

VALUES IN LIFE AND LITERATURE. A COMPARATIVE READING OF THE
DEPICTION OF DISINTEGRATION, INSECURITY AND UNCERTAINTY
IN SELECTED NOVELS BY THOMAS MANN, WILLIAM FAULKNER AND
THOMAS PYNCHON

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THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO MY

PROMOTER, PROFESSOR INA GRÄBE

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Langston Hughes

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Author

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SUMMARY

The reading of selected literary texts in this thesis traces the changes from a divinely ordered world of stability (Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks) to surroundings characterized by insecurity (William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury) to an unstable environment giving rise to largely futile attempts at finding answers to seemingly illogical questions (Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49). As a product of the accelerated speed of technological progression and the information revolution in the twentieth century, man is more often than not incapable of adjusting to changed circumstances in a seemingly hostile environment. Indeed, instability and unpredictability are external factors determining the sense of insecurity and uncertainty characterising the 'world' depicted in the literary texts under consideration. For this reason judicious use will be made of philosophical and psychoanalytical concepts, based, amongst others, on Nietzschean and Freudian theories, to explain the disintegration of families, the anguish experienced by individuals or, indeed, the shifting identities informing the portrayal of character in selected literary texts.

KEY TERMS:

Reflections of life in Literature; Psychological/ philosophical values; Characterization techniques; Comparative reading; Language and the unconscious; Fin de siecle; Disintegration, individual anguish; Fixation, its psychological impact; 'Inner life' portrayal; Memory monologue, selective, associative; Shifting identities; Postmodernism; Irrational quests; Characters as textual construct; Dehumanization, commodification of people.

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SECTION A: THEORY

CHAPTER 1

1. ORIENTATION

1.1 PREAMBLE

In dealing with the ever-changing political and economic problems, such psychologically informed questions as how to cope with or adapt to the evolutionary stream of accelerated change that influences our sense of time have become increasingly relevant.

The seventeenth century has been named the age of enlightenment. The eighteenth, the age of reason; the nineteenth, the age of progress; and the twentieth, the age of anxiety. Man has always struggled to attain a path to a meaningful and satisfying way of life. As a result of injuring experiences, such as wars, racial prejudice, hatred, to both the individual and the community, finding a satisfying way of life has however become increasingly difficult. Life, destruction and social unrest, economic fluctuations and inflations have taken their toll in unemployment, desolation and poverty for millions of people. The high mobility in urban society causes disrupted friendships and the loss of extended family bonds place increasing stress on the home. Homes broken up by divorce cause hurt and disillusionment. All these stress related incidents leave emotional scars on parents and children. The ever increasing competition with its excessive and impersonal bureaucracy tends to

'dehumanize' the individual. The population explosion incessantly increases widespread hunger and starvation, creating social problems and tensions. Poverty and discrimination lead to social pressures and often erupt in violence. The waste of natural resources, the pollution of air, water, and soil, as well as the ever present threat of global atomic war threaten the life-support system of our planet earth. The additional accelerated tremendous growth of knowledge leaves in its wake rapid social change. In the past fifty years more scientific and technological advances have been made than in all previously recorded time. Long accepted assumptions about religion, education, sex, marriage, social and political absolutes are not only questioned, but often ridiculed. Man's changed attitude has established a shift from stability to instability which has also manifested itself in fictional writing.

To understand what this means and what is happening to mankind as we are in the process of moving into the age of accelerated super industrialization altering our life-style, bringing with it the necessity of adaptation, authors and critics alike found that it was once again necessary to re-introduce individual psychology, as this science deals with the human mind and thus human behaviour. To reach a more acceptable evaluation of the change in life and literature which reflects our adapted life-style, one finds that the psychoanalytic model has once more emerged in literature.

By changing our relationship to the resources that surround us, by almost violently expanding the scope of change, and,

most of all, by accelerating its pace, man has ultimately broken with the past. The stage for a new post-modern space related society has been set. This calls into question man's capacity for adaptation.

Innovations in transportation and communication have undergone new, hitherto unknown dimensions and have consequently broadened our horizons. The landing of men on the moon, the erection of space labs and the venturing farther into the universe have inevitably placed man in a new perspective. Such questions as those concerning the meaning of human existence, traditional values and beliefs no longer seem self-evident. The security-providing religious and social positives seem to be lacking as they are increasingly and justly questioned. Thus, despite all technical achievements, this leaves anxious, bewildered people as they cannot find satisfactory answers to hitherto unknown problems. The stress of postmodern time is indicated by the enormous quantity of drugs used, such as tranquilizers, sleeping pills, and alcoholic beverages and by the increase of heart attacks which is the cardinal cause of death in our society. It is also indicated by the marked increase in suicide among the youth as well as the ever increasing delinquency and crimes of violence. It is equally indicated in the vast preoccupation with altered states of consciousness and parapsychology and ample literature on dehumanization and alienation. Consequently, a stream of change has released a totally new social force. This stream of change is so accelerated that it influences our sense of time. It revolution-

izes the tempo of daily life to such an extent that we no longer experience life the way it was experienced in the past. This difference, namely how we experience a totally different life, causes an ultimate split with the past. The transition penetrates our consciousness, radically affecting our relationship towards others and to the entire universe of ideas, art and values.

The adjustment to a vastly developing new and in many ways different life man experiences due to the accelerated speed of technology has, of necessity, become the centre of twentieth-century thought. However, already as early as in the year 1928, the German philosopher, Max Scheler, states in his book Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos, that man has now become more of a problem to himself than ever before in recorded history. Martin Heidegger (1929), voiced his opinion very much the same way: "Zu keiner Zeit ist der Mensch so fragwuerdig geworden wie in der unsrigen", (at no time has man become so unpredictable as in our time). A better understanding of the problem, allows man to explore his own contradictions. Thus the psychological, psychosocial and sociocultural studies of human behaviour have contributed enormously towards a better understanding of a more problematic new mood in twentieth century thought about the complexity of man.

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

In Chapter 2, Section 2.1, the expression of epistemological despair in literature is discussed with reference to the

depiction of behavioural problems in both modern drama and the detective story.

Several areas of fictionality are explored, most of them foregrounding social and cultural conditions which govern the production and reception of the literary text. Attention is drawn to the scope of fiction covering a new form of narration of psychological sensitivity, enveloping the emergence of man's confrontation with a new reality, in which the transitional change takes place so rapidly that an adaptation becomes extremely difficult, and in which man is, as a result, overcome by a sense of alienation where the familiar becomes increasingly unfamiliar.

