conjunction (and), but this assumption could also be challenged. It is possible to consider the progression of

the passage in such a way that the clauses are stacked: from the abstract (no one looks at Rosa more than once), across time (it has been four years since Henry looked at her that one time), to the concrete (he will recognize her not for herself but by her clothes). Such a reading is offered here not to convince that stacking patterns are predominant, but only to show the problems inherent in dealing with conjunctions other than and, which indicates additional or coordinate modification. In other words, meaning rather than form often can affect the classification of particular RC's.

Such problems of classification necessitated the creation of a category for ambiguous sets of RC's--those series that are not clearly either stacked (in the sense of cumulative) or coordinate. The category of ambiguous may at first seem to be a catch-all, but this is not really the case. As can be seen from the previous examples, it was often next to impossible to say that punctuation definitely indicated deletion of conjunctions, or that yet or but were being used for coordination rather than subordination. Here is an "ambiguous" passage:

> 11. Yes, I, just three months, who for twenty years had looked on him . . . as an ogre, some beast out of a tale to frighten children with; who had seen his own get upon my dead sister's body already begin to destroy one another, yet who must come to him like a whistled dog at that first opportunity . . . . (V/158)

These three clauses could be coordinated: Rosa sees Sutpen as an ogre for twenty years, and Rosa sees Sutpen's children destroy one another, and Rosa succumbs to Sutpen anyway as a dog would come to its master. That yet, however, indicates that despite the conditions presented in the first two clauses, Rosa gives in to Sutpen; her act of coming to Sutpen would not seem so horribly ironic to us, and the yet would lose

its impact, if the first two clauses did not present some kind of buildup describing Rosa's perception. Considering also the chronology of events in the clauses, they could be classified as stacked: twenty years duration, then the years of the war (which came after Ellen died), and then the time afer the war. Chronologically, there is a hierarchy; also, as the yet indicates, the third clause could be the third subordination, modifying not only the head noun I but the two preceding RC's as well. Unbelievably, to her, it is the same Rosa who saw him as an ogre siring two more ogres who agrees to marry Sutpen. Also note that in this case each RC is rather long and wordy, making punctuation necessary for visual and mental pause conducive to comprehension. All of these factors would give weight to a classification of stacked.

Yet there are a number of things which prevent an unchallenged stacked classification. First, the head noun I is a proper pronoun--by definition, RC's modifying proper nouns and pronouns are non-restrictive (since proper nouns by definition do not need to have their identification further restricted because their identity is known, so the modification supplied by the RC is incidental or additional, not necessary for pinpointing the person out of a group), and according to the current definition, non-restrictive RC's cannot be stacked.[14] This problem of definition will be handled in more detail in the next chapter. Second, there is the conjunction yet in surface structure, and this means that the possibility that the punctuation represents deletion of conjunctions must be taken into account.

As I analyzed more and more examples and noted Faulkner's tendency to use yet as the negating cement of series of RC's, I refined the criteria

for assigning a conjoined classification: only those series joined by and or coordinate but or or were considered coordinate; those series whose last clause was introduced by yet, and those where but could be replaced by yet with no change in meaning, were classified as ambiguous rather than conjoined. Another complication in classifying RC's that emerged as I analyzed data was the sense that Faulkner intended his style to be taken as cumulative, an actualization of the cumulative nature of the story. This brought into focus the question of whether or not Faulkner used punctuation as an indication of possible conjunction deletion. Some of the sentences are so long that punctuation is needed to give the reader a rest in order to assess what is being said and the implications of that, such as identifying the referent (head noun) of any RC. But for many shorter series of RC's the function of punctuation separating the clauses is ambiguous. Consider this example:

> 12. that cocoon-like and complementary shell in which Ellen had had to live and die a stranger, in which Henry and Judith would have to be victims . . . (V/138)

There is a chronological progression here, not just in theme, but in verb tense as well, so that it is not really clear-cut that the comma in this case represents the deletion of and. In fact, in analyzing surface structure, where there are no other indications in the syntax of constructions being coordinate, it is more consistent with the intent of this study to classify series of same-referent RC's without co-ordinating conjunctions but with separating punctuation as ambiguous, if not stacked, in accordance with a semantic pattern, especially since Faulkner does use series of RC's without conjunctions, in fact more often than with coordinating conjunctions, as I will show later in the chapter.

The presence or absence of punctuation in Absalom, Absalom! rarely simplifies meaning or clarifies grammatical structure as punctuation is supposed to do; rather, in the case of RC's, intervening punctuation and modification not part of the series made the distinction between stacked and ambiguous categories of RC's quite murky, because such syntactic complexity makes it hard to assess whether successive clauses present progressive modification. Series like the one in 13, where intervening information set off by commas immediately precedes a second RC which modifies the referent as it had been identifed by the first RC, were also classified as stacked since the criterion of progressive modification had been met.

> 13. . . . while she waited for the infancy and childhood with which nature had confronted and betrayed her to overtake the disapprobation regarding any and every thing which could penetrate the walls of that house through the agency of any man, particularly her father, which the aunt seems to have invested her with at birth along with the swaddling clothes. (III/60-61)

What the aunt invested Rosa with was not just a general disapprobation about any and every thing (the head noun phrase), but one which could penetrate the walls of the house through the agency of any man (the NP as modified or specified by the first RC).

This idea of progression or hierarchy of modification, which is basic to the definition of stacked RC's, was often difficult to assess for same-head series of RC's in Absalom, Absalom! Therefore, for the process of refining distinctions among categories of RC's, I established a fourth criterion for stacked series to reasonably insure that the criteria of accumulation of meaning with each successive RC and change of meaning if and were inserted between the RC's were being met. If the order of the

two or more non-conjoined RC's could be switched around with little change in meaning, I would not assign a stacked classification but an ambiguous one. If the order in which the RC's occur seemed to make little difference --if any RC could be the first in the series and any could be second or third in the string--that indicated to me that there is no clear pattern or buildup of modification within the series, which in turn meant that and could be inserted between the RC's with little or no change in meaning. I used this switching test for series of RC's separated by punctuation when the series presents no clear pattern of progression in meaning, as in the following examples (classified as ambiguous).

> 14. I was faced with condoning a fact which had been foisted upon me without my knowledge during the process of building toward my design, which meant the absolute and irrevocable negation of the design; (VII/273)
>
> 15. . . . the land, the country which had created his conscience and then offered the opportunity to have made all that money to the conscience which it had created, which could do nothing but decline; (VII/260)
>
> 16. --a man a little older than his actual years and enclosed and surrounded by a sort of Scythian glitter, who seems to have seduced the country brother and sister without any effort or particular desire to do so, who caused all the pother and uproar . . . . (IV/93)
>
> 17. . . . just as the fine broadcloth uniform which you could have seen on ten thousand men during those four years, which he wore when he came in the office on that afternoon thirty years later, had fitted itself to the swaggering of all his gestures . . . . (VII/246)
>
> 18. . . . and then sat laughing harshly and steadily at Henry who could not have lied to her even if he would have, who did not even have to answer at all either Yes or No. (VIII/335-6)

This test of switching the order of the clauses was not designed as a purely separate criterion--that would have violated the analysis of

Faulkner's work as he had set it down in print, and many times I would have been able to switch clauses recorded on the computer printout that could not have been switched in the context of the book because the sentence would continue and be syntactically connected to the last RC in the series. But the switching test was meant to refine and supplement the criterion of hierarchical as opposed to conjoined relationships between the RC's in a series, an imprecise criterion incorporating both syntactic and semantic ideas but without consideration of larger rhetorical and contextual concerns such as emphasis, tone, and purpose.

Now, consider another aspect besides the form or syntax that could lead to a series being classified as ambiguous instead of stacked or coordinate. The following example was classified as ambiguous because the referent for the second which is ambiguous.

> 19. . . . I waited not for light but for that doom which we call female victory which is: endure and then endure, without rhyme or reason or hope of reward--and then endure; . . . . (V/144)

Notice first of all that there is no punctuation separating the RC's. In this case, lack of punctuation makes the relationship between the clauses ambiguous. The first RC is obviously modifying doom. The second RC could also be modifying doom--in fact, it could be modifying that doom which we call female victory, in which case the series could be considered stacked. However, the second RC could be modifying only female victory, in which case this would not be a series of RC's but two isolated RC's. There is no syntactic clue that can make one classification or the other definitive. And in this case, semantic clues only affirm the ambiguity: the idea presented here is one of those open-ended

contradictions about the nature of existence that Faulkner loves so much, and he is having a difficult time defining it. We call a particular kind of doom "female victory." Is the act of enduring itself such a doom--are females "doomed" to endure? Or is endurance a victory, a positive thing, a kind of winning? Perhaps female victory is different from other kinds, somehow negative, incorporating the paradox of the ability to endure (often an asset) simultaneously being a kind of curse. This kind of semantic ambiguity would lead me to classify a series as ambiguous, as would ambiguity about whether the form is stacked or coordinate.

The final category for RC's in Absalom, Absalom!--isolated--contains not only individual RC's which do not belong to a series qualifying the same head noun, but also RC's that are not really "isolated" yet do not belong to any of the other categories. This includes "series" of RC's where the same head noun is repeated before each clause, and "series" of RC's where each clause has a different head noun but all of which are virtually equivalent in identity. Here are examples of repetition of head nouns:

> 20. It was no madman who bargained and cajoled hard manual labor out of men like Jones; it was no madman who kept clear of the sheets and hoods . . . . (V/166)
>
> 21. beside that brute who until Ellen died was not even permitted to approach the house from the front--that brute progenitor of brutes whose granddaughter was to supplant me . . .--that brute who (brute instrument of that justice . . . .) brute who was not only to preside upon the various avatars of Thomas Sutpen's devil fate but . . . . (V/134)
>
> 22. . . . it was not the fact of the mistress and child, the possible bigamy, to which Henry gave the lie, but to the fact that it was his father who told him, his father who anticipated him, the father who is the natural enemy of any son and son-in-law of whom . . . . (IV/104)

The following are examples of elaboration upon the identity of a head noun:

> 23. The note which he had received by the hand of a small negro boy just before noon, asking him to call and see her--the quaint, stiffly formal request which was actually a summons . . . . (I/10)
>
> 24. that engagement which did not engage, that troth which failed to plight . . . . (I/13)
>
> 25. . . . the father whom she hated without knowing it--that queer silent man whose only companion and friend seems to have been his conscience and the only thing he cared about his reputation for probity among his fellow man--that man who was later to nail himself in his attic . . . (III/60)
>
> 26. . . . to ruin the granddaughter of his partner, this Jones--this gangling malaria-ridden white man whom he had given permission fourteen years ago to squat in the abandoned fishing camp with the year old grandchild--Jones, partner porter and clerk who at the demon's command removed with his own hand (and maybe delivered too) . . . . (VI/183)

Note that in these cases the head nouns of the subsequent RC's are variations on an equivalent identification. Such repetition and qualification of meaning through the use of different NP's for the same idea further refined is rhetorical use of language--that is, language used for a certain kind of effect in tone and rhythm. Technically the RC's in these situations had to be considered as isolated because each head noun has a separately realized surface structure identity, even though if the repeated head were deleted after the first time, or if multiple-equivalent-identity head nouns were eliminated, a series of stacked RC's could emerge.

Besides the "simple" isolated RC's which are found throughout the novel, there are other complex patterns which still do not constitute a stacked or coordinated series of RC's. Some of the examples below

illustrate the kind of connected, protracted, and potentially infinite strings of RC's made famous by the nursery rhyme "The House That Jack Built."

27. the son who widowed the daughter who had not yet been a bride (I/11)

28. I found only that dream-state in which you run without moving from a terror in which you cannot believe, toward a safety in which you have no faith (V/142)

29. If I were god I would invent out of this seething turmoil we call progress something (a machine perhaps) which would adorn the barren mirror altars of every plain girl who breathes with such as this--which is so little since we want so little--this pictured face. (V/147)

30. because he looked like a man who had been sick . . . like a man who had been through some solitary furnace experience which was more than just fever, like an explorer say, who not only had to face the normal hardship of the pursuit which he chose but . . . (II/32)

31. Even then he had that same alertness which he had to wear later day and night without changing or laying aside, like the clothing which he had to sleep in as well as live in, and in a country and among a people whose very language he had to learn--that unsleeping care which must have known that it would permit itself but one mistake; (II/53)

32. . . . this second choice devolving out of that first one which in its turn was forced on me as the result of an agreement, an arrangement which I had entered in good faith, concealing nothing, while the other party or parties to it concealed from me the one very factor which would destroy the entire plan and design which I had been working toward . . . . (VII/274)

33. . . . watching the eagerness which was without abjectness, the humility which surrendered no pride--the entire proffering of the spirit of which the unconscious aping of clothes and speech and mannerisms was but the shell . . . (VIII/317)

34. . . . some spark, some crumb to leaven and redeem that articulated flesh, that speech sight hearing taste and being which we call human man. (V/166)

Notice that in the last example the RC is modifying a head that is really itself a string or series of nouns run together not as a list but without punctuation to approximate more precisely some thing which is very hard to define or explain. This kind of cumulative run-on, of course, is not restricted to nouns in this novel, but is found in strings of adjectives and other modifying parts of speech as well, including RC's. And of course, in the larger pattern of complexity, series of RC's (stacked, coordinate, ambiguous) are interspersed with isolated RC's.

These, then, were the four categories of classification of RC's in Absalom, Absalom!: stacked series (*), coordinate series (&), ambiguous series (/), and isolated (#). Faulkner's use of series of RC's both with and without coordinating conjunctions in Absalom, Absalom! indicates that he made a distinction in meaning between the two kinds of series RC constructions, a distinction analogous to that found in the different abstract configurations for stacked and conjoined RC's. Series without conjunctions in Absalom, Absalom! fall into a number of patterns related to the themes of the book, and I will discuss these in the following pages of this chapter. First, in order to understand the precise differences between a stacked series of RC's and a coordinate series, it is necessary to examine in more detail examples of each kind.

Coordinate relative constructions like this one are commonly encountered in spoken and written English:

> 35. . . . the wild murderer whom she had not seen in four years and whom she believed to be (if he was, still lived and breathed at all) a thousand miles away . . . . (V/135)

In this example the two RC's, both of which modify the wild murderer, are coordinated, not part of a hierarchy or progression. The conjunction and indicates that there are two separate ideas of equal importance: one deals with time, the other with distance. Either clause-idea alone would be enough to warrant Judith's surprise at seeing her brother at this time. If the and were not included, the first clause would seem to function more as an identifier of the murderer, while the second clause would indicate Judith's state of mind at the time.

Now consider this example of stacked relative clauses:

> 36. with that forlorn little boy invisible between them who had come there eight years ago with the overall jumper over what remained of his silk and broadcloth, who had become the youth in the uniform--the tattered hat and the overalls--of his ancient curse, who had become the young man with a young man's potence (p. 204)

In this sentence the first relative clause modifies the little boy by describing his clothing when he had first arrived; the second relative clause describes that specified little boy as a youth, and the third describes the specifically identified little boy as he had become youth and then young man. The effect of this passage is of a progression through time, or an accumulation of attributes about this person which started when he was a boy and continued until he was a young man. If and were inserted before the second and third who, it seems that the passage would have a different meaning. That is, as conjoined relative clauses, the effect would be one of stopping time at each point in the person's life--child, youth, young man--because the three stages of life would be parallel, rather than parts of a continuum. In this case, however, where the end of the sentence comes full circle and positively identifies all three stages as being the same person, the series of relative clauses

can be termed stacked. It should also be noted that by stacking the relative clauses in this sentence, Faulkner has reinforced in his syntax the concept of time as a cumulative continuum.

In addition, this example meets the technical criteria I used to designate a series of relative clauses as stacked. First, the two or more relative clauses must refer back to the same NP. Secondly, the second relative clause of the series must modify not the head NP alone but the head NP as already modified by the first relative clause of the series, and the third clause must qualify the NP as it had already been modified by the first and second clauses, and so on for each successive clause. Such a pattern is indicative of progressive embedding of clause within clause--that is, a buildup or accumulation of meaning with each successive relative clause. Finally, the coordinating conjunction <u>and</u> cannot eaily be inserted between the relative clauses without changing the meaning or the relationship of the clauses. These are minimum requirements for assigning a <u>stacked</u> classification. Using these specifications, it can be seen that the relative clauses in example 2 are indeed stacked. Other criteria emerged from the data itself and will be shown later.

Figure 6

Coordinated RC's

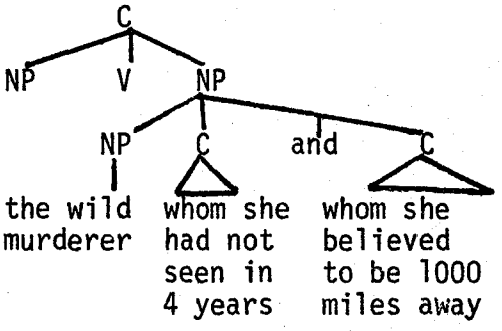
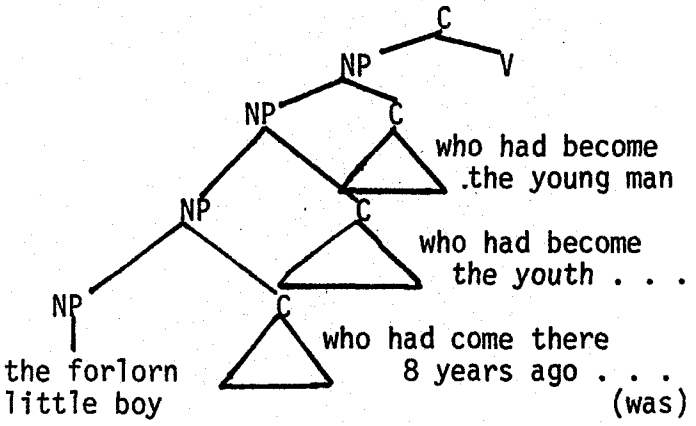


Figure 7

Stacked RC's



Coordinate relative clauses have a different configuration and a different basis of meaning from stacked patterns. As the diagrams show, stacked relatives have a different relationship in abstract structure than coordinate relatives do: stacked clauses are represented in vertical progression while coordinate clauses are laterally parallel.

In surface form the clearest indication of stacking is no punctuation; therefore, the first consideration for assigning a stacked classification was that no punctuation set off successive RC's. Here are some examples of stacked RC's with no punctuation separating the RC's themselves.

> 37. it was that same Akers who had blundered onto the mudcouched negro five years ago who came, a little wild-eyed and considerably slack-mouthed, into the Holston House bar one evening and said, 'Boys, this time he stole the whole durn steamboat!' (II/44)
>
> 38. . . . of that feather's balance between victory and disaster which makes that defeat unbearable which, turning against him, yet declined to slay him who, still alive, yet cannot bear to live with it. (V/161)
>
> 39. and so it was not only the man but the exultation too which the dogs smelled that made them wild. (VII/244)
>
> 40. So he was like a skirmisher who is outnumbered yet cannot retreat who believes that if he is just patient enough and clever enough and calm enough and alert enough he can get the enemy scattered and pick them off one by one. (VII/269)
>
> 41. --a thin delicate child with a smooth ivory sexless face who, after his mother handed the negress the parasol and took the cushion and knelt beside the grave and arranged her skirts and wept, never released the negress' apron but stood blinking quietly who, having been born and lived all his life in a kind of silken prison lighted by perpetual shaded candles, breathing for air the milklike and absolutely physical lambence which his mother's days and hours emanated, had seen little enough of sunlight before, let alone out-of-doors, trees and grass and earth; (VI/193)

Examples 37, 38, 39, and 40 could be termed "classic" stacks: more than one RC modifies the same referent, the second RC modifies that referent

as already modified by the first RC, and and cannot be inserted before the second relative pronoun without changing the meaning (the semantic nature of the modification). In 41, notice that although there is intervening non-relativized modification set off by commas in between the two RC's, there is no punctuation before the second who. In cases like this, where no punctuation separates the RC's themselves in the series, I assigned a stacked classification.

More often, however, my classification would include assessment of stacking patterns that had begun to emerge. In other words, new criteria were generated by the data. It is quite obvious that Faulkner used series of two, three, or sometimes even four RC's modifying the same head throughout this novel. What is not so clear is the grammatical definition of stacked as it relates to how Faulkner uses RC's. The textbook definition of stacked RC's is based on the idea of progressive embedding, but it assumes that the semantic realization of the progression will be apparent in surface structure. In other words, the definition of stacked RC's is neither strictly syntactic (based on structure) nor semantic (based on meaning) but is a combination, and this indicates the need for more precise criteria for classification.

Moreover, in Absalom, Absalom! form and meaning overlap so much that classifications cannot be made on the basis of surface structure alone, but necessarily involve semantic evaluations. That is, if I were to consider every comma, semicolon, parenthesis, colon, or dash separating RC's in a series to be a sign of conjunction deletion and therefore an indication that the RC's should be considered conjoined rather than stacked, there would be few series in the novel that I could without

qualification classify as technically stacked according to form. But the concept of cumulative meanings, or a progression of modification, inherent in the definition of stacked relatives can be seen clearly in the following examples.

> 42. the planting of nature and man too watered not only by the wasted blood but breathed over by the winds in which the doomed ships had fled in vain, out of which the last tatter of sail had sunk into the blue sea, along which the last vain despairing cry of woman or child had blown away (VII/251)
>
> 43. Quentin's Mississippi shade who in life had acted and reacted to the minimum of logic and morality, who dying had escaped it completely, who dead remained not only indifferent but impervious to it, somehow a thousand times more potent and alive (VII/280)
>
> 44. This Jones who after the demon rode away . . . would tell people that he 'was lookin after major's place and niggers' . . . who was among the first to greet the demon when he returned, . . ., who even worked, labored, sweat at the demon's behest during that first furious period while the demon believed he could restore by sheer indomitable willing the Sutpen's Hundred which he remembered and had lost, labored with no hope of pay or reward who must have seen long before the demon did that the task was hopeless (VI/184)

With these examples it becomes more apparent that the concept of time in Absalom, Absalom! is one of a continuum where action in the past constantly affects the present. The test of inserting and in place of commas gives the same results for each of the three examples: as conjoined clauses, the passages would lose their sense of progression through time, and each clause would seem to present an isolated incident. But the incidents are not isolated--they are connected in time. In 42 we see a very definite chronological picture of ships which leave port on a good wind but then sink with their human cargo because of a bad wind. The wind here is the common referent of each clause, and also serves to tie together the doom of the past with the bad fortune of the island in the present and

future--the cries of the women and children which were the last signs of life on the boat are carried by the wind and echo throughout the consequent history of the island.

The chronological progression of 43 can be schematized as living, dying, dead. Throughout the book, and specifically in this passage, Quentin is related to the characters of the Sutpen tragedy because their cultural heritage has traveled down the time-continuum to him, and he must deal with their moral legacy no matter how much he wants to remain isolated in his individuality. The meaning of the second clause here is dependent upon the first clause's modification of shade; the impact of the third clause depends upon the qualifications of the other two clauses. In addition, the sequence of living, dying, dead is counteracted by the increasing virility of the shade as his moral perception decreases. The last example provides a capsule chronology of Jones' relationship with Sutpen. Each relative clause builds upon the one before it to give an overall picture of Jones' loyalty to Sutpen and of how that loyalty weathered the test of time. Of course, this chronological accumulation of information about Jones is necessary to define his state of mind at the point when the continuum finally snaps and he kills Sutpen.

All three of these examples, and example 41 also, show a logical progression through time; that is, the chronology of the clauses is sequential, not scrambled. From this alone it is easy to see that successive clauses modify preceding units, as specified by the definition of stacked. In short, Faulkner here uses a chronological framework for stacking RC's in order to expand the context of any statement, since we must constantly keep the accumulating details of point of view and

circumstance in mind in order to assess the story at a given point of its development. These examples that illustrate a chronological progression among the RC's present the most clear-cut cases of stacking patterns. Other relationships among stacked relatives are not so clearly defined.

The next group of examples of stacked relatives do not offer modification through chronological progression but show more complex relationships between states of mind and future action.