Section 2.2 concerns itself with issues regarding modern literature which reflect epistemological despair expressed in textual indefiniteness. Modern literature will be shown to be arranged around issues concerned with an awareness of tension between a new reality and an old ideal. The resulting notion of this new awareness preoccupied authors from Proust to Beckett: a discussion highlighting the problem is provided with reference to Beckett's Waiting for Godot (1965), as an example of a playwright who succeeded in breaking through the surface of stage convention to the shifting centre of psychological sensitivity manifesting itself in human hopes and fears. In another context, Fishelov (1990: 425) has described the reader's construction of literary character as a process which depends on both textual features and individual perspective, 'the core of such constructing activity consists of an attempt to match the various details and patterns provided by the literary work with

the conceptual network with which we perceive and apprehend the world'. Beckett's dramatic text Waiting for Godot (1965) does not only lend itself to, but actually demands a psycho-analytical discussion. Other dramatists such as Ionesco and Pinter also illustrate the same ontological discontinuity of stable reality and the problematic concern with stability and epistemology in their reflection of communication failure and disintegration of personality or individuality.

Dramatists consequently confront European audiences with a world in which God is dead, a world which has become absurd in the sense of the existentialist. Martin Esslin who made a study of these phenomena coined these stage performances the Theatre of the Absurd (first publication in the USA, 1961).

Section 2.3 concerns itself with the confusion of the detective story, the epistemological genre par excellence. In the examples from Eugene Ionesco's detective story Victims of Duty (1958) it will be argued that his anecdote shows the same confusion in a somewhat different environment as in Beckett's dramatic text Waiting for Godot (1965); the common preoccupation with the same dilemma pointing to one central concern namely that personality or individuality as it used to be known does no longer exist. Consequently, characters lose their identity and are depicted as being restricted within their pre-assigned actantial roles, where personality is underplayed for the sake of focussing on the particular function the literary character has to fulfil. Artistic creations are organized around issues of epistemological doubt and introspective reflection. In discussing these issues, it

will furthermore be shown that such dramatists as Beckett illustrate the ontological discontinuity of stable reality in the form of communication failure resulting in the disintegration of personality. Consequently, the focus of presentation shifts to an 'inner life' determined by psychological dominance. Finally it will be pointed out that the reflection of the 'inner reality' of character reveals all the complexities and incoherences of psychological essence, which, inter alia, calls for an investigation of Fokkema's (1991) semiotic model which reveals the character's distraught inner landscape and simultaneously enhances the awareness of psychological essence.

In Chapter 3, Section 3.1 some external theories impacting on literature are concisely introduced. The first section deals with the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, explaining his doctrine of moral superiority to be attained by forcible selfassertion and the resultant revaluation of his philosophy in terms of the morality of the strong. Nietzsche propagated the end of a great period in history by proclaiming that 'God is dead': 'man errs through an eternal empty space with no help from above, he has to light the lanterns and take destiny in his own hands'. In Section 3.1.1, Nietzsche's philosophy is shown to have had a great influence extending to literature at the end of the century, the well known 'fin de siecle'. The ensuing discussion of the nihilistic influence also concentrates on Beckett's Waiting for Godot which foregrounds the absurdity of waiting for 'Godot', or God. It is however my aim not only to draw attention to

the absurdity, but also to the positive 'help yourself' trend derived from Nietzsche.

Existentialism, which is closely linked to nihilism, will also be the topic of further discussions. It is a post-war philosophy based on the conception of the complete senselessness of existence. Major theorists include Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger and especially Jean Paul Sartre, the French novelist, dramatist and philosopher born in Paris, who like Nietzsche was also an atheist, and who advocated his philosophy in successful plays, books and essays. Besides pointing out the negative trends of this philosophy, there are also positive tenets, one of which may be the assertion that every individual is responsible to humanity as a whole. The discussion also aims to show the difference between nihilism and existentialism.

Section 3.1.2 entitled 'fin de siècle', deals with the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer on their times, focussing in this regard on the turn of the century and the extent to which Thomas Mann's masterpiece Buddenbrooks, first published in 1901, may be seen to reflect a particular philosophy. The negative influence is attributed largely to Nietzsche's philosophy, but also to a great extent to Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, which was based on one of the most renowned German metaphysical philosophers, Immanuel Kant. The influence of these philosophies reached its peak before and towards the end of the eighteenth century, in what was commonly referred to as the 'fin de siècle'. The exerting influence of their philosophy is particularly evident in the main character, Thomas Bud-

denbrook. It is expressed in his desire for annihilation (Freud's 'Thanatos', meaning 'death drive'), his desire for death, in the Buddenbrook saga, a story of 'the demise of a family'. 1)

In Section 3.2 an account of Freud's psychoanalytical theory is discussed in terms of his biological principles and the concept of psychopathology of which the roots can be traced to the past. Repressed needs, conflicts and frustrations causing anxiety can, according to Freud's theory, be traced back to a past traumatic experience. Once the cause of such a traumatic experience is found, a cure for anxiety is possible. Thus the Freudian psychotherapy or psychoanalysis aims to give the patient an insight into his unconscious motivations by means of transference effects between patient and therapist. Freud's masterful dream analyses as well as his study of the psyche will be shown to be determining factors for many mysterious elements manifesting themselves in human behaviour and hence in literature. The importance of a knowledge of psychoanalysis will thus be pointed out as a significant aid in evaluating literary works.

Section 3.2.1, focussing on psychoanalysis and literary criticism, will provide explanations of Freud's universally recognized work, explaining the overwhelming individual role of unconscious motivation and emotional processes in the formation and development of personality. Reviewing the psy-

1) William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1982) also reflects the same theme of disintegration. See the discussion of this novel in Chapter 6.

choanalytical model, the discussion of the ideas of psychoanalytical thought will mainly concentrate on the major principle of his model which is the study of the unconscious. As far as literature is concerned, that which Freud calls 'the softening power of artistic form', explains the artist who, like the neurotic, is oppressed by unusually powerful instinctual needs which (often) cannot be fulfilled and are therefore channelled from reality to fantasy. This phenomenon is particularly interesting as its explanations provide a better understanding of neurotic manifestations such as anxiety and fear which change the behaviour pattern of man and which are illustrated in the analysis of the novels under discussion in Section B of the study.

Freud continued the medical tradition stressing the importance of individual totality also called holistic tendency.

The impact of psychoanalysis on language will be elaborated in Section 3.2.2, with the emphasis on Jacques Lacan, the French psychoanalyst who has initiated the return of psychoanalysis and the unconscious in language. Reformulating Freud's theory of the unconscious, Lacan focused on the linguistic aspect of the imaginative and the symbolic stages in the development from infancy to puberty and adulthood emphasizing the unconscious as not only being structured like language but coming into existence at the moment the subject gains access to language: According to Lacan (1978: 174) this occurs 'when its transference is the enacting of the reality of the unconscious'. The discussion will also point

towards the differences between Freud's psychoanalytic approaches which are centred on interpretation of literary texts to reveal, inter alia, Oedipus complexes, whereas Lacanian analyses are preoccupied with signifying chains. Examples of Lacanian readings will be provided, illustrating, amongst others, how a dream analysis by Freud can become a more intricate, obscure phenomenon after consideration of Lacan's suggestions on the same topic. It is this topic which will be elaborated as a kind of introduction to subjectivity.

In Section 3.3, Freud's psychoanalytical theory will be considered in connection with Thomas Mann's masterpiece Buddenbrooks, to enhance a keener awareness of human relations as a source of psychological insight, especially as the inner voice is an accepted psychological reality. In Buddenbrooks (1982) Mann began to reflect on the 'inner man' in that he unmasked his characters' satisfied appearances, and concentrated on what he called 'the chaotic depths of human nature'. The emphasis here is on the so-called 'inward turn of narrative, signalling an attempt by novelists, to disclose man's most secret thoughts and feelings. The psychological implications of characters' behaviour, as well as the psychological insight to be gleaned from character portrayal, will be highlighted with reference to such characters as Thomas and Christian Buddenbrook, the latter's psychological abnormal manifestations will be shown to be evident in the bizarre forms of his inner psychosomatic neurotic landscape. Thomas Buddenbrook's psychological con-

flicts will be elaborated as being of a different kind than that of his brother Christian. They are, amongst others, caused by external, far too demanding circumstances, as well as demands from his own family. His son Hanno, the last link of the Buddenbrook line, is showing signs of decadence which are masterfully, almost poetically, described by an omniscient author. When Hanno becomes ill, the last hours of his painful existence are shown to be constituted through the internalization of the omniscient author's voice. From the discussion it becomes clear that Thomas Mann can be viewed as a narrator who is determined to render expression to his characters' thoughts and feelings, thus highlighting his characters' psychosomatic conditions which are simultaneously the predominating thematic motif in the novel of the demise of the Buddenbrook family. Furthermore, reference will also be made to William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, as well as Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49. These three novels will be extensively discussed and analysed in Section B, taking the philosophical and psychoanalytical tenets into consideration.

In Chapter 4, Section 4.1 an introduction to the theoretical outline of the representation of character in literature will deal with the contribution of three broad categories, namely the traditional views, stressing the resemblance of literary characters to actual people, the structuralist views which define character as being subordinated to its role or function in the plot and postmodern theories which question the 'identity' of the character,

as according to these views character exists only by virtue of words in the literary text and, as such, only as a textual construct. The differences amongst these theories will become evident during a discussion in which the above issues will inform the reading of Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49. These tenets will be elaborated in Section 4.2.1 with regard to 'flat' and 'round' character exemplifying the view of presentation of character in literature from traditional theorists and authors such as Henry James and E.M. Forster. To clarify Forster's distinction between 'flat' and 'round' characters more effectively, examples will be provided from various literary texts.

Section 4.2.2 elaborates on the criticism and refinement of Forster's categories due to the latter having simultaneously been accepted and discredited in the critical discourse on narrative theory and structure. Rimmon-Kenan (1983) will be quoted as having recognized Forster's distinctions of character as 'pioneering' work. Her criticism covers the field of several objections. Her claims, Pickrel's (1988) and Fishelov's (1990) reconsiderations of Forster's terms of categorization as well as Margolin's (1990) important addition of a more substantive quality to the distinction between 'type' and 'individual' such as psychological considerations, will be discussed with reference to examples from such literary texts which call for said psychological consideration as Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks and Virginia Woolf's To the Light-

house. In trying to find examples from literary texts with which to explain Fishelov's categories of characterization, it will be pointed out that it is advisable to remember that he alerts us to the facts that each literary character most likely contains both 'type-like' and 'individual like' properties; and that the readers will consequently tend to look for both typical and individualistic traits in their construction of literary characters on the basis of textual evidence.

In Section 4.2.3 actantial roles will be the topic of the discussion. The distinction of various types of literary characters, especially Fishelov's categories of 'pure' and 'individual-like types' can be compared to formalist and structuralist studies which focus on the different roles characters are to fulfil with regard to their function in the structure of the narrative text. Propp's pioneering study of the structure of Russian folk tales (1968; first published in Russian in 1928), his differentiation between seven general roles as well as his attribution to the inference that functions can be abstracted as general entities from a variety of concretisations of any particular role, namely that character is subordinated to the action it has to perform in the role assigned to it in the plot, will be elaborated. The subordination of character to action, which is subsequently developed in the structuralist model of Greimas (1966) will be illustrated in terms of a diagram. On the same topic, Rimmon-Kenan (1983) will be quoted as remarking that one and the same actant can be manifested by

more than one acteur whilst the same acteur can be assigned to more than one actant: as an example thereof, Alan Paton's short story The Waste Land will be discussed.

In Section 4.3, techniques of characterization will be introduced. It will be pointed out that these techniques of characterization are based on the different levels in the narrative text. The important distinction between 'actant' and 'personage' is defined in terms of Bal's (1978) definition; and Margolin's (1986) provision for a more technically exact outline. Following Fishelov's and Margolin's contention, a closer look at the character indicators that could be operative on the textual level are provided with examples from Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, which ideally illustrate the direct information provided by the narrator throughout the novel as an aid to the reader in distinguishing between the numerous characters and their character traits. A comparison between the characters of Mann's Buddenbrooks and Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, will show that Faulkner's text relies to a far greater extent on indirect presentation. It is argued that indirect presentation is a far more common literary device in narrative fiction than direct definition. Both of these possibilities are considered with regard to Margolin's (1989) systematization of textual indicators as consisting of narrative propositions about either dynamic or static elements associated with an agent or character. The different areas distinguished by Margolin concerning the grouping of characters into actantial roles will have become clear in the aforementioned Alan Paton story: the young men

grouped together in the role of perpetrator in opposition to the father in the role of victim. This section will be completed by pointing out that although Margolin's distinguished areas may be operative in all narrative texts, the reader will nevertheless have to discriminately use relevant information provided on the textual level in order to construct the image of a character or a group of characters in any particular instance.