> 45. (that morality of his that was a good deal like Sutpen's, that told him he was right in the face of all fact and usage and everything else) (VII/287)
>
> 46. where Henry was waiting (oh yes; waiting) for him, who did not even say 'You didn't answer my letters. You didn't even write to Judith' who had already said What my sister and I have and are belongs to you . . . . (VIII/332)
>
> 47. He could neither have heard yet nor recognized the term "nigger," who even had no word for it in the tongue he knew who had been born and grown up in a padded silken vacuum which might have been suspended on a cable a thousand fathoms in the sea . . . . (VI/198-99)
>
> 48. (and Henry aping him here too, who was the better horseman, who maybe had nothing of what Bon would have called style but who had done more of it, to whom a horse was as natural as walking, who would ride anything anywhere and at anything) (VIII/318)

Again, each of these passages contains stacked RC's according to the definition; that is, second and successive relatives modify not only the antecedent NP alone but that NP as already modified by preceding clauses. It should also be noted that each of these examples illustrates a relation between belief and action, state of knowledge and experience.

Examples 45 and 46 exhibit a very definite pattern of cause and effect between the RC's. The second RC of 45 modifies the whole unit of morality as specified by the first RC. The progression consists of the

first RC being the reason that results in the action of the second RC. That is, because the morality is qualified as being like Sutpen's brand of morality, it naturally follows that the morality would exhibit the specific characteristics presented in the second RC. This kind of relationship automatically makes the second clause a further modification of morality as it had already been identified by the first RC. If and were to replace the comma between the relatives, they would then posit coordinate ideas, and the only relationships between them would be of adding modification to the NP. The relationship between the two clauses is not one of addition, though; it is one of cause and effect, and that is precisely why they can be considered stacked instead of coordinate. Similarly, in 46 there is a causal relationship between the clauses, only this time reversed: the first RC is effected by the second, the cause RC. The word even in the first clause prepares us to expect our question "Why not?" to be answered later in the sentence. The Henry who had already said to Bon "What my sister and I have and are belongs to you" is the same Henry who was waiting for Bon to return to school. And because Henry had already pledged himself this way to Bon, because his love was that complete, he had no reason to question Bon's actions. In other words, the second clause is the underlying cause of the action in the first clause. The even in the first clause, and already in the second, are clues that the second RC is not just a coordinate or additional description of Henry at this time but directly follows from and builds on the way the first clause has specified Henry's action.

Examples 47 and 48 have clausal relationships that are more vague. The RC's in these series deal with a character's state of knowledge at

particular times or show how a belief relates to fact, or how experience is related to state of knowledge. For instance, in 47 the second RC presents what the experience of the boy had been which contributed to his state of knowledge as presented in the first RC. The boy's isolation from reality--his foreignness--is shown in the first clause, where, since the language he knew was French, the derision inherent in the English term nigger would not be apparent to him. This cultural isolation is further specified in the second RC. The state of knowledge (or ignorance) resulting from his upbringing influences Etienne's later beliefs and experiences: he chooses his black blood over his white lineage because his conditioned perception of blackness has been to see it as better than whiteness. The two RC's are obviously not coordinate because the full meaning of the second clause is dependent on the first clause--the information about the boy's sheltered life is not just an additional modification.

Example 48 shows a relation between experience and belief. All the stacked relatives (those with the relative pronoun underlined) modify Henry in a way that specifies his state of experience with horses. All of the clauses revert back to the first modification: Henry who was the better horseman. The second and third clauses of the stack progressively specify his experience with horses. The impact of this accumulation of experience, however, is nullified by Henry's belief that Bon's style of riding--Bon's outward appearance on a horse--is more desirable than the natural knowledge of horses and riding that Henry had attained through experience. The two RC's joined by but are not considered part of this stack because of the conjunction, although they can be seen as part of

the progressive modification helping to specify Henry's state of knowledge and experience in relation to his belief.[15]

It should be noted that with each group of examples it has become more difficult to determine the relationship among the clauses of a stack: those with a chronological progression--41, 42, 43, 44--present the clearest pattern, followed by a cause-effect pattern in 45 and 46, and some kind of belief-knowledge-experience relationship in 47 and 48. A fourth type of stacking pattern can be seen in the following examples.

> 49. . . . and the man who should not have been there at all, who was too old to be there at all, both in years and experience . . . (IV/123-4)
>
> 50. . . . aware of the woman on the bed whose every look and action toward him, whose every touch of the capable hands seemed at the moment of touching his body to lose all warmth . . . (VI/197)
>
> 51. by Henry who knew but still did not believe, who was going deliberately to look upon and prove to himself that which, so Shreve and Quentin believed, would be like death for him to learn. (VIII/335)
>
> 52. --the woman of forty now, in the same shapeless calico and faded sunbonnet, who would not even sit down, who despite the impenetrable mask which she used for face emanated a terrible urgency, who insisted that they walk on toward the courthouse while she talked . . . (VI/201)

Note that in each of these series the first RC presents modification which is elaborated on more specifically--or refined--in the subsequent RC(s). In 49, by stating that Bon was too old, the second RC builds on the premise of the first--that he should not have been there at all. Example 50 is similar, with the second RC specifying the conditions of the first modification. In this example the syntax highlights such a "refining" pattern of stacked modification since the second RC not only makes the first more concrete but also provides the verb with which to complete the first RC.

In the second RC of 51 there is a concrete refinement of Henry's dilemma as it is identified in the first clause; the first clause presents essential information about Henry's attitude, and the effect of the second clause is dependent upon that first modification. Similarly, example 52 provides a series of three RC's, each more concrete or precise than the preceding one in its modification of Judith's condition: not only would she not sit down, but her face showed her sense of urgency, so that not only did her refusal to sit down and her face show how she felt, but she insisted on action that reinforced her appearance and behavior. In each of these cases, there seems to be a progression of meaning that would not have the same rhetorical impact of modification being simultaneously cumulative and progressively refined if and were substituted for punctuation between RC's.

Not all of the stacked relative series of Absalom, Absalom! fit into one of these patterns, but many do. Since commas and semi-colons can indicate deletion of conjunctions, when punctuation separates the clauses in a series of relatives, the series must pass the test of presenting a progression or an accumulation of ideas. The patterns of stacking mentioned above came to form additional semantic criteria for assigning a stacked classification to a series of clauses with an ambiguous relationship. Example 51 on the previous page could have been classified as ambiguous, but was assigned a stacked classification because the second clause is not just an addition to but is a concrete refinement of the first clause. While the comma before the second clause could indicate deletion of and, the stacking pattern--where the second RC necessarily depends on the first RC's modification--is stronger than evidence for

listed and conjoined states of mind. Or consider this next example:

> 53. . . . a pinch-penny housewifery which might have existed just as well upon a lighthouse rock, which had not even taught me how to cultivate a bed of flowers let alone a kitchen garden, which had taught me to look upon fuel and meat as something appearing by its own volition . . . (V/156)

In this case the commas could indicate deletion of and: this series could be seen as a list describing the pinch-penny housewifery. It should be noted, though, that the inclusion of and would alter the meaning precisely because it would make this a list. That it is not a list is suggested by the positioning of an affirmative RC (the third one) after a negative RC (the second one), as if in answer to the negation. Furthermore, there is a cumulative effect when the three clauses are taken together: there is a progression from isolated rock to vegetable garden to dinner table; from wilderness to domestication to civilization or social gathering. The negative form of the second clause emphasizes the meaninglessness of the pinch-penny housewifery whose uselessness was described in the image of the lighthouse rock in the first clause. The last clause qualifies the first two clauses taken together by declaring exactly Miss Rosa's state of knowledge. In this example it appears that the commas serve more the purpose of a pause between wordy clauses than to indicate possible deletion of coordinating conjunctions. Because this series of relatives seems to be cumulative rather than coordinated, it was classified as stacked.

As I have mentioned before, and as it is plain to see from the examples given so far, punctuation often creates ambiguity within series of RC's by making it impossible to definitely assign either a stacked or a coordinate classification. In other words, series of RC's classified as ambiguous

have two meanings: they can be interpreted as stacked or as coordinated. Ambiguous examples also point to the whole question of the function of punctuation and conjunctions other than and or coordinate but. Even though these problems of ambiguity do exist, ambiguous examples do not disprove the existence or the significance of stacked relative clauses in Absalom, Absalom!

Consider example 54, where punctuation makes the sentence ambiguous.

> 54. Then for the second time he looked at the expressionless and rocklike face, . . . the face in which he saw his own features, in which he saw recognition, and that was all. (VIII/348)

We cannot be certain that the second clause presents an idea in addition to the first clause; on the other hand, it is no more certain that we are to consider recognition a further modification of the face modified as in which he saw his own features. Did Bon see recognition because the features were his own, because Sutpen really was his father? Or is the recognition a separate idea that relates to the fact that Sutpen acknowledges Bon only as Henry's friend? The conclusion--and that was all-- is no help in determining if this series is stacked or coordinate because that could refer to either the first or second clause alone or both clauses taken together. Since the passage is so wordy there is no way to tell if the comma is there to give pause in a lengthy construction, or to indicate an additional parallel idea to the first clause. Another level of ambiguity emerges if we consider that in which he saw recognition could be modifying his own features rather than the face. If that is the case, then we are not even dealing with a series of relative clauses. On the other hand, the purpose of the comma may be to indicate that the

second clause does modify face since the position of face is too far removed to have the second clause follow the first without punctuation. In any case, as a series of relatives, this could be interpreted as stacked or coordinate, but there is not internal evidence that indicates if one reading would be more acceptable than the other. Of course, this ambiguity merges perfectly with the theme Faulkner presents in this passage: Bon can never really prove that Supten is his father because Sutpen's recognition of him is so ambiguous, open to interpretation depending on which character is perceiving Sutpen's behavior.

Example 55 was classified as ambiguous because of the ways yet seems to function.

> 55. . . . the two of them who four months ago had never laid eyes on one another yet who since had slept in the same room and eaten side by side of the same food and used the same books . . . . (VII/258)

In this case yet has the meaning of retraction; yet indicates that the following clause is not going to contradict what has come before but is going to qualify the preceding statement with a meaning like in spite of this fact. This example could be considered stacked for two reasons: because the word since acts as a sign that the time period has changed, yet could easily be deleted with no substantive change of meaning--the nuance of despite the fact would still remain in the second clause as long as since remained; secondly, there is a chronological progression. A stacking pattern is strongly indicated by the fact that the second clause as a modifier of the two of them alone would make no sense because of the word since: the second clause builds its meaning on the first RC and seems to be a further modification of the two of them as

specified in time by the first clause. A stacked classification cannot go unchallenged, though, because of the presence in surface structure of yet, which can also be seen as functioning as a coordinate conjunction, equalizing the importance of the two clauses by showing that the condition presented in the first clause was not enough to overwhelm the possibility of Shreve and Quentin becoming good friends.

However, Faulkner more often uses yet as a conjunction whose function is not so much to coordinate or equalize (as and does), but to build, in a way that is negative or contradictory, on information preceding it. Consider these examples:

> 56. no, not spying, not even hiding, who was child enough not to need to hide, whose presence would have been no violation even though he sat with her, . . . , yet who did not do it because . . . . (V/148)

> 57. . . . beside an animal who could stand in the street before my house and bellow placidly to the populous and listening solitude that my nephew had just murdered his sister's fiance, yet who could not permit himself to force the mule which drew us beyond a walk . . . (V/135)

In both of these cases yet connects by referring back to the modification presented in the previous clauses, but the yet clause is dependent upon that previous context for its meaning or effect, not coordinated to it as a separate idea of equal importance, or as a construction whose modification can stand independently of that presented in the previous clauses. And the yet clauses could not be switched in order with the other RC's: the modification in the yet clauses is necessarily entailed by that in the preceding RC's.

In fact, as I pointed out earlier, Faulkner often uses but in this same way--to mean yet or despite this fact, as is the sense of but in 58.

> 58. (brute instrument of that justice which presides over human events which, incept in the individual, runs smooth, less claw than velvet: but which, by man or woman flouted, drives on like fiery steel and overrides both weakly just and unjust strong . . . . (V/134)

In this example, the first two RC's are stacked; the third technically cannot be considered part of the stack because of the conjunction but. However, but here functions as a transition word connecting the final RC to the first two modifications of justice not as a coordinating conjunction but as a subordinating one. Without the first two descriptions of that justice, its overriding power as described in the third clause would lose its dramatic impact. And, of course, this kind of progressive dependency of meaning is a microcosm of the structure of the book as a whole. This particular example presents Rosa'a view of the moral question that is at the heart of the novel.

An analysis of the mechanics of transmitting meaning through language should take into account the context of form and matter, which in the case of Absalom, Absalom! is the entire novel. Therefore, for this study I classified all RC's from each chapter of Absalom, Absalom! to see if any patterns of usage or meaning emerged. The results of my classifications can be seen below, in the frequency chart showing RC patterns by chapter in Absalom, Absalom! Even the most extensive studies of Faulkner's style to date have not surveyed the distribution of grammatical constructions or features throughout whole novels for consistent patterns, but have focused on constructions in smaller passages without investigating whether the findings would hold for the entire book.[16] Yet referentiality is so important in Absalom, Absalom! that context can be considered not just the immediate sentence, paragraph, or chapter, but the entire novel, especially

considering the scrambled chronology of events related as well as experienced: meaning is eludicated the most when we know what happened before and after, so in this sense context is all time within the boundaries set up by the novel. In addition, the limits on time expand when the reader is included in context, as Faulkner wanted us to be; because the work's ultimate "meaning" is left up to the reader: ". . . the truth, I would like to think, comes out, that when the reader has read all those 13 different ways of looking at the blackbird, the reader has his own 14th image of that blackbird which I would like to think is the truth."[17]

TABLE 1

FREQUENCY CHART OF RELATIVE CLAUSES, CLASSIFIED, BY CHAPTER IN FAULKNER'S ABSALOM, ABSALOM!

Chapter/Pages No. of Pages	SERIES * Stack	/ Ambig.	non-stacked & Coord.	# Isolated	SERIES TOTAL	TOTAL RC's	% Series of Total RC's
Chap. I (7-30), 23 pp	2	9	10	118	21	139	15.10
Chap. II (31-58), 27 pp	2	15	10	136	27	163	16.56
Chap. III (59-87), 28 pp	4	4	28	153	36	189	19.04
Chap. IV (88-133), 45 pp	8	35	20	243	63	306	20.58
Chap. V (134-172), 38 pp	17	70	17	243	104	347	29.97
Chap. VI (173-216), 43 pp	29	34	20	207	83	290	28.62
Chap. VII (217-292), 75 pp	27	27	21	307	75	382	19.63
Chap. VIII (293-359), 66 pp	21	67	24	233	112	345	32.46
Chap. IX (360-378), 18 pp	0	7	0	35	7	42	16.66

In other words, in assessing the patterns of RC use, it is important to keep in mind the major narrators of each chapter and the particular discourse situation. In Chapter I we are introduced to Miss Rosa as Quentin would be, and we are presented with only the bare outlines of the story and Quentin's thoughts on why he has been chosen to listen to it. There are not many series relative in this chapter (as can be seen from Table 1) because much of the information is given in an authorial voice--the story is not really living yet, so there is no need to relate it to the present or to modify its facts. In Chapters II and III Mr. Compson takes over most of the telling. His florid style and allusion to classical myth is bound to include types of language that will make his sentences run on with qualifying ideas and asides, and his knowledge of legal jargon would push him toward this tendency too. Consequently, there are more RC's in these chapters than in Chapter I. Mr. Compson is in the position of medium as far as the Sutpen legend is concerned: he tells the community's version although he knows the story according to many versions, and he also has the letter, a material object--living proof--which can be handed down through him.

Note, on the table, the increase in Chapter IV in the total number of RC's and in the series total. In Chapter IV Mr. Compson's style of speech changes slightly from story-teller to dramatist. At this point, the legend seems to gather a life of its own--a life engendered by Mr. Compson's pondering of the moral center of the family's history: why did Henry murder Bon? The answer to this question is inextricably tied in with the experiences of Henry's father; the effects of Sutpen's actions which led to Henry's action are felt into the present time because the

"sins of the father" situation is one that the whole town, indeed all societies, must deal with. Bon's letter is the actual connection of the past with the present, but it does not clarify the relation between cause and effect. For all these reasons Chapter IV naturally has more RC's than the first three chapters: there is more to relate (both in story-telling and in fitting pieces together), and there are also more experiences to be modified because there are more people to make reference to.

The largest number of stacked relatives, as well as the largest concentration of coordinate and ambiguous series of relatives and total numbers of relatives, are found in Chapters V through VIII. Chapter V marks a center-point for modification and reference. It functions as a bridge which refers back to information given earlier (but from a different, more involved, perspective), and its implications reverberate and accumulate in the later chapters. Except for Quentin's few lines at the end, this chapter is a monologue by Rosa Coldfield--making it the most one-sided chapter in the book. Rosa's "demonizing" lingers on through the remaining chapters where more modification is needed to get a picture of Sutpen that is not so biased as Rosa's. As the only narrator who participated in some of the events retold in the Sutpen legend, Rosa is a pivot for reference--she is a connector between present and past. In addition, she is trying to get back to the past to try to undo (or at least take revenge for) all of the effects of Sutpen's life that have robbed her of vitality. This reference to and modification of the past by Rosa is transmitted to and kept alive in Quentin. Chapter V is the only chapter printed almost entirely in italics, and again,

Quentin's comments are the only exception. Italics are used in other chapters to indicate stream-of-consciousness or other kinds of thought patterns, and in Chapter V it appears to be a technique for showing how Quentin's mind is registering what Rosa is telling him. That is, it is a technique that kineticizes time by showing that what Rosa says is simultaneously transmitted to Quentin's thoughts and from there is communicated to the reader.[18] In addition to structurally being the middle chapter in the book, Chapter V also makes the mid-point in narrative and chronological, as well as referential, development.[19] In the first four chapters Quentin is at home in Mississippi, listening to the Sutpen legend from various sources; he has received most of the raw material by Chapter V, where he is provided with the "human" or actually living and passionate element in the person of Miss Rosa. Chapters VI through IX are set at Harvard, where Quentin and Shreve modify and qualify the information they have to create a different legend. And, not coincidentally, Chapter V contains the most parentheses, which points to its significance concerning qualification and modification--areas with which RC's are also concerned.[20] All of these factors account for the large numbers of relatives, particularly series patterns, in Chapter V.

Compared with Chapter V there is a slacking off in Chapter VI for both total number of RC's and number of series relatives. This is due to the shifting of setting away from Mississippi, and to Quentin's style of speaking with Shreve being more conversational (as opposed to internalized, or associative). Indeed, most of the series relatives here are found in Quentin's stream-of-consciousness passages, where thought-flow is kept

moving in the accumulation of RC's. But the series total for Chapter VI is higher than that for Chapter VII because in Chapter VI Quentin is pondering his two recent trips to Sutpen's Hundred and the graveyard: both of these events provide the clues which change the direction of both reference and modification of the tale (from Sutpen to Henry and Bon). While series relatives are fewer in Chapter VII, there are more relative clauses total. In Chapter VII the story again refers to the distant past with the relating of Sutpen's actual life--his innocence, and how he came to plan his design (which would eventually victimize him as he had exploited others). The theme of victimizing, or object vs. subject, is represented in Chapters VII and VIII by the greater use of that instead of who. That appears so often because these two sections deal with the moral cause of the effects of Sutpen's experiences: man's inhumanity to man, any person's inability to accept another as an individual being instead of a lifeless shell indistinguishable from others. Language incorporates the dehumanization of one segment of society by another, as is shown in this passage.

> 59. he did not even imagine then that there was any such way to live or to want to live, or that there existed all the objects to be wanted which there were, or that the ones who owned the objects not only could look down on the ones that didn't, but could be supported in the down-looking not only by the others who owned objects too but by the very ones that were looked down on that didn't own objects and knew they never would. (VII/221)

Notice that the final two-clause stack uses the more neutral that (as opposed to who) to modify the very ones looked down on. There are other discourse-related reasons why that appears more frequently in the later chapters, and this point and RC pronoun frequency and use in general will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters here.

In Chapter VII Quentin and Shreve begin the re-creation of the legend, and the seeds of tragedy sown in Chapter VII are brought full cycle in Chapter VIII. Chapter VIII has the largest number of series relatives in the novel. This is not surprising considering that it is in Chapter VIII that Quentin and Shreve, besides becoming interchangeable narrators, also become Henry and Bon--a transformation that implies the most intense example of reference (the present referring to the past) and relativity in two senses: of relating past culture to present situation, and of Quentin's and Shreve's position relative to that of the dead people, past events, and given information. It is that relativity which shapes their modifications of the story, and the references made through use of RC's show how they are related to those past events. Chapter IX has the fewest number of RC's because there is very little left to refer to or qualify: Quentin is no longer looking at the Sutpen legend and relating it to himself; it is now completely part of his makeup, and he will not be able to dispense with it, even away from home in New England.

In the process of showing that Faulkner's use of stacking patterns for RC's in Absalom, Absalom! is related to the themes of the book, this analysis has also uncovered a gray area, an ambiguity, in the definition of stacking: semantic considerations are involved in the assessment; we cannot rely on surface markers or textbook examples to determine the classification of complex constructions like this:

> 60. . . . to make that scratch, that undying mark on the blank face of the oblivion to which we are all doomed, of which she spoke-- (IV/129)

The nature of the embedding here is confusing. The second clause seems to

be a further, stacked modification of that oblivion as modified by the first RC. But the order of the clauses could be switched. And the RC's are separated by a comma. Why? It could be that in the second RC additional, aside information not necessary to identifying or pinpointing a specific "kind" of oblivion is being given--that the second clause is a non-restrictive clause. Or perhaps that second RC is a commentary by Mr. Compson, and the comma between the clauses is an indication of Mr. Compson's speaking style, one that is constantly half-stopping to add more information. In other words, not only is more than one interpretation of meaning valid for this series of RC's, but the ambiguity is compounded when we try to decide whether or not the RC's are stacked syntactically. And a similar ambiguity of meaning and form characterizes the stories and voices interwoven in the novel.

Each character has a story, and there are stories of other characters within those stories: the book itself is "stacked." The structure of the novel is one of embedding and recursivity. But the nature of the embedding (how those stories are related to each other, how they are relating past and present; and how the characters are related to each other--by blood? marriage? culture? love? hate? war? time?) is often confused and confusing. In fact, a situation parallel to that of Quentin and Shreve faces the reader. In order to find the meaning of the stories in Absalom, Absalom! each reader must take into account not only his own beliefs, knowledge, and experiences, but those of each character in a particular context as outlined by Faulkner. His use of stacking patterns for RC's in the novel indicates that he was manipulating syntax--one aspect of form or style or technique--to add an extra dimension to the content of

the work. By analyzing the mechanics of conveying meaning through syntax, we can help to uncover the precise relationship between the form and the matter of the novel--not just what is being said, but how it is said. And in Absalom, Absalom! that key is the relative clause.

Notes--Chapter II

[1] As a paper read at the SAMLA/SECOL Convention in Nov., 1978 (Atlanta, Ga.), this was originally entitled "Faulkner's Stacked Relatives." This title was meant to play upon the word relative, meaning not only RC's but also the idea that all the characters in the book are related in a stacked way. Of course, the slang meaning of "stacked relatives" is also, inadvertently, part of the pun.

[2] Roderick Jacobs and Peter Rosenbaum, Transformations, Style, and Meaning (Waltham, Mass.: Xerox College Publishing, 1971), p. 1.

[3] I have chosen to use the term abstract structure to refer to what has also been termed the deep or underlying or remote structure of sentences, from which surface structures are derived through the operation of transformational rules. According to Noam Chomsky's revised theory (1965), the semantic reading of a sentence is not a separate component of the grammar--meaning resides in the deepest or most abstract formulation of the sentence, not just at surface level. Chomsky developed his syntactic theory--which includes the concept of deep structure and surface structure and transformational rules--to account for ambiguous sentences (same form, two different meanings), and to account for the universal human ability to generate an infinite number of new sentences using a finite grammar and lexicon. Hence the label "transformational generative" grammar. See John Lyons, Chomsky (London: Wm. Collins, 1970).

Furthermore, Samuel Keyser and Paul Postal maintain in Beginning English Grammar (NY: Harper & Row, 1976) that sentences have not just

one, but any number of successively transformed, intermediate "remote" structures between the base rules of the grammar (which determine the relations among grammatical categories) and the specific surface realization. Abstract structure seems to me an apt description for any of those stages or configurations of grammatical processes by which we subconsciously generate the sentences we write or speak.