Section 4.3.2 entitled 'dynamic elements', focuses on the dynamic portrayal of character. It will be pointed out that although Margolin (1989) speaks of 'verbal, mental and physical acts of a narrative agent...', the reader will more likely than not associate a dynamic portrayal of character with actions rather than with words or thoughts. Actions will be pointed out to be either habitual, forming part of the character's routine, or they can be of a non-routine type, more often than not triggered by unexpected circumstances. Whereas habitual actions reveal stable traits, the one-time or non-routine action could be as functional in revealing particular character traits. These phenomena will be exemplified by illustration of certain characters from Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks and William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury. Rimmon-Kenan's (1983) categories dealing with habitual and non-routine action will be explained as a helpful indicator of character building during which a character's speech including speech voiced in monologue and dialogue or thoughts expressed as interior monologue can also be shown to be indicative of character traits both

through its content and through its form. Speech patterns in Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, certain manners with which words and phrases are voiced or even the avoidance of crude jokes may serve to distinguish between classes of people, as the examples taken from the aristocratic Buddenbrooks will show. These examples will be contrasted with illustrations from William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, where it will be determined that the textual signals indicated by means of the representation of speech or thoughts, serve to suggest external social stratifications, as well as emotional inner life in a different narrative style than that of Thomas Mann.

In Section 4.3.3, entitled 'static elements', numerous other indicators than those mentioned above which should help the reader to form an impression or opinion of character are investigated; these are a character's name, appearance and sociocultural milieu. Name-giving will also help the reader to arrive at a fairly complete notion of a character. As examples thereof, and to reveal the dissimilarities between different modes of writing, such novels as Thomas Mann, William Faulkner and Thomas Pynchon, representatives of a realist, a modernist and postmodernist text respectively, will be provided.

Section 4.3.4 reflects on a critical overview of different theories on postmodern strategies, namely on Margolin's 'dynamic structural model' (1989: 9-24) and Fokkema's Postmodern Characters (1991) which will highlight observations focusing on the shifts in the function and perception of

character in realist, modernist and postmodernist literature. Although Fokkema (1991: 58) correctly observes that the distinctions between literary periods are not as clear cut as may be surmised, she nevertheless quotes a violation of the biological code presented in a typical postmodern instance where 'one of the characters in a novel realizes that it is actually 'written', or has 'a typewriter as an origin' (Fokkema, 1991: 75). As a telling example Milan Kundera refers to where he explicitly denies the biological code by insisting that the main protagonists in his postmodernist text The Unbearable Lightness of Being were 'born' of a linguistic phrase. Another code which will be discussed and which is widely applied in literature is the psychological code which rules and/or governs the assumption of traits or the presence of an 'inner life'. Given the emphasis on psychoanalytic theory in this study, it will be pointed out that this particular code will obviously present a logical link between the external theories discussed in the previous chapter and the conventions governing the depiction of literary character which will be addressed forthwith. This point will be exemplified in the modernist literature of Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, which actually calls for a consideration of the psychological code because of, inter alia, the portrayal of the inner life of its characters.

In Section 4.4 the discussion on the portrayal of the inner life of literary characters will focus on authors and readers who have accepted that narrative fiction can provide access to the minds of characters in a way that would be un-

thinkable in real life. For Forster (1970) this fact distinguishes literary characters from the human beings we encounter in real life whom we can never come to know as intimately as the fictional characters whose thoughts, emotions and feelings are known to us. That this convention is characteristic of narrative fiction will be shown with examples taken from Thomas Mann's contrasting novel which, with a few exceptions, yield a portrayal of individual characters the reader can perceive as 'round, whole, real and fully shaped' (Cohn, 1978: 5). Furthermore, Cohn's depiction of consciousness in literature (1978) will be discussed drawing on a broad range of literary works from various periods, cultures, styles and traditions to determine a typology with which to account for the importance of the 'mimesis of consciousness' in the history of the novel. Taking into account stylistic, contextual and psychological aspects, it will be shown how Cohn identifies three basic types of the presentation of consciousness for both third and first person narration. In terms of her findings she coins the word 'psycho-narration' to account for the 'indirect narration', as opposed to the 'direct presentation', by an omniscient authorial voice of a character's inner psyche, namely Thomas Mann, who used this technique of internalization whenever he deemed it advisable over and above his meticulous description and extensive dialogues and monologues used throughout his novel, as a major technique of characterization. A further discussion of Cohn's (1978) different types of consciousness presentation will be included.

In Section 4.4.1 'psycho-narration' is based on Cohn's (1978) observation that most writers on the novel have taken the transparency of fictional minds for granted. For our purposes it will be discussed how her mentioning of Thomas Mann's insistence of advocating the principle of internalization has given impulse to express the outer adventure of the epic hero into the inner adventures of the Bildungsheld. Following that, Mann's fascination with Schopenhauer's philosophy will be pointed out with examples from the text of the novel Buddenbrooks where, for example the intruding or, as Cohn calls it, the 'audible' narrator, informs the reader of Tom's significant vision.

In Section 4.4.2 devoted to 'quoted/autonomous interior monologue', an outline of Cohn's (1978) distinction between monologues already discussed and newly coined typifications will be explained, as well as her conviction that there is a radical dissymmetry between the technique and the genre. Her concern with psychological credibility will also be highlighted and her findings will be discussed with examples taken from Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, as most of the characters' description in the text call for concerns with psychological consideration. An explanation will furthermore be provided as to the reason for referring to certain of Cohn's coined terms for monologue interior. Dorrit Cohn's graphical schema will be shown to explain the difference between narrative (chronology) and monologue presentation (a-chronology) for the purpose of explaining the contrast between such writings as David Copperfield, Thomas

Mann and William Faulkner, the latter's text describing the imprint left by it in a memory. Regarding The Sound and the Fury, which can, according to Cohn (1978) be termed a 'self-involvement of memory', the fractured chronology in the text will be shown to exhibit blanks or indeterminacies which must be filled in by the reader. Finally, one can wholeheartedly agree with Cohn's (1978) statement that the narrative technique of Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury conforms closely to the term **memory monologue**, as her findings make logical sense. However, in further discussions on this novel, the terms 'interior monologue' and 'first-person narrative' are nevertheless used, together with Cohn's terms 'memory monologue' and 'autonomous monologue'.

In Section 4.4.3 entitled 'narrated monologue', further discussions of Cohn's various terms for the stream of consciousness technique serve as examples for her argument that her coined terms could satisfactorily account also for this method of literary presentation, consisting of a transformation of figural thought-language of third-person fiction as a technique for rendering a character's thought in his own idiom 'while maintaining the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration' (Cohn, 1978). The definition 'narrated monologue' will be explained as implying that a passage in narrated monologue could easily be 'translated' into interior monologue if the third person should be replaced by the first person and the tense changed to the present instead of the past. Examples will be provided to show that if the reader should wish to determine whether a given sentence

or passage belongs to the character's rather than the narrator's domain, a passage in third person could be 'rewritten' in first person to test the validity of this perception.

Section 4.5 will concentrate on 'the reader's construction of character' and the manner in which the reader will try to construct an 'image' of a character based on its textual presentation and to what extent this will be possible. In terms of this tenet, the theoretical contributions of Forster (1970), Margolin (1986), Fishelov (1991) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983) will be discussed with examples provided from the texts of Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49. This discussion will, amongst others, also serve to show how the reader's construction of character, moving from characterization to character-building, will inevitably link up with the larger context in which the work has been produced, thereby showing how external evidence can complement text-internal indicators.

In Section B, which is devoted to an extensive analysis of three major works representative from the realist, modernist and postmodernist traditions of writing, the Orientation explains the reading of these novels in terms of the theories outlined in Section A of the study. An analysis of selective aspects of the three novels, namely Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 relies on an informed reading of these texts in terms of a specific knowledge of relevant contemporary philosophical and psychological ideas.

The purpose of this analysis is to enable the reader to more readily understand the motifs of despair, anguish and uncertainty, which are causes of concern in all three novels.

Dorrit Cohn's (1978) study, which extensively analysed traces of tendencies towards an 'inward turn' in realist novels in the use of the technique of psycho-narration, simultaneously distinguished different techniques towards a more specific character portrayal of inner life, such as the use evident in quoted interior monologue in first person narration and in the utilization of narrated monologue in third person narrative texts both in modernist and postmodernist writing. The discussion of Thomas Mann's use of psycho-narration will show how the portrayal of the inner lives of characters, in particular that of the main character Thomas Buddenbrook, signals the beginning of the 'inward turn' in narrative. In comparison to Thomas Mann's writing technique, it will be shown that William Faulkner uses interior memory monologue, in order to reflect the turmoil and uncertainty prevalent in the lives of his characters in the Sound and the Fury.

The literary manifestation of prevalent ideas and ideologies will further be explained with reference to various manners of depicting character in the three novels. These will range from clearly identifiable personalities in the Buddenbrooks, which is written both in Thomas Mann's own individualistic style and in realist tradition at the turn of the century, the fin de siècle, to such modernist writing as William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, where character

is construed as the psychological configuration of the individual reflecting thoughts, repressions and strong emotionality. These inner dynamics reflect the innermost turmoil which is experienced by the Compson Family in the centre of an extremely limited present time span, simultaneously confronting the reader with a formidable array of literary complexities such as chronological twists and shifts both in narrative style and perspective.

As a result of the accelerated, technologically dominated world, the dramatic effect on man's inner life is reflected in the period following modern literature, namely in the literary period called postmodernism. Aleid Fokkema aptly reflects that in postmodernist writing the conventional psychological depth of character has been replaced and robbed of a personal, unique, inner life, in that characters meta-fictionally comment on the nature of language appearing 'in those Postmodern texts which explicitly undermine, or at least question, traditional representation (Fokkema, 1990: 172). In the ensuing discussion of Pynchon's novel The Crying of Lot 49 (1979) has been included as representative of the postmodernist trend in fiction. The distinguishing features of postmodern literature will be highlighted as the type of narrative technique which draws primary attention to its own status as a subjectively created system which no longer pretends to imitate or represent the real world, but which reflects in its stead the ultimate acceleration of changed transition, namely the psychological outer and inner limits of life. Postmodern literature is thus shown to

be a mode of narration which almost proudly and certainly self-consciously exhibits itself as an invented system, challenging the reader's expectations in that it subverts literary convention which the reader had previously taken for granted. This necessitates that narrative codes have to be decoded, leaving the reader no other choice than to take over the responsibility for the 'act of decoding'.

Taking the afore-mentioned as a point of departure, the purpose of the study of the three novels will be to reveal that a shift from control to anarchy has taken place; this is due to an accelerated transition which was brought about by the shifting values in life as reflected in literature.

Turning now to the analysis of the novels in three consecutive chapters, Section 5.1 introduces the reader to the theme of Thomas Mann's novel, namely the decline of the Buddenbrook family and their family business as well as some of the most important adverse domestic and hitherto unknown foreign influences on their lives which lead to their eventual decline during the transition from stability to uncertainty. To this end the reader will also be acquainted with a specific thematic similarity evident with Faulkner's novel The Sound and the Fury (1982).

Another important topic will be shown to be the influences of such great philosophers as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche whose philosophies became great influential forces in the lives of the people at the end of the century and thus, by extension the characters who reflected this life-style in

the novels under discussion. From the discussion of the topic of the first signs of disintegration it will be shown how the direct information provided by the omniscient authorial voice penetrates the character's inner thoughts and feelings, thereby facilitating access to the significant difference in character between the steadfast old patriarch Johann Buddenbrook, the founder of the family business, and the characters of his sons through which the signs of decadence slowly manifest themselves. These informative topics simultaneously cover the discussion of the following Section 5.2 in which the deaths in the family are investigated. Here it will become evident that the material, every-day life relations are replaced by a shift considerably towards an extensive covering of the inner psychological landscape of each character's consciousness.

In Section 5.3, the third generation heir to the family name and business, Thomas Buddenbrook, will be discussed with the main purpose of highlighting his inner deterioration resulting in the desire for death (Todessehnsucht). His infatuation with Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy will prove to be a significant incentive towards and motivation for this deathwish. Thomas is unable to discover a way of escape from despondency and fatigue, in that the philosophical idea advocated by Schopenhauer, namely to discover a way of escape from pessimism and destruction, by finding some form of idealism has no effect on him. The way to the gradual disintegration will be shown to originate from an overly excessive drive for the honour to devote himself to the

family business and to make a success of it. The sense of being dutybound eventually wears Thomas out and becomes a destructive burden.