[4] For example, see Robert Stockwell, Paul Schachter, and Barbara Hall Partee, The Major Syntactic Structures of English (NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973), p. 422; Jean Malmstrom and Constance Weaver, Transgrammar (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1973), p. 199; Jacobs and Rosenbaum, p. 100-101; Terence Langendoen, Essentials of English Grammar (NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), p. 144.

[5] William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom! (NY: Random House, 1936; Vintage Books ed. 1972). This is the source for all examples used in this study. In parentheses after each passage I have given Roman numerals to indicate chapter numbers, and Arabic numerals to indicate page numbers.

[6] Bruce Liles, An Introduction to Linguistics (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 104.

[7] Stockwell et al., p. 421.

[8] Stockwell et al., p. 423.

[9] Stockwell et al., p. 427.

[10] Sandra Annear Thompson, "The Deep Structure of Relative Clauses," in Studies in Linguistic Semantics, ed. Charles J. Fillmore and D. Terence Langendoen (NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), pp. 79-94.

[11] Stockwell et al., pp. 443-47.

[12] John Stark, "The Implications for Stylistics of Strawson's 'On Referring,' with Absalom, Absalom! as an Example," Language and Style, 6(1973), 273-280.

[13] For example, see Randal Whitman, English and English Linguistics (NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975), p. 135; Jacobs and Rosenbaum, p. 96; Liles, p. 97.

[14] Keyser and Postal, p. 156-7, note 3.

[15] That is, as two separate clauses these RC's are not stacked but are coordinated. However, the two RC's as a unit ("Who had nothing of what Bon would have called style but who had done more of it")is a part of the stack. In short, the stack in this example includes a coordinate series as part of the stack.

[16] For example, see Richard Ohmann, "Generative Grammars and the Concept of Literary Style," in Contemporary Essays on Style, ed. Glen Love and Michael Payne (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1969), pp. 133-148; James Radomski, Faulkner's Style: A Syntactic Analysis (dissertation, Kent State University, 1974); Conrad Aiken, "William Faulkner: The Novel as Form" in William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1960), pp. 135-142; F. C. Reidel, "Faulkner as Stylist," South Atlantic Quarterly, 56, (1957), 462-479.

[17] Fred L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, eds. Faulkner in the University (Charlottesville: U. of Va. Press, 1959), p. 274.

[18] John Hodgson, "Logical Sequence and Continuity: Some Observations on the Typographical and Structural Consistency of Absalom, Absalom!" American Literature, 43 (1971), p. 100.

[19] Cleanth Brooks, The Yoknapatawpha Country (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1963), p. 310-11.

[20] Fred V. Randel, "Parentheses in Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!" Style, 5 (1971), 70-87.

CHAPTER III

FAULKNER'S NONRESTRICTIVE THEORY OF RELATIVITY

Ambiguity is a universal characteristic of language. In spoken language ambiguity can be avoided by pauses, intonations, or pitch, or by addition of clarifying information. In written language, especially literature, however, an ambiguous construction--one that has more than one meaning or interpretation--can never be self-explanatory; we must always rely on some outside source--context or our own experiences, for example--in order to maintain a definitive perspective. That is, once the ambiguity is recognized, we choose one interpretation over another, or we choose to leave the meaning open-ended, depending upon information given or hinted at elsewhere in that piece of literature or gleaned from our own mental processes of relating abstraction to reality. Absalom, Absalom!, with its myriad points of view, presents "truth" that is never authoritative but is being constantly qualified. As a result, the reader can never be sure what information is the most important, the most essential--which details are necessary to understand a meaning of the novel. Appropriately enough, this kind of built-in ambiguity is reflected in Faulkner's use of non-restrictive (NR) relatives in the novel. Particularly in relation to current theories about the differences between restrictives (R) and NR's, I will show that Faulkner's use of relatives challenges the traditional grammatical classifications at both the surface and underlying levels.

It is quite easy for anyone to see the difference in meaning between R and NR relatives when the same sentence is presented two different ways in a textbook. Here, a sentence from Absalom, Absalom! has been substituted to illustrate the supposed difference between the two classes of relative clauses (RC).

1a. hidden not only from her father but from the two negresses, who might have told Mr. Coldfield (Chap. III, p. 78)

1b. hidden not only from her father but from the two negresses who might have told Mr. Coldfield

The sentence found in the novel is 1a, where the RC does not restrict the identity of the two negresses: we presume that there are only two negresses and that they might have told Mr. Coldfield what Rosa was hiding. In 1b the only difference is the omission of a comma before the RC, but that lack of punctuation indicates that the RC has a restricting function that changes the meaning of the sentence. In 1b the RC limits the identity of the two negresses--pointing them out as if they were part of a larger group of negresses, not all of whom would have told Mr. Coldfield. The RC in 1a is one of the few truly unambiguous NR's in the novel--that is, two distinct meanings can be seen for R and NR forms of the same words. As is usual with Faulkner's writing, though, most of the RC's are not that simply analyzed. In order to determine how Faulkner uses NR's in Absalom, Absalom! it is first necessary to look at what NR's are supposed to be and do.

Current definitions of NR's center on how the clause provides modification or information that is not essential for identifying or distinguishing the referent from a hypothetical group. Theoretically,

the referent is unique or sufficiently identified, so that the NR clause provides additional qualification. If RC's have two aspects--that of reference and that of modification--then what distinguishes NR's from R's, at least in cases like 1a. and 1b., is the nature of the referring: it is not that the modification provided in a NR is not necessary or essential qualification, but that the information further describes or comments upon rather than identifies or pinpoints a referent as being somehow a subset. Because of this different function between R's and NR's, most linguists have agreed that it would be undesirable for both types to have the same underlying structure.[1] If transformations do not change meaning, how could only one abstract structure sentence originate surface structures for both 1a. and 1b. when those two sentences have such different interpretations? It is generally agreed that surface NR's are derived from conjoined, rather than embedded, sentences because of their property of adding modification to a referent that does not need to have its identity further restricted.

Stockwell et al. (1973) have listed the commonly accepted characteristics of NR's by which they can be differentiated from R's.[2]

A. NR's do not permit that as a relative pronoun; R's do.
B. NR's require comma intonation after the head NP.
C. NR's may modify proper nouns that have no determiners; R's may not.
D. NR's may modify entire prepositions; R's may not.
E. NR's may not modify any plus NP; R's may.

Note that the characteristics A and B deal with the form of NR's; C, D, and E are more concerned with function or the nature of the referent. In addition, Keyser and Postal assert that NR's cannot be stacked;[3] Langendoen maintains that the order of the main and relative sentences

is different for NR's than for R's;[4] and Marshall points out that the difference between R's and NR's is analogous to that between a set and a subset--that R's can have a partitive interpretation, and that demonstratives (this, that, these, those) may precede the referents of NR's but not R's.[5] Faulkner uses NR RC's in ways that require we examine these aspects of NR's to see if they are really defining features of a difference in function and meaning between NR's and R's, or if they are superficial attributes useful mainly for the classification of RC's.

First, however, consider these examples of relatively clear NR's from the novel.

2. And not only that, but this particular college, which he had never heard of, which ten years ago did not even exist (VIII/313)

3. So at last I shall see him, whom it seems I was bred up never to expect to see, whom I have even learned to live without (VIII/319)

4. the woman, who still existed in that aghast and automaton-like state in which she had arrived, did not, possibly could not recount . . . (VI/205)

5. . . . listening to the prefever's temperature of disaster, which makes soothsayers and sometimes makes them right (III/66)

6. a stranger would have thought that the marriage, which subsequent events would indicate had not even been mentioned between the young people and the parents, had been actually performed . . .(III/75)

7. where her husband, who had offered his talents for horse and mule-getting to the Confederate cavalry, now was (III/85)

If each of these would be read without the pause indicated by the commas before the RC, the meaning of the passage would change: each referent would become a specified or pinpointed subset of some hypothetical larger group. It seems, then, that Faulkner is using commas here to indicate NR relatives. But it is important to keep in mind that punctuation is

not unambiguously the measure or guide against which NR RC's can be distinguished: punctuation is only intended to indicate (and imprecisely at that) pauses, and this means that the use of punctuation assumes that readers can identify NR's in the first place. The concept underlying the definition of NR's as providing additional modification not essential to identifying the referent presupposes or assumes that both speaker and hearer (or writer and reader) share certain knowledge about what is being referred to; it is because of this presupposed shared knowledge that readers can recognize that the writer is adding information or meaning with a NR. In other words, punctuation is not the primary identification of non-restrictive meaning. In fact, for many RC's in Absalom, Absalom!, in spite of the use of commas the meaning is still ambiguous. For example, in 8, the comma can be taken to signal a NR clause.

> 8. . . . they were as two people become now and then, who seem to know one another so well . . . (IV/122)

One explanation for the position of the RC after the whole sentence instead of following the referent two people is that there are four more lines of qualification after the RC than what I have given here, and such bulk would have been unwieldy in the middle of the sentence directly after the antecedent. Possibly, however, the RC was placed at the end of the sentence in order to leave the ambiguity of meaning intact--because it is possible that the RC here is really restrictive, limits the set of people being hypothesized. This passage could be read as:

> they were as two people who seem to know one another so well become now and then

As a matter of fact, this reading makes more sense than one where the modification seems to be the kind of aside or parenthesis that a NR reading shows. The sentence

they were as two people become now and then

almost requires that we be given some qualification about the two people. The sentence implies, because of the comparative word as, that some modification is an integral part of the NP, is necessary to identify what habit or quality two people can have among all the possibilities. That is why the R reading seems to be better-formed than the NR reading: the RC information seems to be an integral part of the reference-boundary of the head NP. If this is the case--and of course there is no way to ever actually prove without doubt that one reading is right and one is wrong--then the comma functions not as an indicator of a NR clause, but merely to give pause between the main sentence and a long qualifying idea. As such, a surface reading gives the impression that the RC is NR form functioning as a R relative clause. That is, in terms of form, example 8 looks like a NR RC because of punctuation; in terms of meaning, the RC can be taken as having either a R or a NR function. There are many ambiguous examples in Absalom, Absalom!, including some with proper noun antecedents, where the punctuation could indicate either non-restrictive meaning or pause because of length or distance or series. These will be discussed in more detail later. First it is necessary to show the other kinds of plainly NR relatives in Absalom, Absalom!--those where the qualification is information mentioned in addition, as an aside or a comment.

The conjunction origin of NR's can be seen most easily when the RC qualifies an entire proposition.

9. they had to depend on inquiry to find out what they could about him, which of necessity would be a night, at the supper-table . . . or in the lounge which he would have to cross to gain his room and lock the door again, which he would do as soon as he finished eating. (II/33)

10. He was not liked . . . but feared, which seemed to amuse, if not actually please, him. (III/72)

11. they would be seen together in the carriage in town now and then as though nothing had occurred between them . . ., which certainly would not have been the case if the quarrel had been between Bon and the father (III/79)

12. no one who knew them either in Oxford or in Jefferson knew that they were members of the company at the time, which would have been almost impossible to conceal otherwise. (IV/122)

13. They have started firing again. Which--to mention it--is redundancy too. (IV/131)

14. So it takes two niggers to get rid of one Sutpen, don't it? . . . which is all right (IX/378)

15. I gave him nothing, which is the sum of loving.(V/147)

In each of the above examples the RC comments on an action; in each case the relative pronoun could be replaced by this or that, and the RC can be seen as a modifying sentence conjoined with the main sentence. Only 15 is ambiguous, and not because it may not be NR but because the referent could be the whole sentence I gave him nothing or just the NP nothing. RC's in parentheses also seem to be clearly NR. By definition, information in parentheses is additional or aside, not necessary for pinpointing reference, and is often used as commentary on an entire idea. Consider this next group of examples.

16. something like peace, like quiet in the raging and incredulous recounting (which enables man to bear with living) (V/161)

17. it was some innate sense of delicacy and fitness (which his sister and daughter did not seem to possess by the way) (II/50)

18. She was . . . a breathing indictment, ubiquitous and even transferable, of the entire male principle (that principle which had left the aunt a virgin at 35). (III/60)

19. He was not liked (which he evidently did not want, anyway) (III/72)

20. a principle apt docile and instinct with strange and curious pleasures of the flesh (which is all: there is nothing else) (IV/116)

21. with a kind of clumsy and fumbling and trembling eagerness (which he thought derived from terror) (IX/362)

Even with these examples that theoretically should be taken as NR because of their marginal nature, there are problems of classification. In 18 the referent is specified as being the entire male principle--a generic category--and any modification of it would be automatically NR. Indeed, it seems that we are expected to think of the relative as NR or as modifying a generic especially since it is put in parentheses, to set it off rather than to have it be viewed as integrally embedded with the main sentence. But because the simple NP principle is repeated within the parenthesis before the RC, the RC itself becomes restrictive. A NR reading of the fragment within the parentheses would seem ill-formed. (And this despite the supposition, by the way, that demonstratives can precede only NR's: consider the difference between this, which specifies identity boundary at such close range so as to preclude any more restriction by the RC, and that, which seems to call out for the referent to be more precisely identified or delineated against a larger, more distant background.) Yet the R relative within the parentheses functions as a NR by referring us

back to entire male principle. And 21 could also easily be read as having a R RC, where the clause further identifies the kind of eagerness, specifies that this kind of eagerness comes from fear. Yet the parentheses imply that the RC should be read as NR or additional modification of a referent which is already sufficiently defined. But do clumsy, fumbling, and trembling unambiguously identify the eagerness as being terror-derived? It seems as though the RC provides qualifying information that is essential to the partitive interpretation of the NP; perhaps the RC is set aside in parentheses because it is Quentin's comment on Rosa's condition, or, in other words, because the quality of being terror-derived cannot be presupposed but only conjectured. Finally, in 16 the identity of the referent is not really clear: it could be peace/quiet, or it could be raging/recounting or it could be the whole idea of peace in the raging and incredulous recounting. In any case, the information provided in the RC does not help to identify the referent, but since many of the possible referents is not preceded by a determiner it should be assumed that the parenthetical RC is NR, or modifying a complete class rather than defining a subset. The interesting point here, however, is that the RC is placed at the end of the sentence, and this reinforces the ambiguity of reference.

Faulkner's tendency in Absalom, Absalom! to place modification at the end of sentences rather than immediately following the head NP seems to have three effects: it makes it easier to lengthen sentences, to keep adding qualification so that the nature of the referent is constantly changing; it makes it harder to pinpoint clearly who or what the referent is; and it makes the difference in form and meaning between R and NR RC's ambiguous. This ambiguity in many cases implies a confusion between what

is essential or non-essential qualification for identifying the referent. In this regard, note the passages below:

22. He could neither have heard yet nor recognized the term nigger, who even had no word for it in the tongue he knew who had been born and grown up in a padded silken vacuum (VI/198)

23. It would never occur to me that this might be his reason, who is not only generous but ruthless, who must have surrendered everything (VIII/331)

24. and if there was triumph, it was on the face twelve miles back there at Sutpen's Hundred, which did not even require to see or be present. (I/24)

25. He saw to that, who had doubtless seen even further ahead than the two years it actually took him to build his house (III/61)

26. he may even have known Bon that well by then, who had not changed until then and so would in all probability not change later (IV/91)

27. Henry was the provincial, the clown almost, who may have been conscious that his fierce provincial's pride in his sister's virginity was a false quantity (IV/96)

28. he trusted no man nor woman, who had no man's nor woman's love (IV/103)

29. the man and the youth, seducer and secuded, who had known one another, seduced and been seduced, victimized in turn each by the other (IV/120)

30. the youth deprived twice now of his birthright, who should have made one among the candles and fiddles, the kisses and the desperate tears, who should have made one of the color guard itself (IV/123)

31. the same impenetrable and serene face, only a little older now, a little thinner now, which had appeared in town in the carriage beside her father (IV/125)

32. he chose well; he bettered choosing, who created in his own image the cold Cerberus of his private hell (V/136)

33. we kept the room which Thomas Sutpen would return to . . . a sonless widower, barren of that posterity which he doubtless must have wanted who had gone to the trouble and expense of getting children (V/155)

34. with that forlorn little boy invisible between them who had come there eight years ago with the overall jumper . . . , who had become the youth in . . . the tattered hat . . . , who had become the young man with a young man's potence (VI/204)

35. this child who could speak no English as the woman could speak no French, who had found him, hunted him down, in a French city and brought him away (VI/195)

36. there followed something like a year composed of a succession of periods of utter immobility like a broken cinema film, which the white-colored man who had married her spent on his back (VI/206)

37. a little island set in a smiling and fury-lurked and incredible indigo sea, which was the halfway point between what we call the jungle and what we call civilization (VII/261)

38. the silhouette of a sentry before it, who challenges him. (VIII/352)

In every case, the RC is positioned at the end of the main sentence, most of the time because other qualifying information that has not been relativized intervenes between the head NP and the RC. Only in 23, where the who is referring back to the NP he implied in the genetive of his reason, is there a compelling grammatical reason for not placing the RC immediately after its referent. Three of the examples show how the distance between RC and NP can make the identity of the referent confused or ambiguous. Even when we know that the context or dramatic scene of 26 is the confrontation between Henry and Sutpen about Bon after Sutpen has investigated Bon's life in New Orleans, the reference is still unclear. Is it he/Sutpen who had not changed until then, or he/Henry or--most likely--Bon who had not changed until then? Each of these three characters does undergo a change just prior to this scene, but the RC information does not help either to restrict the identity of any possibility for he, nor does it merely add modification to Bon's identity if Bon is indeed supposed to be the referent. This is because semantically, someone who does not change

should be the easiest to figure out or predict or know, and in this light the RC would be essential for determining the identity of the referent as being Bon. Again, in 27, it is possible that the head NP is Henry or clown or provincial, and for the last two of these possibilities the RC could be read as R or NR. The same thing happens in 36, where the RC could refer to either year or periods of immobility in either a restricting or non-restricting capacity. Indeed, for any of the remaining examples in this group the RC, if it is placed right after the head NP, can either limit the identity of the referent or be seen as non-restrictive qualification. For illustration of this ambiguity consider alternate readings for the examples whose referents are human nouns--29, 30, 34, and 35.

R 29a. the man and the youth who had known one another were victimized
NR 29b. the man and the youth, who had known one another, were victimized

R 30a. the youth who should have made a birthright had been deprived of it twice
NR 30b. the youth, who should have made a birthright, had been deprived of it twice

R 34a. that forlorn little boy who had come there eight years ago . . . who had become the youth . . . who had become the young man was invisible between them
NR 34b. that forlorn little boy, who had come there eight years ago . . . , . . . , was invisible between them

R 35a. the woman who had found him could speak no French
NR 35b. the woman, who had found him, could speak no French

Examples 22 through 38 are ambiguous--having at least two possible interpretations--because of the distance between referent and RC. As can be seen in the illustration of alternate readings for 29, 30, 34, and 35, these examples raise a number of questions about the exact difference in meaning between R and NR readings. For example, we can ask if there is a qualitative difference that would make us prefer one reading over

another, or if the qualifying information is ever entirely non-essential for the partitive identification of the referent.

Even Langendoen's proposition--that the order of the two sentences from which a main sentence and a RC are derived determines whether the RC is R or NR--does not help here, precisely because that distance between referent and RC does not allow for any predetermination by the reader of whether the RC is to be taken as R or NR. These ambiguous examples from the novel point up the basic weakness of current classifications of RC's: distinguishing characteristics are proposed not by a process of induction, but by comparison with the criteria of examples whose classification has already been decided. Obviously, the most elemental featuré separating R's from NR's is the presence or absence of pause between head NP and RC, indicated in writing by punctuation. This is a formal feature which is supposed to indicate the kind of meaning, or the function, we assign to the RC. It seems, however, at least from these examples from Faulkner, that it is not the "essential" or "non-essential" nature of the RC which dictates use of commas, but the length of or rhetorical emphasis in the discourse, or the distance between the referent and the RC. In most of the passages cited a comma could indicate that the RC is NR, but it appears just as likely that the punctuation offers pause after a completed idea and indication that the RC refers back to some distant referent positioned before intervening information.

In fact, those same questions about the exact difference in meaning between R and NR readings can be asked even of examples where there is no distance between referent and RC, such as 39 and 40.

39. but we do save that one, who but for us would have been sold to any brute (IV/116)

49. love and faith: these left with us by fathers, sweethearts, brothers, who carried the pride (V/150)

In these cases, the comma before the RC could indicate non-restriction, except that the difference in meaning between R or NR interpretations of the referent seems minimal. Rather, if the commas had been omitted here, the resulting meanings would be different because of a shift in emphasis. In other words, the NR form in 39 and 40 is really an extension of rhetoric.

By this I mean that Faulkner's use of punctuation in Absalom, Absalom!, especially considering examples like 39 and 40 (and even, for that matter, 22-38) where the commas do not necessarily signal a specifically non-restrictive meaning, often conforms to his "communicative intent" rather than (or in spite of) a consideration of syntactic constraints. His intent or purpose in Absalom, Absalom! seems to be to pack it all in, to show as many facets as possible of each narrator's and each character's thoughts and feelings, and to do this in a style that also feels fast (as in talking fast in order to say everything and leave out no details), "crammed," copious--cumulative. This is why it is important to keep in mind that RC's are not merely sentences with their own internal structure, but are dependent clauses. And that dependency has the function of expanding the syntactic and semantic context of the sentence both fowards and backwards, as I explain in the Appendix. This kind of movement has the effect of making Absalom, Absalom! simultaneously "difficult" to read because of its fullness, and easy to process because of the way the sentences are structured.

In "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence"[6] Francis Christensen points out that Faulkner is a master of layering structure in his sentences: "To a single independent clause he may append a page of additions, but usually all clear, all grammatical, once we have learned how to read him." (p. 30) The way we should read him, Christensen implies, is by understanding the concept of the cumulative sentence.

> The cumulative sentence is the opposite of the periodic sentence. It does not represent the idea as conceived, pondered over, reshaped, packaged, and delivered cold. It is dynamic rather than static, representing the mind thinking. The main clause (whose additions move backward, so that the sentence has a flowing and ebbing movement) exhausts the mere fact of the idea; logically there is nothing more to say. The additions stay with the same idea, probing its bearings and implications, exemplifying it or seeking an analogy or metaphor for it, or reducing it to details. Thus the mere form of the sentence generates ideas. It serves the needs of both the writer and the reader, the writer by compelling him to examine his thought, the reader by letting him into the writer's thought.

In other words, what Faulkner is doing with language in examples such as these goes beyond the mere telling of the story; his style is a crucial component of the overall rhetoric of the novel--its impact on readers, its success in communicating Faulkner's purpose in writing it. Style can be defined as "a characteristic use of language, . . . a <u>way of doing it</u>,"[7] or as "a tendency of a speaker or writer to consistently choose certain structures over others available in the language."[8] Yet, continues Ohmann, although syntax seems to be a main determinant of style, it is not the whole of style. (p. 148) So that even though the grammatical basis of Faulkner's "cumulative" style in <u>Absalom, Absalom!</u> is his abundant use of RC's, his style involves another larger level, not easily defined--tone or voice or texture--to which the RC contributes also. To understand how Faulkner's punctuation of RC's could have been a

rhetorical choice, it is first necessary to understand his linguistic competence in choosing the RC construction to help effect his style, and his linguistic performance in using RC's. In order to analyze how the syntax, themes, purpose, and texture of Absalom, Absalom! all make up Faulkner's "style" in this novel, it is essential first of all that a description of English grammar be adequate--in this case, a description of RC's and how they are to be classified as R or NR. Ohmann brings out these same concerns in his use of transformational-generative linguistics to analyze literary style:

> . . . the elusive intuition we have of form and content may turn out to be anchored in a distinction between the surface structures and the deep structures of sentences. If so, syntactic theory will also feed into the theory of style. Still more evidently, the proper analysis of styles waits on a satisfactory analysis of sentences. Matters of rhetoric, such as emphasis and order, also promise to become clearer as we better understand internal relations in sentences. More generally, we may be able to enlarge and deepen our concept of literary structure as we are increasingly able to make it subsume linguistic structure--including especially the structure of deviant sentences. And most important, since critical understanding follows and builds on understanding of sentences, generative grammar should eventually be a reliable assistant in the effort of seeing just how a given literary work sifts through a reader's mind, what cognitive and emotional processes it sets in motion, and what organization of experience it encourages. (156-7)

For Absalom, Absalom! a consideration of how punctuation affects the interpretation of the meaning (R or NR) of RC's leads to questions about the adequacy of the traditional distinctions between the two types. In examples 22-38 the commas separating RC's from the main sentence may have been used primarily for the practical reason of giving pause, or rhetorically--to extend the sentence's impact in a certain kind of voice with a particular emphasis. Yet a knowledge of the different

functions of R and NR RC's also leads to the conclusion that the commas may have been used to reflect a theme of ambiguity or ambivalence about whether specific details provide essential or merely additional modification, because alternative R or NR readings of the same clauses seem to differ little in their meaning.

This idea of ambiguity of theme being reflected in relativized sentence structure is reinforced further when we look at constructions in which distance between the RC and its referent is not a factor. In fact, 41 and 42 present the converse of examples like 22-38, where punctuation permits both R and NR readings. In 41 and 42 not only is there no distance between the RC's and their referents, but there is no punctuation between them either.

> 41. one day showed it to him who not only had no visible father but . . . (VIII/313)
>
> 42. I . . . must come to him like a whistled dog at that first opportunity, that noon when he who had been seeing me for twenty years should let raise his head and pause and look at me. (V/158)

If commas were inserted before the relative pronouns in these two examples there would still be little difference in the meaning or the limits on the identity of the referent. The lack of punctuation in 41 and 42 leads the reader to expect a R relative. Yet we already know the specific characters that him and he represent. This means that formally, according to the criteria traditionally used to differentiate R's and NR's, the RC's in 41 and 42 should be considered NR because of the unique nature of the referents, even in the absence of punctuation that signals NR meaning.

In other words, examples 41 and 42 could be called "deviant." Faulkner's "violation" of the conventional standards for well-formed and unambiguous NR RC's draws attention to the deviation, making us search for the meaning implied in the style. And even where there is a distance between the referent and the RC that might lead us to expect punctuation, Faulkner does not always comply. In 43 and 44, moreover, the nature of the referents again demands that the RC's be classified as NR in form.

> 43. he knew it was being old that he had to talk against: time shortening ahead of him that could and would do things to his chances (VII/261)
>
> 44. just existing and breathing like Henry did who maybe one morning . . . waked up and lay right still in the bed and took stock (VIII/329)

No commas are needed here for pause or to show that a great distance has elapsed between referent and RC. But note that in both cases if the RC were to be positioned immediately after the referent, both NR and R readings, differing little in their ability to limit the identity of the antecedent, could be offered. As a matter of fact, each of these RC's should technically be considered NR since each modifies a generic or a unique NP with no determiner. Yet Faulkner seems to want to give the impression that these RC's are restrictive, that they somehow refer to head NP's that need to be made separate within a group. And the lack of punctuation, contrary to making the sentences ill-formed, as many linguists would assert, does indeed have the effect of making the RC restrictive, almost as if a determiner had been deleted. What kind of or which time? Time that could and would do things to his chances. Which

aspect of Henry? Henry who waked up and lay right still in the bed and took stock. There is something in the nature of the uninterrupted juxtaposition of referent and RC that presupposes qualifications that will restrict the referent's identity in a definitive way.

There are numerous other examples from the novel where a proper noun not preceded by a determiner--typically regarded as unique and thereby able to be qualified only by NR's--is immediately followed by a RC without punctuation between the head and the clause.

45. Major De Spain who was sheriff then got down and saw the body (VII/291)

46. Rosa Coldfield who would be right, only being right is not enough for women (V/170)

47. Henry who, before it was too late, might have reacted to the discovery exactly as Sutpen did (IV/104)

48. And so in a few thousand years I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings. (IX/378)

49. and Miss Rosa who in actual fact was the girl's aunt and who by actual years should have been her sister ignoring the mother to follow the departing and inaccessible daughter (III/71)

50. while there was Henry who had father and security and contentment and all (VIII/340)

51. Clytie who in the very pigmentation of her flesh represented that debacle (V/156)

52. --Jones who before '61 had not even been allowed to approach the front of the house, and who during the next four years got no nearer than the kitchen door . . . but who now entered the house itself (VI/184)

53. --Clytie who had never been further . . . than Jefferson in her life, yet who made the journey alone to New Orleans (VI/195)

54. and Bon whom Mr. Compson had called a fatalist but who . . . did not resist Henry's dictum and design for the reason that . . . (VIII/335)

55. held . . . by Henry who knew but still did not believe, who was going deliberately to look upon and prove to himself . . . (VIII/335)

56. laughing . . . at Henry who could not have lied to her even if he would have, who did not even have to answer at all either yes or no. (VIII/336)

57. Henry who up to that time had never even been to Memphis, who had never been away from home (IV/97)

58. Bon who for a year and a half now had been watching Henry ape his clothing and speech, who for a year and a half now had seen himself as the object of that . . . devotion which only a youth, never a woman, gives to another youth or man; who for exactly a year and a half now had seen the sister succumb to that same spell which the brother had already succumbed to (IV/107)

Possibly these constructions are ill-formed, or the typography is incorrect. Or, it could be that Faulkner was trying to indicate a restrictive function for these RC's. Of course, considering the length and complexity of the sentences in this novel, it is always possible that some of the punctuation was added or omitted by mistake, or that punctuation was changed by the editors and printers rather than by Faulkner himself. However, all present evidence indicates that not only did the editors not tamper with most of the punctuation, but that Faulkner had great control throughout the printing and editing process, virtually rewriting the novel from the first typescripts and supervising changes in galley proofs.[9] Moreover, even if his editors did change some of the punctuation, they evidently did not add commas between proper nouns and RC's in many cases, as we have seen. And they would have wanted to add commas in accordance with traditional prescriptions about punctuating NR's. Furthermore, Faulkner's use or not of commas between proper nouns and RC's is consistent when the manuscript is compared with the published edition[10] and this lends support to any claim that Faulkner manipulated the form of RC's for some thematic purpose.

In light of the overall thematic context of the novel it appears probable that Faulkner was using traditionally NR clauses in a restrictive way: to limit the identity, the personality of any given character within a larger context of the various faces or masks that the character could have or has assumed. Or, in other words, to pinpoint a character's identity or essence by delineating for the reader the particular subset of values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, experiences, or ability for action which all form the substance of the character at a certain point in time and according to the perspective of the narrator.

Naturally, in this novel as in any piece of literature, the characters are "unique" individuals: when we read of Henry, we know that there is only one person by this name--Henry Sutpen; Rosa is Rosa Coldfield; Bon is Charles Bon. Yet these names are only shells. All aspects of the story are being continually modified because the narrators are separated from the story by perspective or distance or time. This qualification through retelling implies also that the characters' motives and reactions constantly changed in time because their beliefs were modified by accumulated experience or knowledge. That is, there is a double perspective at work in the text of Absalom, Absalom!--that of the players in the Sutpen tale, and that of the narrators, especially Quentin, Shreve, and Rosa. The result is a kaleidascopic effect, a constantly shifting focus, but one with a pattern. This changing yet consistent pattern is achieved through RC's; in particular, it is achieved through qualification of proper nouns in a way that shows partitive identification of the referents. It is through a restrictive function of apparently NR relatives that substance of life is put into the shells of character.

There is one passage in the novel that makes explicit the idea of any person having the potential for more than one identity, depending on time and place:

> 59. he would seem to listen to two separate Quentins now--the Quentin Compson preparing for Harvard in the South, the deep South dead since 1865 and peopled with garrulous outraged baffled ghosts . . . and the Quentin Compson who was still too young to deserve yet to be a ghost, but nevertheless having to be one for all that, since he was born and bred in the deep South (I/9)

Of course, the RC here is R because it modifies a proper noun plus a determiner. It is fitting that Quentin, the inheritor of the cultural continuum through hearing and recreating the tale, should be confused enough about his own identity and place in the chain of events to have to specify his two separate voices by use of a determiner. But this passage can be seen to set up a framework in which proper noun identity can also be restricted more subtly as to place in time by having relatives traditionally seen as NR in form take on a function similar to that of restrictives. As Quentin learns, identity involves more than being able to separate the past from the present; it also involves discovering how accumulated knowledge and experience can change and thereby define an individual's substance or real self beneath a physical outer being which appears to remain integrated. The RC's which modify the proper nouns of the novel are often used to try to get through the layer of appearance, and this means that even though they are technically or by traditional definition NR in modifying an NP with unique reference, they are used as semantic qualifiers limiting identity or making it more "unique" within a boundary of potentiality in time. That is, the characters may be outwardly unique--not in need of modification through language to be identifed as

individuals--but in reality they are continually transformed by their interaction with events or experiences, knowledge or information, and the retelling of these things in a changing spatial and temporal setting. In this novel, what seems clear or simple (such as labeling a personality with a name, or dividing past and present) is not, and this dynamic metamorphosis is reflected in the syntax.

Furthermore, even examples which have punctuation between proper noun referents and their RC's, or those where the referent is preceded by a demonstrative, can have ambiguous meaning, simultaneously exhibiting NR form while hinting of R function, as the following group of examples illustrates.

60. in one of the dresses . . . Miss Rosa had cut down to fit herself, who had never been taught to sew . . . , who had never been taught to cook nor taught to do anything save listen through closed doors (III/73)

61. Think of him, Bon, who had wanted to know, who had had the most reason to want to know, who as far as he knew had never had any father (VIII/339)

62. I can imagine Henry in New Orleans, who had not yet even been in Memphis, whose entire worldly experience consisted of sojourns at other houses, plantations, almost interchangeable with his own (IV/108)

63. And maybe Wash delivered the beads himself . . . , that was down at the gate when he rode back from the war that day, that after he went away with the regiment would tell folks that he (Wash) was looking after kernel's place and niggers (VII/281)

64. And think of Henry, who had said at first it was a lie and then when he knew it was not a lie had still said 'I don't believe it', who had found even in that . . . enough of strength to repudiate home (VIII/340)

65. --this Jones who after the demon rode away . . . would tell people that he 'was lookin after major's place and niggers' . . . who was among the first to greet the demon when he returned . . . , who even worked, labored, sweat, at the demon's behest during the first furious period . . . , who must have seen long before the demon did . . . that the task was hopeless (VI/184)

Notice how all of these examples present a series of RC's modifying their proper noun referents. In 65, this would seem to make the RC's unquestionably NR, but there are two features in this passage that point to a possible R reading: there is no pause between the referent and the first RC as would be the case with a non-restrictive relative, and the series of relatives modifying Jones is necessary to the identity of Jones as Sutpen's most loving and devoted "servant" at the point in the story when he faces the disillusionment of his hero. In other words, the series of relatives serves to further refine the limitation of this: this Jones here is the same character that kills Sutpen. Like earlier examples, 60, 62, and 63 have a distance between referent and RC. And all of these examples, despite their surface NR form, seem to present characters whose essence is unique only when the modification is a part of the referent, when they are defined in terms of a context.

Moreover, since I have shown in the previous chapter that Faulkner's dialect appears to admit stacking of RC's and that he used stacking patterns throughout Absalom, Absalom! to indicate progressions of chronology, cause and effect, belief and knowledge, or refinement, it seems legitimate to say that all the examples in the final group, as well as 2, 3, 22, 23, 30, 34, 55, 56, 57, and 58 could be considered stacked. There is already controversy about whether or not series of relatives all modifying the same NP can be accepted as being progressively embedded: Keyser and Postal (who favor acceptance of stacks) insist that NR relatives are not stackable. They present no basis for this claim, however, although it can be assumed that this prohibition stems from the conviction that NR's are derived from conjoined rather than embedded sentences. Stacked NR's are

ill-formed or unacceptable, they say, as a function of a principle where a NR clause must be the last element in the NP which it modifies: NR stacks are ill-formed because, with more than one such clause, all but the last necessarily violate the requirement of final position. This principle, an argument based on form rather than meaning, nevertheless does not explain why NR's must be the last element of an NP, nor does it account for examples like the ones above where criteria for non-restriction are contradicted one way by having RC's modifying proper nouns act or function like restrictives, and another way by having RC's identified by definition as NR in form appear to be stacked. Of course, these examples are ambiguous anyway; I have been suggesting a restrictive reading based on themes concerning identity and time, but alternative NR readings would also contribute to the tone of the novel with its confusion about what is essential or non-essential information for arriving at the "truth." There is one example, however, which seems to flout the idea that NR's cannot be stacked.

66. only being right is not enough for women, who had rather be wrong than just that; who want the man who was wrong to admit it. (V/170)

In 66 the RC's are truly NR because each one modifies women--and it is quite clear that generic women, all women, is meant: this is one example where the punctuation makes a difference in meaning. According to Keyser and Postal's principle, though, the first RC cannot be NR--only the second RC can be. Such a reading, however, is completely unacceptable. If the first clause is going to be considered restrictive, then the second clause must be restrictive also; the second clause cannot

modify generic women if women has already been given a partitive limitation in the first clause: only those women out of all women that would rather be wrong than right in such a situation. But again, it is quite clear from the context of this passage that Miss Rosa was talking about a universal quality--an unrestricted truth--about women. It seems clear that the two clauses are stacked: both clauses modify the same head NP, generic women, and there is more than a conjoined relationship between the clauses. That is, the first clause entails the second somehow--there appears to be a cause-effect relationship, where the second clause is the reason for the condition of the first clause. In this way, the second clause modifies not just women but (all) women, who had rather be wrong than right. And the order of the clauses cannot be switched because that in the first clause refers to being right in the main sentence; that could not be placed a clause away from being right and maintain clear meaning. Furthermore, it is interesting to note here that the feature any plus NP, which is not allowed for NR's, needs to be qualified. In a case such as that of 66 where the NP is generic and implies all members of a group, any could be substituted with no change in meaning:

only being right is not enough for any woman . . .

The qualification, of course, is that the any must be emphatic.

Finally, even the first listed characteristic of NR's--that they do not permit that as a relative pronoun while R's do--is not definitive in this novel. Consider these examples:

67. Maybe he would know all the better what Henry was doing because he did not know what he himself was going to do, that he would not know until all of a sudden some day it would burst clear and he would know then that he had known all the time what it would be . . . (VIII/342)

68. and Father said how for that moment Wash's heart would be quiet and proud both and that maybe it would seem to him that this world where niggers, that the Bible said had been created and cursed by God to be brute and vassal to all men of white skin, were better found and housed and even clothed than he and his granddaughter-- . . . was just a dream . . . (VII/282)

Example 67 reads strangely and illustrates how, in matters defining the form of RC's, the prescription against using that for NR's came about. In English, that has so many functions--as relative pronoun, as demonstrative pronoun (from which the relative may have been derived),[11] as demonstrative adjective, and as complementizer (for example, to introduce clauses following verbs like to state, to know, to feel, to believe)--that its use after the pause characteristic of NR constructions could be confusing--especially in writing, where ambiguity cannot be resolved by the stress and pitch available in spoken language, making which a better choice for introducing NR RC's. In 67, that could be functioning as a complementizer to the main verb:

Maybe he would know all the better . . . that he would not know until . . .

The problem with this reading is that so much information intervenes between know and that that the sense of connection between Bon's internal, conflicting states of knowledge is tenuous at best; repetition of because instead of that would have made this sense clearer.

A second possible reading would have that function as demonstrative pronoun:

> . . . because he did not know what he himself was going to do. That he would not know until . . . .

However, the absence of graphic markers to show the stress which implies this meaning (period or semicolon instead of the comma; that underlined or italicized for emphasis) makes this reading unlikely.

It is also possible that that is being used instead of which to introduce a NR RC modifying what he himself was going to do. There are at least two reasons that this reading, despite its apparent ungrammaticality, is possible: using that instead of which allows Faulkner to retain the ambiguity (two interpretations simultaneously) of the construction following that being either a complement of maybe he would know or a RC modifying what he himself was going to do; and this passage is given in Shreve's voice, and, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter IV, Shreve and Quentin when they are talking to each other, tend to use that as relative pronoun more often, and more nontraditionally, than the other characters do. This third reading would seem even more plausible if there were no comma before that: the punctuation in this case does not clarify the relationship among the clauses but in fact allows for more ambiguity.

No matter what the case in 67, in 68 it is clear that that introduces a RC modifying generic niggers: all niggers is implied by the modification in the RC itself. It is not just a particular subset of the black race which had been designated in the Bible as being vassal to all whites, but the whole race itself, even though maybe only some members of that whole race were better housed and clothed than Wash. Example 68 is a clear case of Faulkner's using that with a NR RC--in fact, a NR RC referring to humans, a case which traditionally favors some form of who.

These two examples, and the others as well, lend support to the assumption that Faulkner's playing with RC's in Absalom, Absalom! was deliberate, and that his system of punctuating RC's was not random. Numerous critical analyses have noted that Faulkner's style in Absalom, Absalom!, especially the sentence structure, points to his intent to withhold meaning or make perspectives conditional or ambiguous. Violating the accepted conventions about RC form and function provides one way to incorporate ambiguity of perception into the sentence structure. Of course, as we have seen, ambiguity in RC's is not automatically clarified by the presence or absence of punctuation; commas, for example, do not necessarily disambiguate meaning. Consider that the recursive RC formation is a good way to lengthen sentences indefinitely. And all the considerations of sentence length, pause, and rhetorical emphasis would come to bear on the decision about punctuation of RC's in order for Faulkner to achieve the oral quality of storytelling, that sense of speech-flow. This means that punctuation, at least in this novel, may be controlled less by the type of RC than by length of the sentence. Even if we were to conclude that Faulkner had little or no hand in the punctuation of Absalom, Absalom!, or that the punctuation of RC's is too inconsistent to be much more than error, there is still the published text of the novel to deal with: even in the absence of a thematic tie to RC structure, the form and use of RC's in this book still challenges the traditional distinctions between R and NR relatives. In short, it appears that the differences between R and NR relatives are not as clear-cut as we have been led to believe.

Those characteristics that conventionally distinguish non-restrictives from restrictive RC's are neither purely syntactic nor consistently semantic, as we have seen. In Absalom, Absalom!, the form of RC's--what kinds of NP's they refer to (proper nouns, whole ideas, ambiguous heads), how they are punctuated, and the type of relative pronoun they employ--often violates readers' expectations about being able to tell, clearly, what kind of sentence we are reading. The function of RC's in this novel is also confusing because the form is ambiguous--we may expect, because of punctuation, that Faulkner is parenthetically adding more and more information to a sentence only to discover upon analysis that he is refining that information, pinpointing, trying to get back to some fundamental truth by, paradoxically, modifying and modifying again. All of this means, based on how RC's are formed and how they function in this novel, that distinctions between R and NR RC's must be based on a reader's perception of an author's intention to present nonrestrictive information. The most telling characteristic by which to classify RC's as distinctly NR is the "comma intonation after the head NP." Yet in Absalom, Absalom! and in literature in general, even this characteristic loses some of its validity when sentences are analyzed in isolation. "Comma intonation," or a pause indicating a certain kind of meaning, is an aspect of the rhetoric of the text: comma intonation (especially in the absence of commas, and that particularly in cases where we would expect to see commas, such as after proper nouns) means nonrestrictive modification when the context of the discourse indicates that it can or should be interpreted that way; lack or pause even after "unique" or generic referents means restriction when the context of the discourse

has sanctioned such an interpretation. In other words, the most adequately valid distinction between R and NR RC's--a pause which differentiates meaning--needs to be described in terms of a speech act.

It is my contention that Faulkner exploits that basic distinction between R and NR RC's in Absalom, Absalom!, which allows us to interpret ambiguous constructions as either R or NR, or even as both at once. Faulkner manipulates punctuation so that readers cannot tell if strings of RC's are separated, or if RC's are separated from their referents, for practical reasons (length, distance), for rhetorical reasons (emphasis, rhythm), or for semantic reasons (non-restrictive meaning). He manipulates form so that readers suspect that there is some rhetorical reason (simulating speech-flow, for example) or some thematic reason for not indicating a pause through punctuation when he is modifying proper nouns (so often Henry, for example), or for using that to relativize proper nouns or generic NP's, when we would not expect such constructions in standard English. Elizabeth Traugott and Mary Pratt maintain that such "deviance" in literary works is a stylistic choice--the idea that style can consist of departures from linguistic norms. They point out that Czech linguist Jan Mukarovsky proposed this concept in his term "foregrounding," or style as "bringing to attention"--using language to violate the norms of everyday language. (p. 31) And because readers expect that a novel is "authoritative," having gone through a process of deliberate revision, editing, and printing for a public audience, we treat linguistic deviance differently when it is encountered in fictional literary works than we would in spoken discourse--"we assume that it is intentional and connected with some serious communicative intent." They

continue, "In the literary speech situation, we are prepared to cooperate as hearers to a greater extent than we would in conversation; we are prepared to make more of an effort to 'decipher' deviance, to work at understanding . . ." (p. 261-2) Because of this situation, literary authors are freer to exploit and explore communicative deviance, to use their works to portray the vulnerability and ambiguity of language.

In Absalom, Absalom!, Faulkner uses NR form to imply restrictive function. Distancing constructions and punctuation (or lack of it) maintain ambiguity of meaning not only about whether the modification is essential for identity, but also about the nature of the referent itself. There is a metaphor in Chapter IV which aptly describes the state of NR vs. R relatives in the novel: what we have in this book is like a photograph that is being developed. Certain identities emerge and we think we have seen enough detail to know those people in the picture as unique individuals; yet time passes and more light is admitted to the negative, changing the composition, so that we cannot tell how much more information or development will be necessary before we can pinpoint certain characteristics. It is not until time is stopped, the picture is complete and we can perceive the accumulations of background and context as well as detail, that the ambiguity of what we have been seeing transpire will be put into perspective: not erased, but ambiguity recognized and focused. This is a recursive process, similar to the way both kinds of RC's work. Faulkner felt, as Einstein knew, that both time and distance can distort perspective of what is real. Faulkner's style reflects this concept of relativity: by blurring the lines between form and function of RC's, he adds a syntactic dimension of ambiguity to the themes of the novel.

Notes--Chapter III

[1] For example, see Robert P. Stockwell, Paul Schachter, and Barbara Hall Partee, The Major Syntactic Structures of English (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 422; Jean Malmstrom and Constance Weaver, Transgrammar (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1973), p. 199; Roderick A. Jacobs and Peter S. Rosenbaum, Transformations, Style and Meaning (Waltham, Mass.: Xerox College Publishing, 1971), p. 100-101; and D. Terence Langendoen, Essentials of English Grammar (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 144.

[2] Stockwell et al, p. 422.

[3] Samuel J. Keyser and Paul M. Postal, Beginning English Grammar (NY: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 156.

[4] Langendoen, p. 143.

[5] David Marshall, Current Problems in the Generation of English Restrictive Relative Clauses (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975), p. 5.

[6] Francis Christensen, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence," in Contemporary Essays on Style, ed. Glen A. Love and Michael Payne (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1969), pp. 27-35.

[7] Richard Ohmann, "Generative Grammars and the Concept of Literary Style," in Love and Payne, p. 135-36.

[8] Elizabeth C. Traugott and Mary L. Pratt, Linguistics for Students of Literature (NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 29.

[9] For complete discussions of this point see Gerald Langford, Faulkner's Revision of Absalom, Absalom!: A Collation of the Manuscript and the Published Book (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1971) and Michael Millgate, The Achievement of William Faulkner (NY: Random House, 1963).

[10] See Langford, p. 29.

[11] Elizabeth Closs Traugott, A History of English Syntax (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. 103-104.

CHAPTER IV

ON RELATIVITY AND READING: *ABSALOM, ABSALOM!* AS BLACK HOLE

> Teachers and writers often frown on ambiguity, seeing it as a hindrance to communication and a symptom of unclear thinking, as indeed it sometimes is. Poets and literary critics often deal with ambiguity as a creative device that concentrates meaning . . . .[1]

In the case of *Absalom, Absalom!* awareness of the ambiguity inherent in Faulkner's complex use of RC's merely adds another layer of complication to a work that is so often described as being difficult to read. What I am trying to do in the Appendix in introducing Keenan's Case Hierarchy into an analysis of *Absalom, Absalom!* is to show one way in which a purely linguistic analysis of language can fall short of explaining why some literature "seems" easy or difficult to read, or why some authors' styles seem complex while others' seem simple. The question of what happens in our minds when we read is one that psychologists as well as linguists and literary critics have addressed frequently in the past few decades. The proposed answers to this question obviously hold implications for the interpretation of specific literary works. The whole idea of *theme* necessarily involves more than analysis of individual literary pieces as "autonomous" works, or as original inventions by an author, or as meaning created by a reader. Faulkner's idea that a novel is "completed" by readers reconstructing the tale from their own points of view anticipated current views of reading as an interactive process, or a speech act, involving author, text, and reader, with the "meaning" of a work residing somewhere within the action of reading itself, a recursive process in which

readers in the act of reading become progressively more self-conscious of how their minds are processing the coordinates of author's style(s) and content of the text.