The psychosomatic condition of Christian, Thomas's brother, and the untimely death of Hanno, Thomas's son, will be discussed in Section 5.4 in the light of the mood of total exhaustion which was so characteristic at the end of the century. The signs of fatigue and decadence are explained through the detailed description of the characters' physical genuine or imagined illnesses.

With the closing detailed description of the final demise of Hanno Buddenbrook, the topic will concentrate on an author who gently leads the reader to participate in the pain and distress of the last heir of the Buddenbrook's human existence, in a time which was appropriately referred to as decadent, a process of condition and decline, the much talked about fin de siècle.

The introduction of Chapter 6, Section 6.1 will deal with a similar topic as that of Mann's portrayal of the demise of the Buddenbrook family, namely the disintegration of a family which is communicated as individual anguish in its unmediated portrayal of the consciousness of the Compson children in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1982). The discussion will concentrate on the portrayal of the inner life of the characters, the fragmented presentation of time and the constant movement from selected remembered childhood experiences, which preclude any sense of a logical progres-

sion of events, to the present behaviour of the Compson children. Whilst the focus of certain events are singled out for detailed representation, the reader is confronted with the challenge of assembling dates and events in order to grasp the basic thread of the story. Events of psychological importance are foregrounded for the reader, who is 'invited' to experience the same event through the perception of the different focalizers.

The contrast between the realist and modernist conventions in the two novels respectively will be pointed out to capture fundamental differences of style and convention. Contrasting with the audible voice of the narrator, as illustrated in Thomas Mann's reliance on psycho-narration, William Faulkner's style fully explores what Dorrit Cohn (1978) defines as various techniques whereby the unmediated disclosure of a character's thoughts and feelings could be attempted by means of different forms of interior monologue, defined by her as, amongst others, quoted, autonomous and memory monologue. What Cohn (1978: 247) refers to as a 'special, and especially fascinating sub-genre', namely memory monologue, will be useful in analysing Faulkner's intricate portrayal of the inner life of the three Compson children. Although Caddy is largely absent from the narrative 'present', she nevertheless occupies a dominant role in the novel through the repeated references alluded to in the consciousness of her brothers.

The discussion in Section 6.2 will in particular also focus attention on the selective and associative remembrance in

the technique of memory monologues of the characters. This technique is indicative of a steadfast, accurate vehicle of interior monologue, as a separate fictional form as in autonomous interior monologue, denoting a temporal sequence of related past experienced events yielding to the temporal sequence of present remembrance and resulting in the past being fundamentally dechronologized. Referring to Faulkner's text as a significant example of the exploitation of memory monologue, where the character's mind is 'trained full-time on the past', Cohn (1978: 247) differentiates between memory monologue and other forms of autonomous monologue.

In Section 6.2.1, dealing with April 7, 1928, the discussion will focus on Benjamin Compson, the mentally retarded son of the Compson family. To facilitate access to Benjy's unique psychosomatic condition, illustrations with quoted examples from his memory monologue will be provided, where his monologue illustrates his retardation by marked elliptic sentences, gaps in the presentation and associative links between actual scenes on the day of his monologizing and remembered scenes from a distant past. While attention will be drawn to Benjy's severe retardation, which is also called feeble-mindedness, it will be brought to the reader's attention that he has to assemble dates and events from the verbal or sensory association of Benjy's fragmented perception, indicative of the imbecile's confused and jumbled mind. Benjy's mental retardation has deprived him of normal cognitive activities. So, for example, his understanding of time is limited to the difference between day and night. As Benjy

lacks the concept of chronology, the concept of past and present are equally real to him, and a future does not exist in his mind. It will thus be shown that he lives in an uninterrupted present, where such events as his grandmother Damuddy's death, his sister's wedding and other events receive equal attention. It is consequently due to the character's perspective that the random order destroys any attempt at structuring a related sequence of development. Thus time becomes entirely subjective and time shifts pose a primary source of narrative complexity to the reader.

In Section 6.2.2, referring to June 2, 1910, Quentin's narrative is analysed as it focuses on his last day's thoughts, the day of his suicide where the relations between the explanation of the last day and his memories of earlier days vary. This varied presentation precludes a text of unequivocal consistency, its complex narrative reflecting an emotional adolescent mind in stasis, with the exception of the reproduction of remembered dialogues and events. Emotive expressions are however not limited to memories only, but appear at the moment Quentin remembers and comments on the incidents of his last day. Whilst he reflects on these incidents, memories are triggered off by traumatic events, statements by his father and dialogues in which his mother or Caddy feature prominently. Switches between present and past are identified as 'thought transferences', in that descriptions of and reflections on the events of his last day invariably lead to very rapidly remembered scenes. In this regard, Cohn (1978: 248) refers to 'a kind of triggering de-

vice that releases into the mind a shower of memories from the more distant past', in which it is shown that, for example, his remembered dialogue with his father undoubtedly contributes towards Quentin's instability. Being a typical representative of a nihilistic trend reflected in the complexities of psychological essence, the father is determined to imprint on Quentin's mind his belief that, in terms of his world view, there is not any more a simple relationship between object and form, and that realities are in fact made up of fleeting moments and indistinct shapes. Quentin's pre-occupation with time is shown to effect a specific thought pattern which in turn results in certain scene shifts. Time is associated with Caddy and simultaneously, almost automatically, with death, hell and punishment, whilst his mind moves swiftly from time past to time present and back again. Thus time is shown to be used both as a theme and a motif. In the absence of parental love, it will be pointed out that Caddy represents all Quentin's unfulfilled longings and she is simultaneously the more perplexing enigma of sexual otherness which, because of their extraordinary intense bond, leads to sexual desire. Quentin's feelings of confusion are, inter alia, shown to originate from the disproportional imbalance of love within the family which is simultaneously to be viewed as one of the reasons for the ultimate decline of the family.

The focus is thus on Quentin's final hours, where the reasons of his anxiety are investigated. Predominantly, the concept of time plays an ever increasingly threatening role.

Recurring symbols of Quentin's longed for peace are shown to foreground the unifying theme of water with nature. Tortured thoughts are evinced from memories of his father's words as the final moment of suicide approaches. These are simultaneously connected with the actions he performs. With the ultimate thought quotation 'a quarter hour yet. And then I'll not be', (Faulkner, 1982: 157) it will be made clear that Quentin's anxiety reaches the final momentum, simultaneously releasing emotional memories: thinking ahead to the moment which already lies in the past, before beginning his monologue in which an uninterrupted stream of associations becomes the connecting power of fragmented memories of a more distant past.

Section 6.3 deals with the fixation on sexual problems and its psychological impact on the Compson children.

In Section 6.4, the final concluding observations on the selective disintegration of the Compson family will be reiterated, ending with Schopenhauer's vision that the importance of the portrayal of the inner landscape is a high and noble task 'for it is the inner life which is the true object of our interest' (Schopenhauer, 1961: 98).

The introduction to Chapter 7 traces the logical progression with reference to the development from Thomas Mann's individual style evident in Buddenbrooks, where the technique of characterization is varied, to William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, where the focus is on the consciousness of the characters, thereby showing that an individual experiences

reality subjectively and that the experience of life is made up of fragmented and subjective interactions. Besides exhibiting a radical distrust of the notion of coherence, a notion of coherence which was still evident in Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, the focus is now shifting exclusively to the inner life of characters, foregrounding their limited, egocentric consciousness. Character portrayal is consequently construed as individual psychological configuration, the idea being that of creating an illusion of psychological depth. As such, much of the elation was shown to be of a subjective nature, that is, perception owes much to Freud's exultant psychoanalytical theory. Although Faulkner portrays the disturbed inner reality of his characters, revealing the complexity and the incoherence of psychological essence, this does not effect the disintegration of character. Although each character in the novel is shown to have a different version of reality, so that reality itself becomes fragmented, the reader can still identify with the characters because of their life-likeness.

There is a stark contrast evident between Thomas Pynchon's postmodernist writing and Faulkner's portrayal of character. The primary characteristic of postmodernist writing will be shown as accentuating the fact that characters have lost their individuality. Because of the loss of identity, the characters have become aggregates of attributes derived from words written on the pages in narrative texts. Postmodern writing thus challenges the notion of individual character; in-depth representation which has been a literary

'trade-mark' reflected in modernist writings, is shown to have shifted. The real world is no longer 'imitated' or 'presented'. Its new ambiguous representation forces the reader into an awareness of the linguistic and fictive nature of reality whereby the reader must accept the responsibility for the act of decoding.

Thus, as far as Thomas Pynchon's text is concerned, it will be shown that the shift from the life-like portrayal of character in realist, and modern literature to the textualisation of character in postmodernist writing has resulted in an undermining of the conventional psychological depth associated with literary character, in that postmodern character is presented as being a linguistic construct rather than a 'life-like' human being. As such the portrayal of character acquires an element of artificiality, favouring so-called flat characters, rather involved in 'role playing' and in textual processes above the established continued psychological motivation of cause and effect. In other words, the afore-mentioned established rules of cause and effect, the motivation in logical continuity of a character's behaviour, cannot be detected in this literature.

In Section 7.2 the text The Crying of Lot 40 will be discussed in terms of certain discernible trends in postmodern or metafictional writing, focussing in this regard on relevant examples from the text in order to distinguish, in Sections 7.2.1, aspects of Pynchon's writing strategy. The self-conscious awareness of the artificiality inherent in the act of writing becomes evident, in Pynchon's text, in

the author's almost God-like authority to question every conceivable aspect of hitherto 'certain' values regarding life and reality. In her study on self-conscious writing entitled Metafiction, Patricia Waugh (1984: 2) observes that this kind of fiction making 'simultaneously refers to the abstract nature of life itself', this will inter alia, be elaborated in Section 7.3.

This so-called 'abstract nature of life itself' will become evident during the discussion on the novel in which, as stated above, the diversities of role-playing will be shown to contribute towards a fragmentation of the concept of a 'stable' personality in literature (Section 7.3.1), which inevitably draws attention to the dehumanization of 'human-like' characters in their interaction with an industrialized and highly commodified environment (Section 7.3.2). Following theorists such as Forrest-Thompson, Aleid Fokkema, McHale, Sloan, Cohen and others the notion that the ultimate postmodernist text exhibits a theme which becomes incoherent and decentralized, resulting in a depiction of fragmented subjects, will be illustrated.

Given the emphasis on fragmentation and dehumanization in the depiction of character, it is argued in Section 7.4, that it is perhaps not surprising that psychological problems are shown to be such an integral part of any particular character's reality that the idea of seeking treatment for psychological disorders, indeed, in having a special relationship with one's shrink, is seen as part of a 'normal' person's life-style. However, instead of the serious and very real problems the reader encountered in Faulkner's

novel, Pynchon underplays the severity, even the reality, of psychological problems by stressing the comic element in grotesque scenes depicting sexual aberrations.

Having focussed on the undermining of the concept of a stable personality, or a 'human-like' character, in post-modernist writing, another aspect of Thomas Pynchon's writing strategy is discussed with reference to his parody of the traditional detective novel in Section 7.5, dealing with irrational quests. Stressing Pynchon's exploitation of situational ambiguity, the questioning of the notion that a statement is either definitely true or definitely false, the reader is coerced into sharing the main character, Oedipa Maas's, seemingly indefinite and hopeless search for the 'truth'. The author deliberately places his main protagonist, Oedipa Maas, into a cognitive dilemma whilst engaging her in the search for the meaning of the Tristero involving her in issues of verifiable data. Despite establishing causal links between events, she becomes utterly confused. The discussion will show to what effect Pynchon uses metaphor and symbol to suggest Oedipa's growing confusion. The desperate attempts by Oedipa to establish a world of stability in finding the truth about her quest in respect of the Tristero, all become ambiguous. Pynchon effectively uses the symbol of the tower Babel when he places Oedipa in the tunnel of confusion, also referred to as Rapunzel's tower. The authoritative God-like author/narrator consequently draws attention to the excluded stability or middle which Camus (Esslin, 1976: 12) explains as follows: 'cut off

from religious metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost'. In this instance Oedipa Maas exemplifies this conviction, in that all her 'actions become senseless, absurd, useless'.

Whilst Oedipa's name draws attention to Oedipus Rex, who goes in search of his true identity, it will be shown that Oedipa Maas similarly goes in search of some substantial truth concerning the Tristero. After an extensive research, Oedipa has to realize that all her endeavours are essentially in vain.