Indeed, Stanley Fish in his landmark paper "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics" suggests that the meaning of a literary work is whatever "means" in the act of reading itself, or, put another way, that meaning is not what an author "means" or what a text "means," but what a reader discovers about the act of reading in the act of reading--that literary works are "about" the act of reading.[2] This reader-based theory could certainly be borne out by Absalom, Absalom!, since any reader must surely discover by the end of the book that there is really no "end" or definitive truth to the tale of Sutpen or the story of how Quentin and Shreve create their own tale. It is ultimately left up to the reader to piece together all the loose ends, which invariably leads to a rethinking of what has come before Quentin's protesting "I don't hate the South." In this way, as an infinite loop, Absalom, Absalom! can be seen to be "about" the act of reading, readers discovering in the process that Faulkner is playing a game in relating the tale by using biased narrators who provide details out of sequence and who later change their stories according to "newly discovered" pieces of information, whether factual or fabricated. The structure of Absalom, Absalom!, analogous to the process of reading, is like a black hole, sucking us into another universe that operates on its own set of time and space dimensions.

But the point here is that there are many stylistic clues in Absalom, Absalom! that point to Faulkner's intent to make readers conscious of their part in reconstructing the novel. Fish's insistence that meaning is

created by the reader begins to explain the underlying structure of Absalom, Absalom! as a novel "about" the process of relating a tale, but it is inadequate for dealing with the other components of the act of reading--namely, the writer with his communicative intent (in Faulkner's case in Absalom, Absalom!, an idea about temporal and spatial distortions of the web in which we are all related), and the text, or the style--how that communicative intent is effected. It is necessary to examine other theories about language use and its relationship to the act of reading in order to appreciate more fully the impact of RC's for the "meaning" of Absalom, Absalom!

Because sentence-level grammars cannot account for meanings that accrue from how sentences are connected, in recent years linguists and psychologists have proposed models and theories to try to account for the process of comprehending texts--novels, for example--and to try to explain how we integrate the meaning of what we are reading with our previous knowledge and experiences. In other words, some schools of thought maintain that sentence-level grammars cannot explain or describe larger meanings like themes and motifs, and can make no allowance for the larger semantic representations of what holds sentences together in a text--aspects of cohesion, a term that includes a number of linguistic features that depend upon either context or inter-sentence semantic relations for their full meaning: things like tone, texture, register, pronoun replacement, demonstrative reference, ellipsis, and transition markers. Halliday and Hasan[3] define cohesion this way:

> . . . a text typically extends beyond the range of structural relations, as these are normally conceived of. But texts cohere; so cohesion within a text--texture--depends on something other than structure.

> There are certain specifically text-forming relations which cannot be accounted for in terms of constituent structure; they are properties of the text as such and not of any structural unit such as a clause or sentence. Our use of the term cohesion refers specifically to these non-structural text-forming relations.

Yet cohesion, even if it is text-forming semantically, is--must be--syntactically built in at the sentence level in the text. This means that text comprehension or text semantics cannot be talked about solely in terms of knowledge the reader brings to the task. And speech act theories about reading agree--that the author's purpose and the style or structure of the text itself are the other parts of the speech event that constitutes the process of reading. In other words, some theories of comprehension that try to allow for that larger element of connection that sentence grammars cannot handle--schema and macrostructure theories and text grammars--tend to emphasize the part the reader's world-view plays in the meaning of a text at the expense of the other components of a communicative event like reading. My position is that what activates a reader's world-knowledge are specific clues in the text and context. Comprehension of a text should be seen as an interactive process between sentence and discourse, text and context, writer and reader, rather than strictly as a macrostructure-down or word-up processing system. By concentrating on the relative clause (RC)--a cohesive construction (since it connects by reference) whose semantic and syntactic components can be accounted for by sentence-level grammars--I will demonstrate how a reader's comprehension involves an ongoing, recursive process starting with text-based linguistic pointers that build to a macro-structure, or cohesive discourse unit, for a text. My intention is to present not a grammar, but a discussion of interactive models of comprehension or processing strategies

such as those proposed by Dillon, Hirsch, Levy, and Pratt, and to show these ideas at work in Absalom, Absalom! In the context of this novel, a reader's recognition, comprehension, and processing of RC's as syntactically recursive, cohesive constructions can lead to a new way of putting the text together, a new meaning, or a new level of comprehension that goes beyond the clause or sentence--even beyond the written discourse, to an underlying theme or macrostructure of the text.

According to their definition of cohesion, Halliday and Hasan are concerned only with relations among sentences; consequently, the relative clause construction is eliminated from their analysis since by its nature it is a sentence fragment whose pronoun substitutes for a noun phrase (NP) in the same sentence. Nevertheless it can be argued that in a text, RC's are cohesive: they help build texture because they connect clauses by referring back to and qualifying something that has come before. Furthermore, this dual function of RC's--reference and modification--is recursive: not only does the relative pronoun refer us back to the "real thing," but the RC progresses, expanding or refining the NP referred to. The configuration of this process would be like a loop or Chinese boxes, since the RC is embedded--sometimes in the main sentence, and sometimes (often in Absalom, Absalom!, as I have shown earlier) in other RC's or dependent clauses which in turn can be inside of other RC's or subordinate clauses. And because they are recursive and embedded, RC's can lengthen sentences indefinitely: RC's can be added infinitely--each new one relating to an NP in the previous clause ("the cat that ate the rat that ate the . . ."), or each succeeding clause referring back to the same original NP as it has already been modified by intervening RC's (stacked). It

seems, then, that RC's are cohesive elements, yet traditional, structural, transformational, generative or any other kind of sentence grammar can account for their inherently cohesive semantic and syntactic functions.

Moreover, while RC's are built into the structure of a sentence, because they have the capacity to expand utterances indefinitely, they can be text-forming. This is particularly well illustrated in Absalom, Absalom!: open up the novel to virtually any page and chances are good that you will find a number of RC's, many of which lengthen main sentences with qualifying ideas for whole paragraphs or pages--and the number of relative formations would dramatically increase if reduced RC's (those where the relative pronoun has been deleted) were included in the observation. Literary critics have noted two things about this novel that reinforce the idea that Faulkner's abundant use of RC's was designed rather than accidental: first, that the themes of the book center around the connection of people and events through time, with an original action reverberating into the future where the characters that it touches modify its significance through their individual points of view; and second, that Faulkner was trying to imitate speech-flow, stream of consciousness, and the process of storytelling or mythmaking itself through his style. And now linguists are examining how writers and speakers use language, and they are providing theories and data that support the contention that form is meaning.

As I mentioned in my first chapter, Mary Louise Pratt is one linguist who is exploring how a text or literary discourse "means" by suggesting that literature be taken as a "speech act" or a written communicative event, based on philosopher John Searle's concept that speaking a language

involves performing an act and is a rule-governed form of behavior.[4] Most speech act theory of language has discussed spoken utterances, but Pratt applies the precepts of the theory to literature and the reading of literature. Basic to the theory is the concept that in addition to the act of producing a recognizable grammatical utterance, speakers of a given language also assume certain "appropriateness conditions" to be in force in performing a speech act. These conditions, or rules, even though they are not part of the explicit verbal structure, are a crucial component of the grammar of a language because they "form part of the knowledge which speakers of a language share and on which they rely in order to use the language correctly and effectively, both in producing and understanding utterances." (pp. 81, 83) Another term for appropriateness conditions could be contextual knowledge, or an understanding of the way in which a speaker is using the language: to represent a state of affairs (by describing, stating, telling), to direct (by commanding, requesting, inviting, daring) an addressee to do something, to show the speaker's commitment to specific action (by promising, threatening, vowing), to express the speaker's psychological state or feelings, or to declare that the act of speaking is bringing about a specific state of affairs (by blessing, passing sentence). These things that are being done in the speech act, which are governed by contextual "rules" or appropriateness conditions, are called illocutionary acts.(pp. 80,81) In this way speech act theory provides a way of talking about language not only in terms of surface grammatical properties but also in terms of the larger, outside context in which utterances are made, the intentions and expectations of the participants, and in general "the unspoken rules and conventions that are understood to be in play when an utterance is made and received." (p. 86)

In seeing literature as a specific speech context, Pratt maintains that the notion of genre is information we bring to our reading of literary works--that genres and subgenres can be defined as systems of appropriateness conditions for literature.(p. 86) The main point of Pratt's thesis, however, is that literary narratives belong to the same class or genre of representative speech acts as "natural narratives," or spoken stories, do; both types of stories--written and oral--are characterized by what she calls "display-producing relevence" or "tellability," where a speaker, author, or literary narrator

> is not only reporting but also verbally displaying a state of affairs, inviting his addressee(s) to join him in contemplating it, evaluating it, and responding to it. His point is to produce in his hearers not only belief but also an imaginative and affective involvement in the state of affairs he is representing and an evaluative stance toward it. He intends them to share his wonder, amusement, terror, or admiration of the event. Ultimately, it would seem, what he is after is an interpretation of the problematic event, an assignment of meaning and value supported by the consensus of himself and his hearers. (p. 136)

Pratt cites Faulkner, along with Conrad, as one of the best-known modern writers to use the natural narrative framework, with all its "problems of coherence, chronology, causality, foregrounding, plausibility, selection of detail, tense, point of view, and emotional intensity." (p. 66-67) But one of the most important things that distinguishes oral and written narratives, one of the bits of contextual knowledge we bring to bear on a discourse we know to be a piece of literature, is the fact that it was published, and most likely it was intended to be published--that we "presuppose a process of preparation and selection" which leads to the assumption that the author is trying to communicate something, and that elements of style which call attention to that style, or contrasts between

the manner we expected and the manner we get, can be considered intentional because of what we know about the circumstances under which literary works are composed, revised, edited, selected, published, and distributed. As Pratt points out, "The literary pre-paration and pre-selection processes are designed to eliminate failures which result from carelessness or lack of skill. The more selection and revision processes we know a work has gone through, the less likely we will be to attribute apparent inconsistencies and inappropriatenesses to random and unintentional error." (p. 170)

In discussing the stylistic "violations" of readers' narrative expectations in works such as Tristram Shandy, Camus' L'Etranger, and Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, Pratt maintains that "the author is implicating things in addition to what the fictional speaker is saying or implicating. . . . the fictional speaker's failures (such as Benjy Compson's failure to orient, evaluate, and maintain causal sequence, reflected in the grammar of his section) have the same basic effect. In all, it is not only the experiences reported which are unusual and problematic, but the report itself." (p. 99) This is precisely what happens with Absalom, Absalom!

That is, according to Pratt's formulation of speech act theory as applied to literature, form is meaning; the whole of the discourse is more than the sum of its parts because the whole includes a literary context which readers know includes a writer's intentions to write for an audience, his deliberate revision and editing of a text that will be checked before being printed, and his knowledge of readers' knowledge that display-producing texts are intended to be interpreted--any discrepancies or apt correlations between style and thematic implications are meant to be explored.

In fact, Gerald Langford shares this same insight, which he derived from his examination of Faulkner's rewritings of the manuscript of Absalom, Absalom!:

> To trace the process of such revision is to experience a sharp focusing of the dominant theme of the novel, and to witness a demonstration of how the meaning of a fictional work can shape its structure and thus stand revealed by what has become the outward and visible sign, or form, or that meaning.[5]

Notice that what I and other literary critics have taken to be Absalom, Absalom!'s themes correspond to the functions of relative clauses--reference (or connectedness, relation) and modification (or relativity). And that this particular style has the rhythm of spoken language reinforces my view that RC's are a structural aspect of cohesion. Elements of cohesion can be considered the kind of written clues connecting ideas that substitute for situational and physical elaborations in spoken discourse. Yet one of the most used--although little consciously noticed--ways of qualifying and connecting our meanings in spoken language is through the use of RC's: they are grammatically cohesive in speech, so that one method of having ideas cohere in a speech-like way in writing would be to use RC's as a dominant means of elaboration. And even if Faulkner was not consciously aware of these properties of RC's, competence in the English language alone would have dictated the use of this construction as a way to relate ideas as a real-life narrator would. As I mentioned before, Langford's study confirms the fact that Faulkner actively revised both manuscript and galley versions of Absalom, Absalom! right up until the time it was published. This never-ending writing process is consistent with Faulkner's philosophy of life being an

ever-changing continuum. Indeed, Langford's comparison of Faulkner's manuscript with the final printed draft of Absalom, Absalom! turns up a number of examples like this one:

both versions: He planted the seed which brought her to flower--the white blood to give the shape and pigment of what the white man calls female beauty, to a female

Manuscript	Random House first ed. pp. 116-7
principle other than our cold bleached one, more apt and docile to be taught pleasures which her white sister still flees from. But not whores.	principle which existed, queenly and complete, in the hot equatorial groin of the world long before that white one of ours came down from the trees and lost its hair and bleached out--a principle apt docile and instinct with strange and ancient curious pleasures of the flesh (which is all: there is nothing else) which her white sisters of a mushroom yesterday flee from in moral and outraged horror--a principle which, where her white sister must needs try to make an economic matter of it like someone who insists upon installing a counter or a scales or a safe in a store or business for a certain percentage of the profits, reigns, wise supine and all-powerful, from the sunless and silken bed which is her throne. No: not whores.

(Langford, p. 138)

The manuscript passage has one relative clause; the revised version which ultimately was published adds five more RC's which not only lengthen the description, but change the tone of the utterance from a rather stark statement to a lush contrast of moral viewpoints. However, this observation raises the question of whether a reader would notice that the which's and the who were connecting all these images by referring back and then progressing forward with refining information.

Just as "there are usually components of an author's intended meaning that he is not conscious of,"[6] readers often do not interpret the significance of stylistic devices to meaning in a conscious way. Therefore, much of what is communicated through language, especially in literary narratives, is unspoken--implied or implicated--conveying meanings other than or in addition to the literal meaning of what is articulated.[7] In Linguistics for Students of Literature Elizabeth Traugott and Mary Pratt further maintain that speech act theory gives a new perspective on a central concern of literary theory: the relations between reader, author, and text; while syntax and semantics tend to direct attention to the internal structure of a text, speech act theory goes further to include the writer and reader, suggesting that a text "be viewed not as an object but as an act of communication between a writer and a public." (p. 225) In Absalom, Absalom!, the RC is used with such frequency that one of two conflicting things might happen: it cannot help but be noticed and interpreted as having some significance, or it is so common a syntactic feature in spoken language and it is so common a feature in the novel that we might not notice its frequency of use at all. In fact, both things can happen and have happened in my experiences of reading Absalom, Absalom! But it is not until the number of RC's is noticed, it is not until readers become conscious of that feature, that patterns of significance of their use--a connection between style and meaning--are noticed and, once made conscious, remain self-consciously apparent.

In this light, consider how Faulkner's use of RC's might draw attention to itself, so that readers would be drawn in to analyzing the implications of this stylistic feature. Obviously, the key syntactic clue

to the presence of a RC is a relative pronoun, and of the ones charted for this study (which, who, whom, whose, that), which seems to draw the most attention to itself. While that can replace referents that are either things or persons, meaning that it is useful for resolving the dilemma of whether to use who or whom in a given case, it traditionally cannot head a clause modifying proper nouns, whole ideas, or any other kind of nonrestricted referent.[8] One reason that is so restricted as a relative pronoun in modern English is that relative that receives minimal stress and is pronounced with a schwa vowel sound (as opposed to the more emphasized diphthong of demonstrative that), both of which characteristics would tend not to allow for the pause between referent and RC necessary to indicate non-restrictive meaning. Lack of emphasis in stress and pronunciation would also tend to make that as a relative pronoun less noticeable in a string of words--less apparent as having a relativizing function. Which, on the other hand, in addition to referring to things in restrictive clauses, is the only relative pronoun used to modify whole ideas, and can also be the object of a preposition where that cannot (because it could so easily be confused with demonstrative that); which tends to receive more stress than that, and cannot form contractions with is as that can. All of these factors make which more noticeable as a relative pronoun than that, which is probably why that seems more "natural" or "easier" to use in informal discourse, and why it is probably used more frequently and less consciously than which is, except in the traditionally necessary circumstances.

Note, however, the frequency chart below for use of relative pronouns in Absalom, Absalom!

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY OF RELATIVE PRONOUNS IN ABSALOM, ABSALOM!, BY CHAPTER

	THAT	WHICH	WHO	WHOM	WHOSE	TOTAL Which, Who, Whom
Chapter I	10	60	53	9	7	122
Chapter II	0	101	47	10	5	158
Chapter III	5	110	57	14	3	181
Chapter IV	8	163	97	25	13	285
Chapter V	5	215	102	14	11	331
Chapter VI	8	135	123	10	14	268
Chapter VII	85	205	76	7	9	288
Chapter VIII	61	127	116	27	14	270
Chapter IX	5	21	15	0	1	36

Which is by far the most-used relative pronoun in Absalom, Absalom! In fact, given the aural nature of the novel, it is surprising that which is used so much more often than that. However, the surprise dissolves if we consider that Faulkner may have been using which (and often who and whom, also interchangeable with that in certain situations) to draw conscious attention to the relative clauses in the novel, to imply a theme of connectedness (or relation) or relativity of a never-ending tale. There is no way to definitively confirm this observation; however, Traugott and Pratt's definition of style does support my claim that Faulkner was especially using which clauses (and the other WH clauses) in such a way that readers could not help but see, eventually, that RC's carry the weight of relating the story through narrators, and of connecting the pieces of the story over time and distance for the narrators themselves. "Style," Traugott and Pratt say,

> results from a tendency of a speaker or writer to consistently choose certain structures over others available in the language. . . . To claim that style is choice is not, of course, to claim that it is always conscious choice. Indeed, if one had to make all phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic choices consciously, it would take a very long time to say anything at all. In literature, as in all discourse, a sense of the "best way of putting something" can be intuitive or conscious; the result as far as the reader is concerned will be much the same. (p. 29)

In my case, so many WH-fronted RC's in Absalom, Absalom! give the effect of an infinite network of overlapping loops. WH clauses call attention to themselves in a way that non-stacked that RC's do not. Whether this style was conscious on Faulkner's part is immaterial when we consider that literary critics have pointed out (as indeed the title itself does) a main idea in Absalom, Absalom! is the web of kinship and the moral responsibility (which itself can be passed on to the next generation) that surround each individual's action. RC's help form a style that aptly expresses the content of this particular novel; as Faulkner himself pointed out, each novel compels its own form or style: he found a different form of expression to best communicate the different underlying concerns of each of his works; what I observe about RC's and their relations to meanings in Absalom, Absalom! cannot be applied wholesale to any other of Faulkner's works.

In this spirit, it is not only interesting but also jarring to note the great jump in the number of RC's using that in chapters VII and VIII. If we examine the structural context of these two chapters, however, the increased use of that can be accounted for. In chapter VI, where relative that is used only eight times out of a total of 290, the narrative situation has become quite complex, more layered or multileveled than the relatively straightforward alternation of omniscient narration with Mr. Compson's

telling and Quentin's thinking in chapters I through IV, or than Miss Rosa's stream-of-consciousness in chapter V. In VI, which mostly concerns the life of Charles Bon, his mother, and his son, we are presented a movie-like montage in which neither Quentin nor Shreve narrate the scenes, but where the scenes are told through Quentin's memory of his father's words or through the authorial filtering of Quentin's thought-process interspersed with Shreve's guesses. By chapter VII the narrative framework is easier to follow, because by this time Quentin and Shreve are beginning to live the details of all the intertwined grandfather, father, Rosa, and Sutpen stories even before they tell them to each other.

Chapter VII consists of short authorial passages commenting on how Quentin and Shreve anticipate each other in their storytelling, with the bulk of the chapter being Quentin's unfiltered narration to Shreve of Grandfather Compson's story of the young Sutpen, his design, and his first wife. All 85 relative that's belong to Quentin's narration: there are so many more that's in this chapter perhaps because Quentin is using a more colloquial style with his friend, and because he often quotes the speech of the more uneducated players in his tale (those more likely to use that than the more formal which), and because that--in stress and pronunciation--is not as unwieldy as which or who or whom: that helps move the story along more quickly than do the WH pronouns, which draw attention to themselves. The same reasons can account for the large number of that in chapter VIII, where Shreve takes over a fairly straightforward narration giving way at the end to the transformation of Quentin and Shreve to Henry and Bon.

In chapter VIII, all but five relative _that's_ are spoken by Shreve. Of course, for both chapters VII and VIII, the only two chapters where _that_ exceeds 10 in number, relative _that_ still occurs less frequently than _which_, and in all but chapter VII, less than _who_. Another way of supporting the contention that Faulkner chose WH clauses in order to draw attention to the novel's underlying themes of relativity of truth and relatedness of individuals, is to examine how many of the WH pronouns could have either been replaced by _that_ or grammatically deleted altogether. The chart below shows for chapters VII and VIII the number of _which_, _who_, and _whom_ clauses where _that_ could have been used in place of the WH pronouns.

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF REDUCIBLE RC'S IN CHAPTERS VII AND VIII OF _ABSALOM, ABSALOM!_

	THAT	Reducible THAT	WHICH, WHO, WHOM	WH Replaceable by THAT	Reducible WH
Chapter VII	85	24	288	180	56
Chapter VIII	61	23	270	152	41

As you can see, over half of the WH clauses in each chapter could have used _that_ instead because the head nouns were things or indefinite human nouns like _man_ or _woman_. In each chapter, also, of the number where _that_ might have been chosen but was not (and I analyzed these two chapters because _that was_ used more than in the other chapters), a substantial number of those--over 25% in each chapter--could have dispensed entirely with the relative pronoun with no change in meaning except the absence of the surface marker of a relative construction. As I mentioned before, this study is not analyzing the number of surface _reduced_ RC's in _Absalom, Absalom!_ It is significant, however, that in these two chapters, which I consider to

be representative of the novel as a whole in the way that WH RC's are marked, examples like these could have been fronted by that and/or reduced, which would have changed the style of the novel to be not so overtly relative. Version A for the four examples below is the sentence found in the novel.

1. A. In fact, he had actually come on business, in the good faith of business which he had believed that all men accepted. (VII/233)

B. In fact, he had actually come on business, in the good faith of business that he had believed that all men accepted.

C. In fact, he had actually come on business, in the good faith of business he had believed that all men accepted.

2. A. Not moral retribution, you see: just an old mistake in fact which a man of courage and shrewdness (. . .) could still combat if he could only find out what the mistake had been. (VII/267)

B. . . . just an old mistake in fact that a man of courage . . .

C. . . . just an old mistake in fact a man of courage . . . could . . .

3. A. and maybe somebody looking at him would have seen on his face an expression a good deal like the one--that proferring with humility yet with pride too, of complete surrender--which he had used to see on Henry's face. (VIII/320)

B. . . . an expression a good deal like the one . . . that he had used . . .

C. . . . an expression a good deal like the one . . . he had used to see . . .

4. A. He knew what would be there--the woman whom he had seen once and seen through, the girl whom he had seen through without even having to see once, the man whom he had seen daily, watched out of his fearful intensity of need and had never penetrated . . . . (VIII/327)

B. . . . the woman that he had seen once and seen through, the girl that he had seen through without even having to see once, the man that he had seen daily . . . .

C. . . . the woman he had seen once and seen through, the girl he had seen through without even having to see once, the man he had seen daily . . . .

The rhythm and overall effect of each of these passages changes with a change in form; while the sense or meaning is not fundamentally altered, a change in form can affect readers' processing of meaning. It is important to keep in mind that RC's are reducible (able to have the relative pronoun deleted) only when the relative pronoun is direct object or object of a preposition within the RC (see the Appendix for a fuller explanation of this rule); and stacks and coordinated series of relatives are not possible if more than the first clause in a series is reduced. Finally, of course, that cannot function as object of a preposition in a RC (and Faulkner lengthens sentences most often by using RC's to modify objects of prepositions, as I show in the Appendix), and traditionally relative that cannot refer to a nonrestricted or proper NP, although I have already shown how Faulkner violates this convention. In short, patterns of correlation between surface use of that for RC's and direct narration of Quentin and Shreve to each other, and the large numbers of WH relatives present in surface structure even in cases where that could have been used or the relative pronoun deleted entirely, support my view that Faulkner was using RC's not just as structures to lengthen sentences by adding modification but as syntactic clues implying and reflecting the novel's underlying themes of connectedness and relativity of perspective, and that he expected his readers to become aware of this construction's relation to themes.

All this means that in order to "crowd and cram" everything into one multiclaused sentence with stacks of modification, in order to maintain in his style the thematic ambiguity about unique (or nonrestricted) personality beneath uniform masks or costumes, and in order to make more obvious the distinctions between the kinds of speech situations he is presenting--

narration, filtered secondhand retelling, rendered stream-of-consciousness, play-acting of roles in the tales within the tale, and authorial voice--Faulkner seems to use WH RC's much more often and in a more complex way than the grammar of story-telling[9] dictates as necessary.

This claim, however, is still open to the charge that I am reading too much significance into Faulkner's use of RC's in Absalom, Absalom! Yet all those RC's with all their patterns and ambiguities of meaning, with all their weight of extending and looping the stories and stories within stories, are there and do represent a stylistic choice (whether conscious or sub-conscious) of an author who attempted to display experience in a form or style suited to each particular rendering. At this point, in order to affirm and clarify the significance of RC's to what Absalom, Absalom! "means," it is necessary to explore in more detail the theories about how the recognition of particular linguistic clues or text-based pointers act upon theme, or the semantic shell (or schema) of what we have already read that is stored in long-term memory.

Underlying discourse comprehension, according to psychologists Perfetti and Lesgold, is the basic principle that a sentence in a discourse has two levels of structure: sentence-level (S), which is governed by rules of syntax, and thematic (T) level, which is "discourse-sensitive."[10] Their theory about cognitive processing of texts or discourse is neither bottom-up nor top-down;[11] instead, their view is somewhere in between, with sentences (rather than words) being the clues to discourse-level organization of language (rather than the macrostructure being the direct trigger of cognitive processes). In their own words,

> The S-organization and T-organization are interactive. One level (S) organizes elements of a sentence into appropriate sentence constituents. The other level (T) interrelates propositions contained within and between sentences. These two levels of organization cannot function independently in well-formed discourse, so there is an effect of level T on level S (as well as vice versa). This effect is achieved through certain linguistic ordering devices, and results in the principle that the surface structure of sentences reflects discourse organization principles. (p. 143)

What this principle does for the study of literature is to make clear the process that so many academics have been pointing out in the vaguest way: style, or sentence structure and texture, can reflect general themes. Furthermore, if the cognitive processes are interactive (form and meaning) for both reading and writing, as Perfetti and Lesgold suggest, then analysis of syntax by the reader or use of particular constructions by the writer can be the key to meanings at the discourse level, and moreover can reinforce the impact of those themes once they have been outlined. Perfetti and Lesgold's concept of interaction is particularly useful in my examination of Absalom, Absalom! because of the RC's, as constituents of S-level organization do reflect the T-level.

The interaction of levels has occurred in my own mind in this kind of pattern: from the time I derived a subconscious thematic meaning from this novel (probably somewhere midway through the first reading), I began to notice that the style resembled different people talking on and on about the same story; this general S-level recognition led me to note the sheer numbers of RC's holding together this never-ending tale, so that when the RC clue was fit into the T-level organization, new patterns of meaning grew out of my vague notions of "the theme," which in turn validated and reinforced my conscious discovery of a syntactic construction that abstractly (the RC as a function of reference and modification) and concretely (the RC

as lengthener in imitation of speech-flow) mirrored thematic meanings. Presently, as I have shown in the preceding sections, my observations are influenced by a process of metacomprehension which makes the scope of retrievable meanings infinite since they progressively feed on themselves, just as the novel itself is a story within a story within a story.

In other words, RC's in the novel can be the concrete point from which a reader can abstract larger (than the clause) semantic units. Reading is not analogous to parsing sentences, because the search for meaning--integration, organization--informs all of our cognitive processes, especially those like reading and writing that can easily become meta-cognitive or self-conscious acts. Rumelhart's interactive model of reading assumes this kind of movement among broadening embedded levels.[12] He maintains that our apprehension of information at one level of analysis can often depend on our apprehension at a higher level; specifically, "our perception of syntax depends on the semantic contex in which the string appears." This last statement is true of RC's because, by their nature, they are context-dependent: there must be an NP in another part of the sentence that the relative pronoun is replacing (syntax), and the impact of the RC's meaning is diminished unless we know what the NP is that is being modified and why it is being qualified, which should explain how well the RC is performing its job (semantics). As with any other syntactic construction the RC also has semantic value--not in the function of reference, but as qualification of some thing in a larger context. This property, too, supports the possible designation of RC's as cohesive since, according to Halliday and Hasan, the connecting function or "cohesion does not concern what a text means; it concerns how the text

is constructed as a semantic edifice." (26) This is just another face on the interaction between form or syntax and meaning or semantics. I have reconstructed a macrostructure (theme, or subsuming semantic network) of "relatedness despite mutability" from the way Absalom, Absalom! is built with RC's--syntactic devices relating specific strings of words to context.

Linguist George Dillon reiterates my thought this way:[13]

> The way a writer chooses to frame sentences and place their elements does affect the reader's cognitive processes in predictable ways which analysis can explicate, but via the strategies of processing: a particular construction or preference of a writer is important insofar as it affects processing of the text.

Note how Dillon has introduced the writer into the cognitive processes behind reading. Whether the author's identity, ideas, character, background are unknown or familiar, there is always someone who has somehow consciously shaped for some purpose the concrete product that we try to decipher--semantically and syntactically--through the reading process. Dillon's model for reading consequently includes not just the interaction between sentences and discourse, but between reader and writer. He proposes that the reading of sentences has at least three levels:

perception--where we specify a sentence's propositional structure, such as identifying propositions or matching subjects-objects and modifying elements

comprehension--where we integrate a sentence's propositional content into a contextual frame, or a world with actors, places, forces, etc.

interpretation--where we relate the sense of what is going on to the author's constructive intention (themes, meaning). This level is abstract, and can govern comprehension and perception.

Dillon further defines his model by pointing out that the three levels themselves are not processes as such but rather that various processes or strategies may be carried out to achieve the goals of each stage, and the three levels may interact. Indeed, this model describes the development of my interest in RC's in Absalom, Absalom! Once the RC's were recognized--once I became aware that this particular structure was being used over and over again--I was able to ascertain their specific significance in relation to the context of particular characters in particular settings, and from there I abstracted a conclusion about overall meaning and Faulkner's intended themes, which sent me back to the "perception" of RC's to start the whole movement all over again.

Of course, Dillon's model does not really explain how we process the sentences we read, but that is because he maintains that there are different strategies for achieving the same processing goals. However, he does point out one characteristic of the perception stage which is especially relevant to the study of RC's:

> Psycholinguists have accumulated an impressive amount of evidence that the clause is a crucial unit of sentence processing. Once a clause is put together, it is removed from the immediate processing center, and material in it is no longer available for immediate recall. (p. 30)

E. D. Hirsch further clarifies this assertion by pointing out that in English, clauses are more directly perceived than their individual constituent words because

> we suspend some of our final decisions about the syntactic-semantic functions of the constituent words until after we have decided on the meaning of the clause. We perceive the constituent words and phrases in a definite way only after we have achieved semantic closure. Clause is therefore related to closure by psychological function as well as by etymology.[14]

This statement not only reaffirms my point that the syntactic and semantic functions of RC's are inherently interactive, but also that the process of comprehending this interaction is recursive. Hirsch would agree with this assessment, since he offers this explanation: "The basic insight that the whole is prior to the parts in language perception must be roughly accurate. . . . it follows that language processing must entail some kind of reviewing procedure whereby everything must pass by the attention monitor twice: perceived the first time as a sequence of not yet fully determined linguistic functions and perceived the second time more holistically and definitely as a semantic unit." (p.108-9) It sounds here as though Hirsch is setting up a competence-performance distinction; in any case, his theory of two-step perception corresponds with my own recognition and then metacomprehension of RC's in Absalom, Absalom!, as well as with Dillon's perception-comprehension differentiation. Hirsch sums it up this way:

> The clause, then, is the primary perceptual unit of all languages because it is the minimal unit that has semantic determinancy. . . . This genuine linguistic universal is based upon a universal of the human mind. The mind sets a limit on the duration of any temporal sequence that can be perceived as a unit. Since speech is produced and received as a temporal sequence of elements, all languages require the use of a bracketing mechanism--the clause --which consolidates a sequence of elements into a definitely perceived semantic unit. We can speak only in clauses, and we can receive speech only in clauses. (p. 109-110)

Furthermore, a relative pronoun generally indicates the beginning of a clause, or new unit to be processed--nothing to the left of the relative prounoun is part of the clause it initiates. Yet the referring-modifying nature of RC's dictates that the reader integrate the clause information with what has come before, so that the two-stage perception of the clausal unit is supplemented with some kind of cognitive process that connects the

RC with the NP it refers to. And if we accept the assumption (made by Johnson-Laird, Sachs, and others) that it is meaning or gist that is stored in long-term memory rather than syntactic structures, it is easier to see how I can abstractly discuss RC structure as it relates to themes of relativity in this novel: readers' notice of the numbers of RC's in the book in general builds a semantic shell even if the exact wording of specific RC's is not remembered. Moreover, Hirsch suggests that we integrate current meanings with our semantic memory of the whole discourse mainly at the transition points between clauses, since only at these transitions are we still accurately remembering the linguistic features of the preceding clause. In this sense, relative pronouns are transition markers or points of cohesion.

But Faulkner's prose style, particularly the syntax of Absalom, Absalom! and his other "heavy" works like Go Down, Moses, is often cited as being dense or difficult to read. Perhaps this criticism grows out of the possibility of there being a grey area between competence and performance in language use; perhaps the cognitive stage of "perception" is an aspect of competence, while "comprehension" or the integration stage is more aligned with performance--although it should be a kind of competence also since perception of syntax is virtually useless without a semantic overview. Dillon implies as much by saying that

> language processing involves more than perception of propositional structure and identification of referents; sentences are not processed in isolation but in relation to contexts. Context enters into perception (via the notion of theme) and comprehension of reference, but context is even more important in regard to another aspect of processing: information constructed from the text is not merely displayed before the mind; rather it is linked or integrated into previous information. (p. 140)

Indeed, the author of Absalom, Absalom! seems to offer prime examples to test this system of processing: context--not only linguistic, but situational within the story--is a key word in any discussion about Faulkner, especially since any analysis of his works will uncover a number of styles and voices, and a predominate use of a multiple-viewpoint technique, both of which underscore an obsession with the importance of perspective or context. I show the importance of context in processing the structure of RC's in the Appendix. But this awareness of context and perspective regarding syntactic structure can be transferred to perception of meaning as well, as Dillon notes:

> The effect in Faulkner is a sense of great richness, each thing a plenum bearing relations to other things even more diverse and numerous than the teller can pack in. The relative and adverbial clauses tie each thing and event into so many other events and relations that the current function in the sentence recedes in importance and is lost. (p. 179)

What does Faulkner mean, what exactly is he trying to get across to a reader when he writes in this "difficult" or overloaded way? When we are trying to characterize the cognitive process of reading, shouldn't we consider who or what is behind the written page as well as the purpose for writing the discourse down in the first place? Dillon associates the writer's intentions with themes; Hirsch, Pratt, and Traugott insist that reading, by its nature, is a communicative act: the reader knows and the writer knows that the writer is trying to communicate. In this light, Hirsch offers a different explanation of Faulkner's reputation as a difficult author to read. He says,

> Communicative efficiency is synonymous with relative readability, and both imply the relativity of my criterion to the writer's semantic intentions. Some of the prose of William Faulkner is not very readable on an absolute scale, but many of these passages rank high in relative readability, since they are highly efficient in communicating Faulkner's complex semantic intentions. (p. 75)

In other words, as Hirsch explains, the idea of readability implies a rhetorical efficiency where the prose affects the reader in ways that transcend the mere conveying of information. In short, the dimension of the writer's semantic intentions is a basic part of the meaning of what we read.

Levy's "taxonomy of communicative goals" is also based on a scheme [15] for reading that includes not just the text and reader but also the writer. And he emphasizes, as I have suggested, that cohesion is a property built into the text (by some producer), not just interpreted by the reader. Cohesion is realized through the reader's language resources, Levy claims, but its ultimate reference point must be found in the structure of the linguistic content and in the flow of the writer's thought processes.

> Cohesion, after all, is not a property of the text per se. It is an assessment by the reader of the extent to which some marks on paper . . . give him access to the speaker's ideas, ideas that are mediated by the mental activity of the speaker. . . . the speaker is not merely communicating ideas or propositions, but thought processes. A coherent text is one that allows the hearer to connect each of its pieces with what has come before. (pp. 207-8)

Underlying these ideas, Levy proposes, is the concept of language production as a planned process where the writer chooses linguistic expressions from the alternatives provided by his language in order to satisfy any number of communicative goals. In plain words, form reflects meaning. A writer's mental processes--how he arrived at meaning--are encoded in his writing;

consequently, the chosen linguistic forms serve as clues helping the reader to reconstruct in some way the writer's thought processes. This act of reconstructing is how the reader "comprehends." And naturally, the comprehension involves all the cognitive processes discussed so far--syntactic perception, semantic or contextual integration, and interpretation of both of these things at discourse level in relation to communicative goals (or intentions, themes, text meanings, macrostructure). Says Levy of reading comprehension as a communicative network of cognitive processes, "The image is very much one of the speaker dropping linguistic clues to mark his path and of the hearer following close upon his heels, doing a kind of retracing . . ." (p. 204)

What Pratt and Traugott, Dillon, Hirsch, and Levy are saying is that the writer's intended meaning shapes the expression or form of writing he chooses to use, including syntax as well as text-structure, which in turn determines reader comprehension of meaning. For any given text, the only way we have to arrive at meanings of that text is found in what the writer has set down in print, how the writer has decided to express his ideas. As Dillon says, "We are oriented or direct ourselves when we read toward the construction of propositional content, and this orientation shapes and constrains our apprehension of the text." (p. 185)

Jonathan Culler arrives at a similar view of the reading process in On Deconstruction.[16] In outlining the history of twentieth century literary criticism and its being influenced by structuralist and poststructuralist philosophy, he ultimately rejects Stanley Fish's reader-based critical theory in favor of an interactive model for the process of reading. "Fish sets out to challenge the formalist notion of the text as a structure that determines

meaning. . . . Despite the claims of Fish's theory the reader becomes the victim of a diabolical author's strategy. In fact, the more active, projective, or creative the reader is, the more she is manipulated by the sentence or by the author." (p.71) Culler's point, however, is that no one component of the model--author, text, reader--can in all contexts definitively be the determinant of meaning; "the variable distinction between fact and interpretation or text's contribution and reader's contribution will break down under theoretical scrutiny." (p.76) The process of reading involves a duality, a tension between textual presence and an implied presence discovered by the reader, which perpetuates an unresolvable paradox:

> for the reader the work is not partially created but, on the one hand, already complete and inexhaustible--one can read and reread without ever grasping completely what has already been made--and, on the other hand, still to be created in the process of reading, without which it is only black marks on paper. The attempt to produce compromise formulations fails to capture this essential, divided quality of reading. (p. 76)

Culler suggests deconstruction as a way of reading that respects that action's inherently divided quality. He defines deconstruction in a Faulknerian (or negative) way[17] as "not a theory that would define meaning in order to tell you how to find it. As a critical undoing of the hierarchical oppositions on which theories depend, it demonstrates the difficulties of any theory that would define meaning in a univocal way: as what an author intends, what conventions determine, what a reader experiences." (p. 131) In other words, deconstruction involves a double movement both inside and outside previous categories and distinctions, whereby the "opposition" or object being deconstructed undergoes "a reversal that gives it a different status and impact." (p. 150)

I quote Culler's abstractions at such length because a deconstruction process of some kind seems to be at work in Absalom, Absalom! The "truths" about Sutpen and his family, their actions, and the results, are ultimately ambiguous or unknowable, unable to be pinned down, especially because both inner context (individual personalities) and outer contexts (time, distance, circumstances) are continually changing in relation to Quentin and Shreve. It is these two who initiate reversals--reliving Sutpen's life, then becoming Henry and Bon--that give the legend of Sutpen, as well as their own stories and how all the stories fit into a larger history, a "different status and impact."

In addition to the deconstruction going on in the novel itself whereby "understanding" comes from Quentin and Shreve (and ultimately the reader) living the perspectives of the other characters and conjecturing all those "might-have-been's" that the characters never articulated--absences, missing pieces that become gaps in the legend (which is, after all, public property), I can discern deconstructive tendencies in the way I have analyzed the novel. From the larger perspective of reading Absalom, Absalom!, on the one hand, I can view it as a complete or whole work with discernible patterns of RC use: series of RC's stacked to reflect causal or chronological sequence, consistently ambiguous interchanges of the form and function of restrictive and nonrestrictive RC's to reflect the eternal metamorphosis of the concepts of "truth" and "individuality" in the novel; reversals of the relationships of RC's within themselves and to their larger sentences, reflecting an overriding sense of context or perspective as determining meaning. Yet, as I reread Absalom, Absalom!, I see more and more relevant and significant correspondences between its content and its style; the meanings seem complete,

but the possibility of more re-(or de-)constructed meanings infinite. And I cannot seem to escape that recurring image of recursivity, symbolizing the workings of both the RC and the overall, larger structure of Absalom Absalom!: the loop, an eternal golden braid, as Douglas Hofstadter terms it in his book on the infinity of recursivity.[18]

Right now, as I return to an examination and then metacomprehension of my data as I end this study, I am struck by the repetition and correspondence to themes in the list of NP's modified by RC's. Over and over, although often extensively modified beforehand with adjectival strings, the same types of words and phrases appear as the referents of the RC's: man, woman, kinship terms (father, son, brother, sister, aunt, niece, nephew); the face, clothing (dresses, uniforms, coats, masks); food; shelter. This is a novel about identity: confusion about family ties and even cultural and historical ties, or how one person is related to another; and insecurity about individual uniqueness, especially when facial expressions and beards can mask a person's true feelings, or when everyone has to wear the same kinds of clothes because of the war, or when two boys who seem to have nothing in common can virtually become the same long-dead person(s) through relating a tale. The authority of individual perspective is undermined by the notion of hereditary relatedness (or relation across time)--by the notion of the sins of the father being visited on later generations. The authority of individual perspective --or, in other words, the relativity of truth and the validity of individual experience--is also undermined when it turns out that underneath all appearances and superficial features of dress and manner, we are all connected and we are all basically the same (but trying to be different).

Relatedness and relativity are the boundaries of a never-ending loop in Absalom, Absalom!: each of us is connected, related, despite time, distance, race, culture, upbringing; yet each of us is so alone, and everybody has a story--his or her own view and experiences--to relate. But nothing in life really matters unless that connection is made. The story needs to be related to hold meaning, to simultaneously assert our individuality and place us within the sameness of all humankind over time. This is what Judith was talking about when she delivered Bon's letter to Quentin's grandmother--the "figure in the carpet," how we all try to make our mark. But the mark itself doesn't matter--it is the process of making the mark that counts, or relating her story, even if the story itself seems pointless.

The structure of Absalom, Absalom! itself--the way the stories are told and retold and modified and intertwined and always left open-ended enough for the reader to find both more questions and more answers--is stacked, ambiguous, context-dependent, and recursive. Its meaning resides in its relativity--its being related, or told, and its relating us to the characters of this fictional world through the act of reading. Quentin's thoughts here are a microcosm of the whole that is more than the sum of form and content of the novel:

> Maybe we are both Father. Maybe nothing ever happens once and is finished. Maybe happen is never once but like ripples maybe on water after the pebble sinks, the ripples moving on, spreading, the pool attached by a narrow unbilical water-cord to the next pool which the first pool feeds, has fed, did feed, let this second pool contain a different temperature of water, a different molecularity of having seen, felt, remembered, reflect in a different tone the infinite unchanging sky, it doesn't matter: that pebble's watery echo whose fall it did not even see moves across its surface too at the original ripple-space, to the old ineradicable rhythm. . . . (VII/261)

Notes--Chapter IV

[1] Elizabeth C. Traugott and Mary L. Pratt, Linguistics for Students of Literature (NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 9.

[2] Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980).

[3] M. A. K. Halliday and Ruquarya Hasan, Cohesion in English (NY: Longman, 1976), p. 7.

[4] Mary Louise Pratt, Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 80.

[5] Gerald Langford, Faulkner's Revision of Absalom, Absalom! (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), p. 3.

[6] E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Validity in Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 21.

[7] Traugott and Pratt, p. 241.

[8] As we have seen, however, Faulkner has violated these conventions more than once in Absalom, Absalom!

[9] Pratt, p. 45.

[10] Charles A. Perfetti and Alan M. Lesgold, "Discourse Comprehension and Sources of Individual Differences," in Cognitive Processes in Comprehension, ed. Marcel Just and Patricia Carpenter (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1977), pp. 141-184.

[11] For example, see Teun A. Van Dijk, "Semantic Macro-Structures and Knowledge Frames in Discourse Comprehension," in Just and Carpenter, pp. 3-32; Walter Kintsch, "On Comprehending Stories," in Just and Carpenter, pp. 33-62;

and Terry Winograd, "A Framework for Understanding Discourse," in Just and Carpenter, pp. 63-88.

[12] David Rumelhart, "Toward An Interactive Model of Reading," (U. of California, San Diego: Center for Human Information Processing, Technical Report #56, 1976).

[13] George L. Dillon, Language Processing and the Reading of Literature (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1978), p. XVII.

[14] E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Philosophy of Composition (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 108.

[15] David M. Levy, "Communicative Goals and Strategies: Between Discourse and Syntax," in Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 12 - Discourse and Syntax, ed. Talmy Givon (NY: Academic Press, 1979), pp. 183-210.

[16] Jonathan Culler, On Deconstruction (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U. Press, 1982).

[17] Faulkner delights in showing us what something is not as a way of defining what it is. He does this thematically as well as grammatically. For example, The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying, and Absalom, Absalom! all revolve around a negative presence, an absence of the character that is the center of the story (Caddy, Addie, Sutpen). Faulkner achieves a "subtractive" presence rhetorically through the use of terms like not only and yet, and semantically through his use of words and morphemes that denote absence--without, un, -less, dis, and especially not, which he often uses as a prefix. For a more complete study, see James T. Farnham, "A Note on One Aspect of Faulkner's Style," Language and Style, 2 (1969), pp. 190-192.

[18] Douglas Hofstadter, Godel, Escher, Bach (NY: Basic Books, 1979).

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APPENDIX

FAULKNER'S CASE FOR A RELATIVE CASE HIERARCHY

As I have tried to show in discussing non-restrictive RC's in Absalom, Absalom!, ambiguity about the essentiality of particular details in the Sutpen saga is built into the syntax of the novel. The relative importance of pieces of information is determined by perspective--the particular, individualized point of view of a character or narrator within a larger context. RC patterns can be investigated in other ways that illuminate thematic aspects of Absalom, Absalom! In this chapter I will again be examining the form and function of Faulkner's relatives in Absalom, Absalom!, only this time from the aspect of case--what part the relative pronouns play in relation to the RC's and to the sentences of which the co-referent they modify is a part.

In simplest terms, case for RC's determines what form the relative pronoun takes--who or whom, for example. Yet case has a larger function in terms of RC's. If the concept of case includes how parts of speech relate to each other within the sentence, then RC's, because they are sentences within sentences, should be seen in terms of what, in the main sentence, they are modifying: they have their own intra-clause case, but they also have a function relative to the case of their referents. For example, the referents or head NP's that the RC's refer to, can be analyzed to see if any deep patterns of modification are predominant. Since RC's are embedded sentences which modify an element in a larger sentence, they can be seen and analyzed in two different ways: as

self-contained sentential units, or as units of modification or larger structures.

The first perspective involves assessing the relationship of the referent to the verb within the RC. This passage, appropriately enough, illustrates the concept of perspective:

> Because he was still innocent. He knew it without being aware that he did; he told Grandfather how, before the monkey nigger who came to the door had finished saying what he said, he seemed to kind of dissolve and a part of him turn and rush back through the two years they had lived there, like when you pass through a room fast and look at all the objects in it and you turn and go back through the room again and look at all the objects from the other side and you find out you had never seen them before, rushing back through those two years and seeing a dozen things that had happened and he hadn't even seen them before . . . . (VII/229-30)

Things, the antecedent for that, is the subject of the RC verb phrase had happened. Notice, however, that when the RC is seen in the context of the larger sentence, the referent things is not the subject of past action but the object of Sutpen's seeing, what he sees in his memory. In other words, as with the novel as a whole, "case" for a RC depends upon perspective--whether the RC is seen as a self-contained unit or as a dependent clause with an embedded function in the main sentence. As I will discuss in more detail in the following pages, when RC's are considered as self-contained units, the referents are most often subjects of RC verbs. Yet, in the larger frame of reference, in this novel the NP's that are modified by RC's most often hold the position of objects of prepositions, or oblique objects. This is not insignificant considering that Absalom, Absalom! deals with themes of subjectivity and objectivity concerning not only the relative distance from and involvement in the narrated story of Sutpen, but also concerning who is subject and who is

object of time, destiny, and experience. Sutpen is object of the monkey nigger's derision, but he becomes subject, subjecting other to his design. Bon is often referred to as an object of furniture or art, yet he controls both Henry and Judith. Rosa is object of Sutpen's expolitation (which was designed in the first place to assure his status as subject over others), yet she is subject of her design of revenge. Jones, too, is object--one of those men often referred to by that instead of who. Finally, Quentin also is both object and subject: object of the history of the South from which he cannot escape, and subject over the story which requires more than objective retelling. As with the inherent ambiguity in Faulkner's use of NR relatives, the whole idea of subjects and objects in relation to RC's in Absalom, Absalom! implies a built-in paradox that precludes easy classification: subjects can be objects, or the other way around, depending on your point of view.

Yet there is a second reason--one which has implications for the study of literature and "style"--for analyzing the case of RC's in Absalom, Absalom! As I will outline below, internal RC case can provide a measurement for relative syntactic complexity of literature; or, in other words, the frequency of certain kinds of RC constructions can affect the relative readability of prose. Since readers and critics in general have attested to the "complexity" of Faulkner's prose in Absalom, Absalom!, it is important to analyze exactly how Faulkner uses RC's in this novel by employing some kind of standard that helps evaluate how these make his writing "complex." British linguist Edward Keenan has developed what he calls a "Case Hierarchy" that he uses to analyze the RC formations in selected written works; I will be using his classification system and compare examples from Absalom, Absalom! with his findings. But, as I will show, such an examination will also uncover

the shortcomings of Keenan's classification, which is based on looking at case only at the level of internal clause structure. Because RC's modify as well as refer, it is necessary to look at what RC's are doing to (and doing in relation to) their referents in a larger context as well.

Keenan's Case Hierarchy is the result of his investigation of relativization strategies in a number of languages, developed in his search for language universals, or characteristics of linguistic competence (innate knowledge about a language) which all languages share. This is Keenan's Case Hierarchy, reading from the high-frequency end to the low-frequency end:

Subjects--Direct Objects--Indirect Objects--Oblique--Genitive--Comparison

This proposed hierarchy represents a case-ordering "constraint"--a universal linguistic rule--which Keenan maintains that "any rule of relative clause formation in any natural language must obey."[1] In other words, Keenan maintains that all languages have a strategy that relativizes NP's as subjects of RC's; if there is a second relativization strategy, it relativizes NP's as direct objects, and so on down the scale, in order. For example, a language could not relativize subjects and oblique objects without also having a strategy for direct and indirect objects. In this chapter, however, I will not be concerned with Keenan's theory about language universals, but with his predictions about linguistic performance, or how speakers form relative clauses, and its relation to the case hierarchy.

To test his predictions about performance, Keenan examined RC's in four sets of writing: two European newspapers (421 RC's), Orwell's Animal Farm (344 RC's), Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse (675 RC's), and

a collection of works by philosopher P. F. Strawson (798 RC's). Keenan had wanted to test his hypothesis by examining RC's in spoken language, but he admitted that he was using written sources as indirect evidence because it is so hard to elicit judgments about acceptability of relative-clause-forming strategies from speakers. In the process of analyzing written RC's, Keenan developed criteria for evaluating syntactic complexity of written works.

It seems only fitting to test Keenan's hypothesis with a book written in a style meant to imitate speech-flow; a book whose themes include treating people as objects, and determining subjectivity and objectivity relative to the retelling of the legend; a book containing more RC's in only five chapters (1511) than any one of Keenan's sources. By investigating some of the RC's in Absalom, Absalom! using Keenan's system, I will be able not only to verify his predictions, but also to show the deficiencies of his system for evaluating RC's in literature. Specifically, his system is concerned with RC's as independent sentence units instead of also considering them as units of modification within the context of a larger sentence.

Although it may seem at first that I am using Absalom, Absalom! as an example of how Keenan's Case Hierarchy may be applied, there are other, more far-reaching implications for both Faulkner studies and studies of literature in general. While Keenan is not primarily interested in devising a classification of syntactic rules for use in analyzing literature, he is interested in the concept of universals in language structures. Philosophers and linguists have long pondered the reasons for languages of the world being much more similar in their grammatical structures than

what we might expect. Similar constraints in all languages on what is allowable word order or allowable pronoun forms, for example, indicate that language is not entirely conventional or culturally imposed. In fact, some linguists argue that the universal constraints on language must be genetic, part of the human capacity for language with which we are born. Other linguists seek an explanation for language universals in general cognitive structures, such as our tendency to perceive dualities more readily than three-part structures, which could explain why all languages employ some way of distinguishing I and you, for instance. In any case, the universal tendencies in the structures of languages are so widespread as to justify a claim that part of humans' innate cognitive capacity is specifically linguistic.[2]

Yet we can also speak of universals in themes of literature. Folklorists have catalogued tale-types that can be found retold with variations in most parts of the world, for example. And part of the pleasure we derive from reading works of fiction arises from our evaluating how an author personalizes or handles a familiar theme or motif. Indeed, much literary criticism concerns itself with uncovering reworked myths or particularized archetypes--stories and images that are considered subconscious and universal. From just a cursory examination of Absalom, Absalom!, for example, we can discern the folk motif of "the fair unknown" (Bon), threads of Biblical themes (retribution), echoes of the mythic "fallen hero," and shades of the more modern story of the alienation of man. Language universals may be analogous to the idea of universal themes in that both posit a shared human way of dealing with and communicating experience, or a universal perception of existence.

Part of the ultimate task of linguists is to distinguish what is universal from that which is unique to a particular language or language group. Similarly, one of the tasks of the critic is to evaluate how a particular author has shaped any universal themes, to pinpoint that author's style, which makes him different from anyone else who may have used the same plot or ideas. In analyzing a passage from Faulkner's "The Bear," Richard Ohmann maintains that,

> it seems reasonable to suppose that a writer whose style is so largely based on just these three semantically related transformations (relative clause, conjunction, comparison) demonstrates in that style a certain orientation, a preferred way of organizing experience. If that orientation could be specified, it would almost certainly provide insight into other, non-stylistic features of Faulkner's thought and artistry. The possibility of such insight is one of the main justifications for studying style.[3]

The implications, then, of using Keenan's hypothesis about the linguistic universality of RC formations for a study of Absalom, Absalom! are twofold: we can examine in detail Faulkner's competence in relation to a proposed universal linguistic standard and thereby provide more information for the study of both linguistics and syntactic complexity and readability in literature in general; and we can examine in detail Faulkner's linguistic performance, or his style, and how that style relates to the themes of this novel, through his use of the relative clause.

Since all natural languages possess at least one relative clause formation strategy that works on subjects--that is, making the referent the subject of the RC verb--Keenan suggests that "there is a sense in which the Subject end of the Case Hierarchy expresses the 'easiest' or most 'natural' position to relativize."[4] (p. 138) Three predictions stem from this "performance constraint":

> 1. The frequency with which people relativize in discourse conforms to the Case Hierarchy, subjects being the most frequent, then direct objects, etc.
>
> 2. "Authors who are reliably judged to use syntactically simple sentences will present a greater proportion of RC's near the high end of the Case Hierarchy than authors independently judged to use syntactically complex sentences." (p. 141)

Prediction 2, relating complexity of written sentences to the performance constraint of the Case Hierarchy, developed from Keenan's feeling that the data illustrating prediction 1 constituted only "weak confirmation" of that hypothesis. Keenan devised the simple/complex scheme of prediction 2 to reinforce the weak verification of prediction 1 because he admitted that an alternative hypothesis about RC formation strategies could have accounted for the pattern of data from prediction 1: "Namely, that RC formation in English applies randomly with respect to NP positions that are relativizable at all, and the observed distribution is due to the general distribution of NP's in discourse, i.e. NP's occur most frequently as subjects, then as direct objects, etc." (p. 140)

> 3. "There is a tendency in 'simple' authors to move underlying direct objects into superficial subject position (e.g., by PASSIVE) under relativization." (p. 146)

In the case of Absalom, Absalom!, prediction 1 is confirmed: Faulkner's relativization partern in this novel follows the ordering of the Case Hierarchy. For Table 4, I classified RC's according to Keenan's system for chapters IV through VIII in Absalom, Absalom!--the chapters with the largest total numbers of RC's (and incidentally, the most series of RC's). Although RC's also occur in predicate nominative positions--notice that this position is not included on the Case Hierarchy scale--they are not included

in my analysis because they are not included in Keenan's study. This exclusion accounts for the differences in total numbers of RC's for these chapters on this chart as compared with the total numbers on the frequency chart presented in my chapter II. I have given, on Table 4 following here, the total number of RC's examined from each chapter in parentheses below the chapter number. In the individual cells on the chart I have classified each chapter's total number of RC's according to the categories of the Case Hierarchy, showing for each chapter the percentage of the total number of RC's in each case position, the number of active voice RC's in each position, and the number of passive RC's in each position. I then calculated the total number, for the five chapters, of RC's in each case position, and the percentage of this total number overall (1511 RC's) for each case position.

For each of the five chapters studied, RC's are formed most often on subjects, followed by direct objects, oblique objects, genetives, and objects of comparison. As can be seen in Table 4, of the 1511 RC's examined in chapters IV through VIII, the greatest percentage--55.13%--are formed on subjects; that is, 55.13% of all the relative clauses have referents that are the subjects of the verbs <u>within the relative clauses</u>.

TABLE 4

RELATION OF REFERENTS TO RELATIVE CLAUSE VERBS

(helps to confirm Keenan's prediction 1 that the frequency with which people relativize in discourse conforms to the Case Hierarchy)

	Sub	DO	Ind	Oblique	Gen	Comp	
Chapter IV (279)	52.15 142 3P	23.38 64 1P	--	19.78 52 4P	4.67 13	--	% within chap. number passives
Chapter V (298)	52.18 151 4P	25.92 77	--	18.51 54 1P	3.36 11	--	
Chapter VI (256)	57.03 139 7P	21.48 55	.39 1	15.62 40	5.46 14	--	
Chapter VII (358)	52.51 177 11P	26.81 96	--	18.15 65	2.51 9	--	
Chapter VIII (320)	61.87 189 9P	19.06 61	.31 1	14.06 45	4.06 13	.62 2	
Totals: 1511	832	354	2	261	60	2	Passives=40
% of Total	55.13	23.45	.13	17.23	3.90	.13	2.65

It is important to keep in mind that Keenan's classifications depend on how an NP is referred to--how it is made part of the relative clause (RC). Considering this, it is interesting to note the patterns of the most emphasized categories--subject, direct object, oblique--for chapter VIII. Chapter VIII has the greatest percentage of RC's whose referents are subjects of the RC verbs, but the smallest percentage for both direct and oblique objects among the five chapters. This high subjectivity and low objectivity of the co-referentiality between antecedent and relative pronoun reinforces the thematic situation in chapter VIII: the most intense form of reference occurs when Quentin and Shreve become Henry and Bon, when they become subjects in the legend and thereby abolish

the distance between past and present (which is usually a filter effecting direct or oblique objectivity of perspective).

It should also be noted here that for English Keenan has collapsed the indirect object category with the oblique NP's since "for purposes of relative clause formation in English it behaves in just the same way--a preposition (to) must be retained, and is either stranded, or fronted with the relative pronoun." (p. 139) But this itself challenges the validity of the case hierarchy, at least concerning the position of indirect objects on that scale. Do indirect objects behave in the same way as objects of prepositions even when the preposition is not retained? Because Keenan has merged the indirect object with the oblique object category there is no way to tell how many relatives he found formed on indirect objects. As Table 4 shows, the five chapters of Absalom, Absalom! provided only two examples of relativization on indirect objects, the same number as for objects of comparison (which Keenan also found no examples for). The important point here is that I did find two indirect object examples, one of which, it seems to me, is not so easily collapsed into the oblique category. Consider:

> 1. the same somber unchanged fierce paranoic . . . from whom he could learn nothing by indirection and whom he dared not ask outright (VIII/331)

Certainly, in the underlined RC, whom is not the direct object of ask, but neither has the preposition to been deleted--of would be more likely here. In any case, my data, coupled with Keenan's own, points to the probable need to move indirect objects farther down on the Case Hierarchy, at least for English since the ordering of cases on the hierarchy is supposed to reflect frequency and acceptability of use.

As can also be seen from Table 4, very few passive constructions were relativized in the five chapters from Faulkner--only 2.65%, and most of these (34 out of 40, as indicated) were passive subjects, as Keenan predicted. These data, then, seem to support the converse of Keenan's prediction 3: if simple authors tend to passivize in order to form relatives on subjects, then we should expect complex authors to do this less often. Of course, this prediction hinges on Keenan's prediction 2, which concerns the relationship of the Case Hierarchy to "simple" or "complex" syntax.

The problem with prediction 2 is that it is dangerously close to circular reasoning: Keenan sets up a situation where authors who use syntactically simple sentences tend to relativize on NP's at the high end (subjects) of the Case Hierarchy, and this tendency itself is the definition of "simple." We can disregard this problem for the time being, however, since numerous critics (as well as anyone else who has read Absalom, Absalom!) have noted the complex sentence style of this particular work of Faulkner's. For example, Warren Beck in Three Decades of Faulkner Criticism presents a typical impressionistic evaluation:

> . . . Faulkner is trying to render the transcendent life of the mind, the crowded composite of associative and analytical consciousness which expands the vibrant moment into the reaches of all time, simultaneously observing, remembering, interpreting, and modifying the object of its awareness. To this end the sentence as a rhetorical unit (however strained) is made to hold diverse yet related elements in a sort of saturated solution, which is perhaps the nearest that language as the instrument of fiction can come to the instantaneous complexities of consciousness itself.[5]

Assessments such as this are as valid (if not more so) as Keenan's reason for his classification of Woolf and Strawson being that "these authors are

clearly sententially complex, although in stylistically different ways." (p. 142)

Keenan's study of the relative clauses in his four sources (which he divided into "complex" and "simple" groups) did confirm prediction 2: the RC's of the newspapers and Orwell, classified as "simple" sources, were formed with a much higher frequency on subjects than were the RC's from Woolf and Strawson, the "complex" sources. Using Keenan's prediction 2 we would expect that the percentage of relative clauses formed on subjects in Absalom, Absalom! would be lower than that for Keenan's "simple" sources, and, like his "complex" sources, oblique relatives would be of a higher percentage in Faulkner than for the "simple" authors. The results of my study, illustrated in Table 5, do indeed confirm that Faulkner follows the pattern of complex authors, at least regarding the frequency with which direct objects and oblique objects are relativized. Note, however, that Faulkner's relativization of subjects (55.13%) corresponds more closely to the percentage of the simple authors (55.77%, as opposed to a much lower 40.12% for Keenan's complex sources), and this would not be expected if the syntax of Absalom, Absalom! were truly complex according to Keenan's prediction 2.

This unexpected tendency can be seen more clearly in Table 6, where the pattern of relativization in Absalom, Absalom! is compared individually with that of Woolf and Strawson, Keenan's "complex" authors. Faulkner's work has a higher percentage of relatives formed on subjects than either of the other two works, yet Absalom, Absalom! has the lowest percentage formed on direct objects, and is the middle work for formation on oblique and genitive objects. According to my own "pre-theoretical judgment,"

TABLE 5

FAULKNER'S RELATIVIZATION PATTERN IN COMPARISON WITH KEENAN'S COMPLEX AND SIMPLE SOURCES

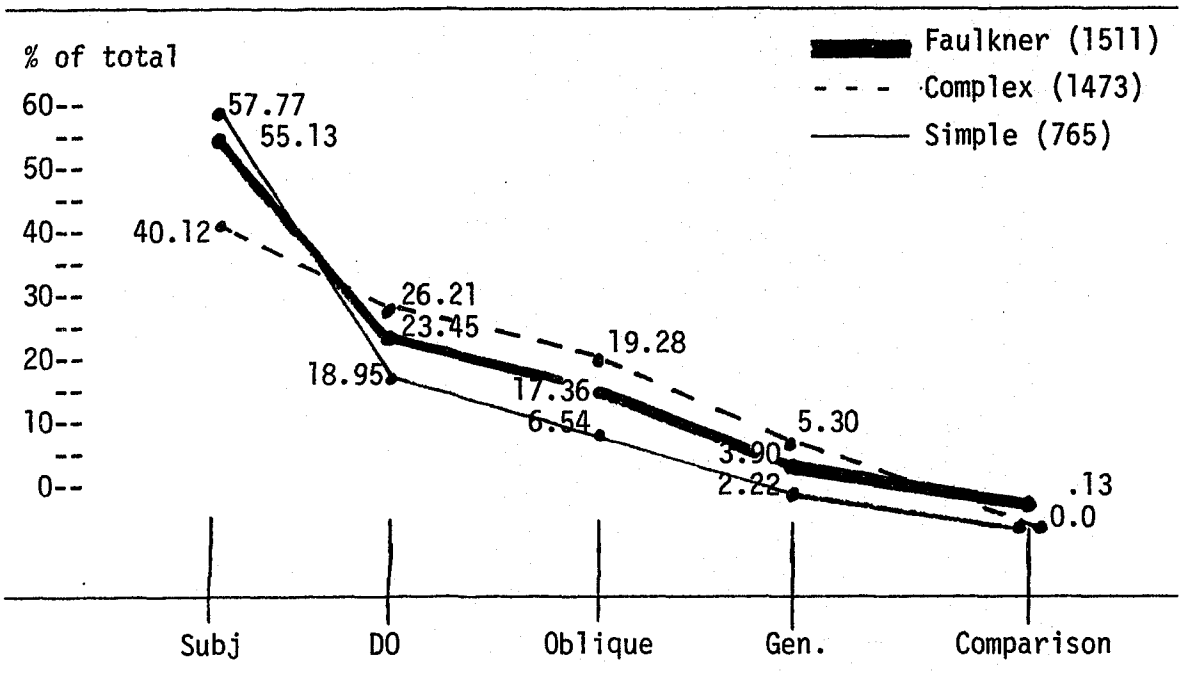
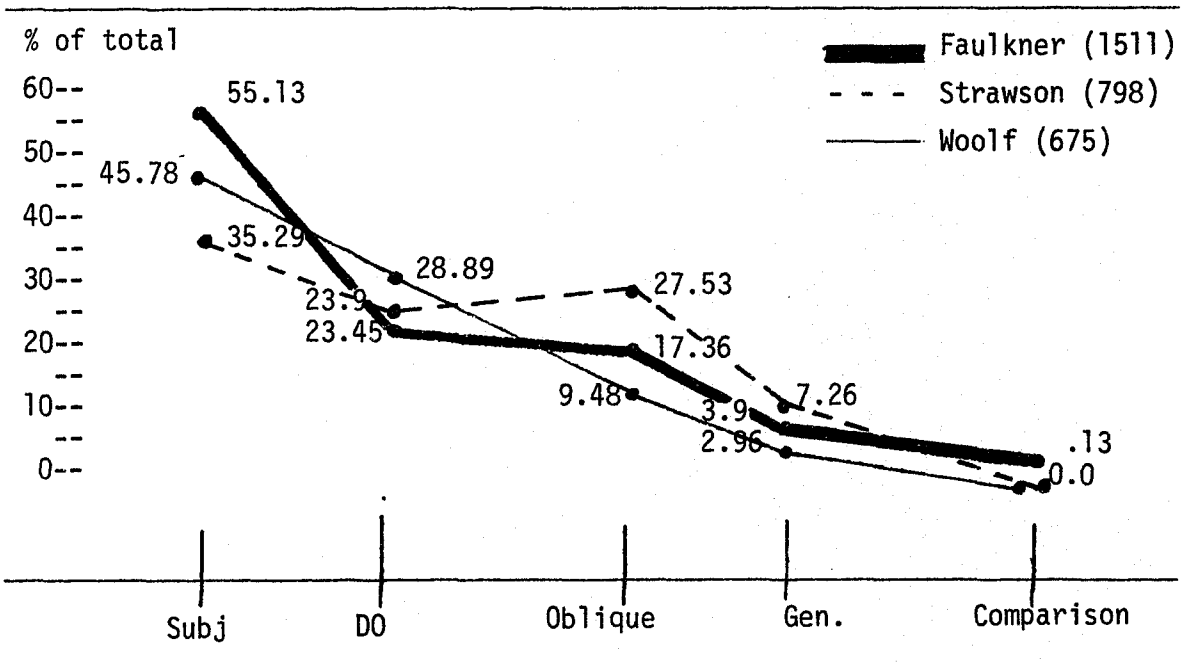


TABLE 6

FAULKNER'S RELATIVIZATION PATTERNS IN COMPARISON WITH THE DATA FROM EACH OF KEENAN'S COMPLEX AUTHORS, WOOLF AND STRAWSON



as Keenan calls it, I would have evaluated Faulkner's "internal sentence structure" (as Keenan specified, independent of the structure of the entire discourse) as being the most complex in comparison with that of Woolf and Strawson; and, therefore, according to Keenan's prediction 2, I would have expected Faulkner to have had the lowest percentage of relativizations on subjects and the highest on oblique objects among the three authors. Consider this passage from chapter IV as being fairly representative of the sentence structure throughout Absalom, Absalom!

> Yes, Henry would know now, or believe that he knew now; anymore he would probably consider anti-climax though it would not be, it would be anything but that, the final blow, stroke, touch, the keen surgeon-like compounding which the now shocked nerves of the patient would not even feel, not know that the first hard shocks were the random and crude. Because there was that ceremony. Bon knew that that would be what Henry would resist, find hard to stomach and retain. Oh he was shrewd, this man whom for weeks now Henry was realizing that he knew less and less, this stranger immersed and oblivious now in the formal, almost ritual, preparations for the visit, finicking almost like a woman over the fit of the new coat which he would have ordered for Henry, forced Henry to accept for this occasion, by means of which the entire impression which Henry was to receive from the visit would be established before they even left the house, before Henry ever saw the woman: and Henry, the countryman, the bewildered, with the subtle tide already setting beneath him toward the point where he must either betray himself and his entire upbringing and thinking, or deny the friend for whom he had already repudiated home and kin and all; the bewildered, the (for that time) helpless, who wanted to believe yet did not see how he could, being carried by the friend, the mentor, through one of those inscrutable and curiously lifeless doorways like that before which he had seen the horse or the trap, and so into a place which to his puritan's provincial mind all of morality was upside down and all of honor perished--a place created for and by voluptuosness, the abashless and unabashed senses, and the country boy with his simple and erstwhile untroubled code in which females were ladies or whores or slaves looked at the apotheosis of two doomed races presided over by its own victim--. . . (pp. 113-114)

Is there an explanation for the discrepancy between the prediction-based expectation and the interpretation of the data from Absalom, Absalom!? A closer look at Keenan's definition of terms provides insight at this point.

Note that Keenan refers to "NP positions that are relativizable"; elsewhere he speaks of this process as "relativizing on various NP positions," "to form relative clauses on," "to relativize on," or "the relativizability of certain NP positions." From these phrases, all of which describe either position of NP's or their ability to be relativized on, it could be assumed, as I originally did, that Keenan means the position of the NP in the larger sentence to which a relative clause is subordinated. This assumption could be made because the primary function of a relative clause is modification, as Stockwell et al confirm:

> A sentence embedded (in surface structure) as modifier of an NP, the embedded sentence having within it a WH-pronominal replacement for a deep-structure NP which is in some sense identical with the head NP, is a relative clause.[6]

Elizabeth Closs Traugott also subordinates the reference-forming function to the modifying function in her definition of relative clauses:

> Relative clauses modify a noun. Each of the two sentences that result in a main clause and relative clause must have an NP with the same reference.[7]

However, Keenan's working definition of relative clause--" syntactic means a language uses to restrict the referents of a NP to those objects of which some sentence is true (the sentence being expressed by the 'subordinate clause' in surface)" (p. 137)--seems to place more emphasis on the idea of reference than on modification. Indeed, by talking of relative clauses as sentences that are true about an object, he seems to be considering relative clauses in isolation from the larger sentence context. By focusing on relative clauses as complete entities, tied to a larger structure only by the presence of a relative pronoun, Keenan seems to be disregarding

the modification aspect of relative clauses; that is, he ignores the fact that relative clauses provide more information about an NP which already has a position and a function in a larger sentence.

The examples Keenan uses to illustrate the categories of the Case Hierarchy bear out the impression that he is analyzing relative clauses separate from the larger context in which they are embedded. Consider, for example, Keenan's description of what he means by subject: " . . . suppose a natural language has a relative clause formation strategy that works on subjects of main verbs, as in, e.g., 'the boy who stole the pig,' where boy is the subject of steal." (p. 137) It is clear from this example that Keenan is not considering the relative clause in relation to a larger sentence; it is also clear that when he speaks of relativizing on an NP he is talking about the process which makes the referent part of the relative clause. In other words, Keenan's NP positions in the Case Hierarchy designate the relation of the referent NP to the verb of the relative clause. That he is talking about this relationship rather than the relation of the relative clause to the main-sentence position of the modified NP is obvious from the few examples he presents, all of which are relative clauses out of context from a larger sentence:

> the boy Mary is taller than shows that the NP can be the object of comparison in relation to the main verb of the relative clause. (p. 138) (the boy [Mary is taller than the boy])
>
> the woman whose coat as stolen shows a genitive relationship. (p. 139) (the woman [the woman's coat was stolen])
>
> But the woman that got her coat stolen shows the NP as subject of the passive verb. (p. 139) (the woman [the woman got her coat stolen])
>
> Similarly, the farmer whose pig John stole is considered genitive; (p. 139) (the farmer [John stole the farmer's pig])

while the farmer that John stole the pig from is an oblique relative clause because the referent is object of the preposition. (p. 139) (the farmer [John stole the pig from the farmer])

From these few examples--the only ones Keenan presents--it can be seen that he is concerned not with the function of relative clauses as embedded modifying sentences, but with their form, especially with the oblique, genitive, and comparative categories, each of which is marked in surface structure in some way.

Relative clauses, then, can be seen from two different perspectives: as self-contained sentences, or as dependent sentence units. Faulkner would be the first to admit that there is always more than one way of looking at a reality, and that context--larger structures of some sort--can affect any one angle of vision. The modification factor of RC's should also have an effect on how complex the sentence structure of a piece of writing is judged to be. A look at what NP positions in the larger sentence the relative clauses modify reveals a pattern of complexity which Keenan's system of classification could not account for.

Of course, it is that relationship of the referent to the verb of the relative clause which does determine the case form of the who relative pronoun, as these RC's from Absalom, Absalom! show.

2. any son-in-law of whom the mother is the ally (chap. IV, p. 104) (any son-in-law [the mother is the ally of any son-in-law]) determines the form whom.

3. that wedding whose formal engagement existed nowhere (chap. IV, p. 103) (that wedding [that wedding's formal engagement existed nowhere]) determines the form whose.

4. the strange little boy whom Clytie had used to watch and had taught to farm . . . now farmed on shares a portion of the Sutpen plantation (chap. VI, p. 209) (the strange little boy [Clytie taught and Clytie watched the strange little boy])--the direct object relationship determines the form whom.

Because the oblique, genitive, and comparative relationships within the RC are in some way marked by form, I classified relative clauses according to form, as well as according to Keenan's classification (Tables 4, 5, and 6). All clauses where the relative pronoun immediately followed a preposition (as in 2) were classified as oblique form; any relative clause whose relative pronoun was whose (as in 3) was classified as genitive form. Example 5 illustrates the only examples I found of objects of comparison within the RC.

> 5. And he spent ten days there, not only the esoteric, the sybarite . . . but the object of art, the mold and mirror of fashion which Mrs. Sutpen (. . .) accepted him as and insisted (. . .) that he be (. . .) and which he did remain to her until he disappeared (chap. VIII, p. 320) (the object of art . . . [Mrs. Sutpen accepted him as the object of art, and he remained as the object of art to her])

Table 7 shows the breakdown by chapter of relative clauses in oblique, genitive, and comparative forms: note that the totals for each chapter are never more than the totals for those categories in Table 4. In other words, the surface form of the relative clause (in Table 7) corresponds to the kind of relationship between the referent and the relative clause verb (in Table 4). The discrepancy between Tables 4 and 7 in the oblique totals for chapters V, VII, and VIII can be accounted for by the fact that I enumerated relatives as oblique form only when the preposition immediately preceded the pronoun, even though relatives like those of 6 where the preposition is transposed also exhibit an oblique relationship between the antecedent and the RC verb.

> 6. whore or lady either whom you can count on to do that (chap. IV, p. 117) (whore or lady either [you can count on whore or lady])

Keenan's Case Hierarchy, then, deals with the form of relative clauses. But what about the function of relatives? Table 7 hints at a pattern of complexity that Keenan's system does not uncover by showing that in each of the five chapters, for both oblique and genitive forms, the RC's modify more NP's that are oblique than any other NP position in the larger sentence.

TABLE 7

RELATIVE CLAUSES CLASSIFIED BY FORM ACCORDING TO POSITION IN LARGER SENTENCE OF NP THEY MODIFY

FORM	Oblique						Genitive						Comparative					
MODIFIES	S	DO	I	Obl	Pred Nom.	Total	S	DO	I	Obl	Pred Nom.	Total	S	DO	I	Obl	Pred Nom.	Total
Chap IV	7	14	-	27	3	51	3	3	-	7	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chap V	7	14	-	11	5	37	1	3	-	6	1	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chap VI	4	11	-	24	1	40	2	1	-	10	1	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chap VII	7	10	-	28	6	51	3	1	-	5	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chap VIII	7	5	-	19	2	33	-	1	-	11	1	13	2	-	-	-	-	2

Examples 7 through 12 illustrate my classifications for Table 7 in relation to Keenan's method. That is, for each example, I have classified the form of the RC, the larger sentence position of the referent modified by the RC, and the relationship of the referent to the RC verb.

> 7. the same two serene phantoms who seem to watch . . . above and behind the inexplicable thunderhead of interdictions and defiances and repudiations out of which the rocklike Sutpen and the volatile Henry flashed and glared (chap. IV, p. 97) (oblique form modifying object of preposition; oblique relation to RC verb)

8. We exhume from old trunks and boxes and drawers letters without salutation or signature, in which men and women who once lived and breathed are now merely initials (chap. IV, p. 100) (oblique form modifying direct object letters; oblique relation to RC verb)

9. the two accursed childred on whom the first blow of their devil's heritage had but that moment fallen, looking at one another (chap. V, p. 138) (oblique form modifying subject of looking--children; oblique relation with RC verb)

10. take it as coming from the pen of one whose humble position as legal advisor and man of business to the above described lady and young gentleman, whose loyalty and gratitude toward one whose generosity has found him . . . in bread and meat and fire and . . . has led him into an action whose means fall behind its intention (chap. VIII, p. 315) (all are genitive form modifying objects of prepositions; genitive relation to RC verb)

11. that love which gives up what it never had--that penny's modicum which is the donor's all yet whose infinitessimal weight adds nothing to the substance of the loved (chap. V, p. 149) (genitive form modifying direct object of had--modicum; genitive relation to RC verb)

12. the two servants and the girl whose Christian name he did not yet know loaded the muskets which he and the father fired (chap. VII, p. 253) (genitive form modifying subject girl; genitive relation to RC verb)

From these examples it should be clear that form and the relationship between referent and RC verb are closely bound. But while these formal aspects of relativization can be a basis for evaluating syntactic complexity, the sentence structure becomes infinitely more complex when relative clauses are seen in the framework of larger sentences in which they are embedded. This point is illustrated further by examples 13 through 21. The examples below show RC's modifying the NP positions of subject, direct object, oblique object, and object of comparison in the larger sentence structures. Again, the relative clauses never modified indirect objects or genitive constructions in the five chapters that were examined. All larger constructions using like or as, as well as those with inflection markings plus than, were considered comparative. Keenan's classification of the

referent is given after the classification according to position modified by the RC.

13. that which he bequeathed me sprang in hatred and outrage (chap. VIII, p. 318) (modifies subject that, which is direct object of RC verb bequeathed)

14. I told that Jones to take that mule which was not his around to the barn (chap. V, p. 134) (modifies direct object mule, which is subject of RC verb was)

15. with that puritan's humility toward anything which is a matter of sense rather than logic (chap. IV, p. 111) (modifies object of preposition anything, which is subject of RC verb is)

16. in the made-over dress which all southern women now wore (chap. IV, p. 125) (modifies object of preposition dress, which is direct object of RC verb wore)

17. that one fusillade four years ago which sounded once and then was arrested, mesmerized, out of the air which lies over the land where . .. (chap. IV, p. 131) (modifies object of preposition air, which is subject of RC verb lies)

18. as free now of the flesh as the father who decreed and forbade, the son who denied and repudiated, the lover who acquiesced, the beloved who was not bereaved (chap. VIII, p. 295) (each RC modifies comparative construction using as: as the father, as the son, as the lover, as the beloved; each of these referents is subject to its RC verb: father decreed, son denied, lover acquiesced, beloved was)

19. not because she had to . . .: but like the millionaire who could have a hundred hostlers and handlers but who has just the one horse, the one maiden (chap. VIII, p. 297) (both RC's modify comparative construction using like, and the millionaire is subject of both RC verbs, could have and has)

20. as a plump boy of twelve who outweighs the other by twenty or thirty pounds still looks younger than the boy of fourteen who had that plumpness once and lost it (chap. VIII, p. 324) (modifies comparative construction using younger than, and boy of fourteen is subject of RC verb had)

21. they began to gather out there a little after sundown, at Sutpen's house that didn't even have walls yet, that wasn't anything yet but some lines of bricks sunk into the ground (chap. VII, p. 219) (both RC's modify object of preposition house, which is subject of both RC verbs didn't have and wasn't)

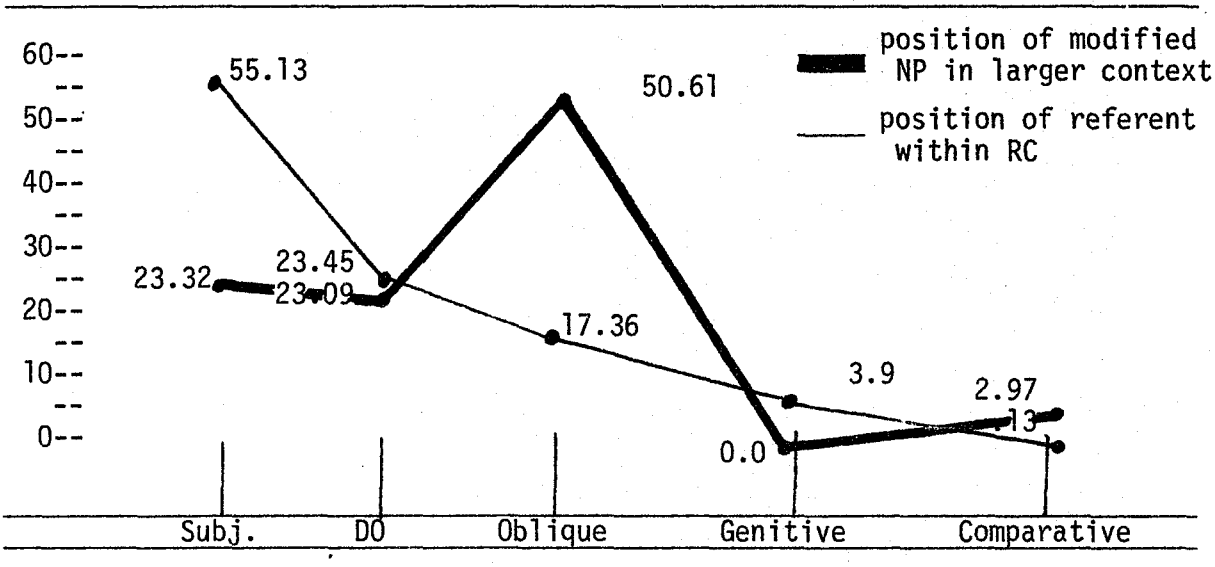
Note that numbers 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, and 20 have relative clauses embedded within relative clauses--a type of construction which would be considered sententially complex by any standard; Keenan's system does not take this kind of pattern into consideration. Also note that in numbers 13 through 21 I have chosen examples where my system of classification based on the modification function of the relative clause is completely different from Keenan's classification by the relationship of the referent to the verb of the RC.

Table 8 illustrates precisely this point by superimposing the classification of relative clauses according to positions in the larger sentence of the NP's they modify (function) on Keenan's classification dealing with the intra-clause relationship between the referent and the verb of the relative clause (form): the configurations of the two aspects of relativization are almost the opposite of each other in all categories except the direct object. Table 8 helps to explain why the data from Absalom, Absalom! tend to place Faulkner in a "simple author" category even though the prose and the RC's themselves in this novel appear to be complex. Concurrent with the underlying theme of the novel--that context accounts for a great deal of meaning--sentence context can account for the complexity of RC patterns. And by sentence context I mean the larger sentence structure in which the RC is embedded, emphasizing the modified NP's position in that main sentence rather than its status within the relative clause. Relative clauses in the five chapters from Absalom, Absalom! modify more NP's that have an oblique position as objects of prepositions in the larger sentence than any other NP position. Table 8 outlines this pattern by comparing the case of the modified NP in the main

sentence (thick line) with the case of the relative pronoun in relation to the RC verb (thin line). Note in Table 8 that the RC's modify oblique object NP's in over half of the examples as a whole (50.16%), while subjects and direct objects are modified less than a fourth of the time, and indirect object and genitive constructions are not modified at all. In particular, the figures for subject and oblique object categories show the inverse of results found when Keenan's system of classification is used.

TABLE 8

CASE OF THE NP MODIFIED VS. KEENAN'S INTRA-CLAUSE CASE OF THE RELATIVE PRONOUN



The word oblique itself suggests an indirect relationship among words; objects of prepositions give information about time, place, instrumentation, or other aspects of context rather than direct information on action or the subject or object of that action. In other words, "obliqueness" can be considered a gauge of syntactic complexity even outside of Keenan's framework. When RC's modify objects that already have an oblique relationship to main-sentence ideas, the total structure becomes even more complex

since an NP that is objectified indirectly is further qualified. In short, relative clause modification of oblique objects extends the sentence and expands the focus of the sentence in a way that is much more complex than qualification of either the main focus (subject) or receiver of action (object) in the sentence would be. While Faulkner's RC's show a "simple author" tendency in that referents are subjects of the RC verb, in a larger syntactic context his relative clauses are complex because they modify oblique objects so often.

Furthermore, Table 9 shows that even with a different, larger-context perspective on RC's, we can still find syntactic reinforcement of individual chapter themes. Table 9 gives a breakdown by chapter of what NP positions in a larger sentence the relative clauses modify. For the sake of consistency I did not include RC's that modify referents that have a predicate nominative position in the larger sentence, and this accounts for the discrepancy between Table 9 and Table 4 for the total numbers of RC's in the five chapters. Chapter IV has the largest percentage of RC's modifying oblique objects (54.33%), and this corresponds to Sutpen's being seen most indirectly (or obliquely) in this chapter--as the town had viewed him in the past, further filtered through the persona of Mr. Compson. In this chapter it is not the heart of the legend, the source or repercussions, that is explored, but peripheral action and supposition. In chapter VIII, however, where we find (just as under Keenan's system) the largest percentage of RC's modifying larger-sentence subjects (26.58%), the central problems of the story--the reasons for actions--are uncovered through the complete

subjectivity of Quentin and Shreve as storytellers. Finally, chapter V's having the greatest percentage of RC's modifying direct objects (30.5%) emphasizes the theme of Rosa as object or victim in all contexts: in the eyes of her father, aunt, sister, Sutpen, and the town, Rosa is object; she cannot act, but is the receiver of exploitative action--and she reiterates these points in her monologue which makes up chapter V.

TABLE 9

FREQUENCY CHART FOR RELATIVE CLAUSES MODIFYING NP POSITIONS IN A LARGER SENTENCE

RC MODIFIES	Subj	DO	I	Obl	Gen.	Comp.	Total #
chap. IV	21.65% 55	23.62% 60	-- 0	54.33% 138	--- 0	.39% 1	% 254 #
chap. V	19.30% 50	30.50% 79	-- 0	47.10% 122	--- 0	3.09% 8	259
chap. VI	25.00% 61	20.90% 51	-- 0	52.86% 129	--- 0	1.23% 3	244
chap. VII	24.09% 73	24.42% 74	-- 0	47.85% 145	--- 0	3.63% 11	303
chap. VIII	26.58% 67	15.47% 39	-- 0	51.58% 130	--- 0	6.35% 16	252
Total #	306	303	0	664	0	39	Total # for all chap. = 1312
Total %	23.32%	23.09%	--	50.61%	---	2.97%	
	Subj	DO	I	Obl	Gen.	Comp.	

Even if no conclusions could have been drawn about the relative clause modification patterns in relation to the structure of individual chapters, some general conjectures can be made. The closeness of the percentages and numbers of RC's modifying subjects and direct objects (23.32% and 23.09%; 306 total and 303 total) is a reminder that subjects

can become objects and objects subjects depending upon context and point of view. Is Sutpen the ultimate subject, initiating all action and treating others as objects; or is he the epitome of object because he is subject to a fate which he cannot control? Of course, this same point could be made about the two opposing interpretations of relative clause patterns that were presented in Table 8.

The most significant figures in Table 9, however, are the consistently high totals (664 or 50.16% for all the chapters together) of RC's modifying oblique objects. Through this kind of indirect and complex syntax Faulkner can keep the real issues in a state of suspension. The contextual properties of objects of prepositions become more significant but at the same time more obscure when they are being qualified so often. In other words, the modification aspect of RC's--which NP's are modified and what their function is in the larger sentence--can contribute to syntactic complexity. And, in literature, the modification relationship between NP and relative clauses shows more apparent thematic significance than how the replaced referent functions <u>within</u> the RC.

A final example will serve to illustrate why Keenan's system for evaluating RC complexity is too narrow for unqualified application to literature.

> 22. he did not even imagine then that there was any such way to live or to want to live, or that there existed all the objects to be wanted <u>which</u> (A) there were, or that the ones <u>who</u> (B) owned the objects not only could look down on the ones <u>that</u> (C) didn't, but could be supported in the down-looking not only by the others <u>who</u> (D) owned objects too but by the very ones <u>that</u> (E) were looked down on <u>that</u> (F) didn't own objects and knew they never would (VII/221)

Of these relative clauses, B, C, D, and F have referents that are subjects of the RC verbs. In A, objects is predicate nominative to were in the RC; in E, the referent ones is PASSIVE subject to the RC verb phrase looked down on. But the total construction seems to be more complex both syntactically and semantically than an evaluation according to Keenan's classification would indicate. In a larger context, A modifies a there-extrapositioned direct object, B modifies a subject, but C, D, E, and F each modify oblique objects. And, in addition, C is embedded in B, and E and F are stacked. It seems obvious, as I mentioned earlier, that Faulkner wanted to emphasize that the ones looked down upon are objects rather than real humans--signaled by use of relative that instead of who--and this relationship is apparent only when larger sentence context is seen, not when the RC's are considered as separate sentence units.

In other words, Keenan's system of classification misses much complexity by focusing on the relative clause and its NP referent as a self-contained unit, instead of as a sentence embedded in a larger context. Keenan may be on the wrong track to explain syntactic complexity in terms of the referent's function within the relative clause. As he himself says, it would naturally be expected that the referents and relative pronouns would occur most as subjects of RC's since NP's occur more often as subjects in discourse than as objects. Indeed, it could be said that Keenan's predictions are not so much performance-based as competence-based, considering that the primary reason that speakers form relative clauses is to modify an NP in a larger construction. The process of forming that embedded clause to make a co-referential relationship apparent is competence-related. That is, when Keenan talks of relativizing

on some NP position he means a process which speakers do not consciously premeditate and analyze: he is talking about an abstract-structure process where the NP that has a primary function in the larger sentence is given a secondary relationship with another verb. "Relativizing on," when the term refers to syntactic complexity, should take relative clause function of modification into account--it should refer to the NP position relative to the larger sentence.

These distinctions between form and function of the relative clause could also make a difference in interpreting the results of Keenan's prediction (which he is now in the process of testing) that relative clause comprehension is a function of the Case Hierarchy; or, in other words, "on recall tests, native speakers will do less well if the basic information were presented in relative clauses formed low on the Case Hierarchy than in ones formed high on the Case Hierarchy." (p. 147) It seems to me that what NP position in what kind of construction the relative clause is modifying should have at least as much correlation to the degree of comprehension and recall of the relatives as the relation of the referent to the RC verb would. In Absalom, Absalom! Faulkner uses at least four narrators through whom he simulates speech-flow. In such a context the stacking and co-ordinating of series of relative clauses having the same referent (as in 1, 5, 10, 11, 19, 21, and 22), and the multiple embeddings of RC's within RC's probably account for the syntactic complexity of the novel more than the relationships of those referents to RC verbs account for it. Therefore, analyzing relative clauses as modification units in relation to the larger position of the NP's they qualify would account for the fact that Faulkner is the midpoint of

complexity between Woolf and Strawson under Keenan's system (in Table 6) even though the sentence structure of Absalom, Absalom! seems much more complex than that of the other two authors. At the same time, the cumulative qualifications and multiple embeddings of relative clauses in Absalom, Absalom! permit it to seem to be more easily comprehended, as the sentence structure of a spoken passage would be more easily comprehended, than the Woolfe or Strawson works are.

In short, relative clauses are a means by which sentences are expanded; the word relative itself implies that a relationship exists between the embedded sentence and a larger sentence. The data from Absalom, Absalom! imply that it is easiest to expand sentences by forming relative clauses--whether singly, in series, or progressively embedded--that modify NP's that are objects of prepositions in the larger construction. By restricting context and thus disregarding the modification function of relative clauses, Keenan's Case Hierarchy hypothesis is much too simple for analyzing literary performance or readability.

Notes--Appendix

[1] Edward L. Keenan, "Variation in Universal Grammar," in Analyzing Variation in Language, ed. Ralph W. Fasold and Roger W. Shuy (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown U. Press, 1973), p. 136.

[2] See Elizabeth C. Traugott and Mary L. Pratt, Linguistics for Students of Literature (NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 7-8; and John Lyons, Chomsky (London: William Collins and Co., 1970), p. 105.

[3] Richard Ohmann, "Generative Grammars and the Concept of Literary Style," in Contemporary Essays on Style, ed. Glen A. Love and Michael Payne (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1969), p. 143.

[4] This assumption that it is most "natural" to form RC's where the referent is subject of the RC verb is challenged by the restrictions on reducing relatives in English: only relatives where the referent is the direct object of the RC verb can be reduced in one step; RC's with the referent as subject are reducible only when be is deleted along with the relative pronoun.

[5] Warren Beck, "William Faulkner's Style," in William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1960), p. 153.

[6] Robert P. Stockwell, Paul Schacter, and Barbara Hall Partee, The Major Syntactic Structures of English (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 421.

[7] Elizabeth Closs Traugott, A History of English Syntax (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. 62.