Upon contemplation, it will, inter alia, be emphasized in Section 7.6 that by foregrounding the helplessness of mankind, whilst simultaneously vigorously stressing human dignity, Pynchon sets himself the significant task, namely, inter alia, to bring about an awareness of the ever increasing mood in twentieth century thought about the conflicting nature of man.

Finally, a discussion of whether the text can be explained in terms of epistemological or ontological issues, will draw attention to the fact that the outcome may be viewed as being doubtful, because the evidence is so finely balanced that one cannot help to hesitate between these two principles. Arguably, the aforementioned points may actually also contribute towards the 'fantastic' effect this literature has on the reader (McHale, Sloan, Cohn, 1987: 24).

CHAPTER 2

EPISTEMOLOGICAL DESPAIR EXPRESSED IN MODERN LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In her study on postmodern character, Aleid Fokkema (1982: 61-79) singles out as typical features of modernist literature textual indefiniteness or incompleteness, epistemological doubt, metalingual skepticism and a particular regard for the reaction, the idiosyncrasies of the reader. Semantic aspects are orderly arranged around issues concerned with epistemological doubt and metalingual self-reflection.

All the conventions of epistemological doubt are reflected in William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom! (1936) in the fall of the Sutpen dynasty. In The Sound and the Fury (1982), the same epistemological doubt is expressed in the imaginative creation of the degenerate and disintegrating Compson family. 1)

The story in Absalom, Absalom! (1936) culminates in Quentin Compson and his room-mate Shreve's state of extreme incompleteness and indefiniteness: 'a few old mouth-to-mouth tales,' as Quentin's father says, 'letters without salutation or signature' (1936: 83).

Biased or underinformed, unreliable informants such as Mr Compson, Miss Rosa Coldfield and ultimately Thomas Sutpen himself heighten the indefiniteness by their successive

1) For a detailed discussion of Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury see Chapter 6.

interpretations. Epistemological doubt and metalingual skepticism are firmly thematized in later stages by their chain of unreliable transmissions. Despite some mysteries Rosa Coldfield is troubled with, her rhetoric may be viewed as being free from doubt. But that of Mr Compson is permeated by doubtful self-reflections on what he calls the 'turgid background of a horrible and bloody mischancing of human affairs':

... we see dimly people, the people in whose living blood and seed we ourselves lay dormant and waiting, in this shadowy attenuation of time possessing now heroic proportions, performing their acts of simple passion and simple violence, impervious to time and inexplicable - Yes, Judith, Bon, Henry Sutpen: all of them. They are there, yet something is missing: they are like a chemical formula exhumed along with the letters from the forgotten chest, carefully, the paper old and faded and falling to pieces, the writing faded, almost indecipherable, yet meaningful, familiar in shape and sense, the name and presence of volatile and sentient forces; you bring them together in the proportions called for, but nothing happens; you re-read, tedious and intent, poring, making sure that you have forgotten nothing, made no miscalculation; you bring them together again and again nothing happens: just the words, the symbols, the shapes themselves, shadowy inscrutable and

serene, against the turgid background of a horrible and bloody mischancing of human affairs.

(Faulkner, 1936: 83; emphasis MW)

It should be clear that the characteristics of modern fiction which include textual indefiniteness or incompleteness, epistemological despair (Fokkema: epistemological doubt), and metalingual skepticism are all evident in the above self-reflection. The dominant of modernist fiction is thus epistemology. The concern of modernist fiction is expressed in strategies such as the foregrounded questions cited by Dick Higgins in A Dialectic of Centuries (1978: 101): 'How can I interpret this world of which I am a part?' 'And what am I in it?' Other typical questions employed by modernist and, as there is no definite dividing line, often also postmodernist writers 2) are 'What is there to be known?'; 'Who knows it?'; 'How do they know it, and with what degree of certainty?'; 'How is knowledge transmitted from one knower to another, and with what degree of reliability?'; 'How does the object of knowledge change as it passes from knower to knower?'; 'What are the limits of the knowable?'; Or in the question of questions contemplating **who man really is!**

In both of Faulkner's novels Absalom, Absalom! (1936) and in The Sound and the Fury (1982) typical examples of such epistemological concerns are presented in modernist style, char-

2) Although the medium of presentation of postmodern fiction is supposedly ontological, it must be emphasized that their questions are unmistakably of epistemological significance. For a discussion on this subject see McHale (1987).

acterized by the use of interior monologue. 3)

The logic of such epistemological questions is that of a detective story, the epistemological genre par excellence. Faulkner's protagonists in Absalom, Absalom! (1936), who have to solve a 'real' murder-mystery, investigate, like other characters in many modernist and even postmodernist texts, the evidence of witnesses of dissimilar degrees of reliability to enable them to reconstruct and thus solve a 'crime'. Epistemological themes such as the accessibility and the circulation of knowledge, the effect of different structuring of the same or similar knowledge in different minds and the problematic questions of the limits of knowledge become evident in Faulkner's writing. In Absalom all these epistemological themes are foregrounded, and expressed in the multiplication and juxtaposition of perspectives. All the evidence is focalized through Quentin's single centre of consciousness, variant virtuoso expressions of interior monologue, also and especially in Miss Rosa's consciousness, present themselves. Finally all epistemological uncertainties of the characters are transposed to the readers. Dislocated chronology, withheld or mysteriously presented information, and many other forms of indeterminacies, create the same problems of accessibility, reliability and limitation of knowledge for the reader as it does for Quentin and Shreve. Thus Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom! (1930) signifies

3) In her book Transparent Minds (1978) Dorrit Cohn has developed a series of terms to capture the depiction of consciousness in literature. See Section 4.4 for a discussion of Cohn's study.

a text of epistemological dominance, with the exception of chapter 8, where this tenet actually breaks down: Quentin and Shreve reach the limit of their knowledge of the Sutpen murder-mystery. However, they carry on beyond reconstruction into pure speculation. The specifics of the narrative act become redundant, and with it all questions of authority and reliability. The literary text shifts from mimesis of the various characters' narration to unmediated diegesis. The characters' speech representation is taken over by the author who directly involves himself, showing what happened between Sutpen, Henry and Bon. The murder mystery is seemingly solved. This happens through imaginative projections of what could and **must have happened**, very similar to the investigations held by Pynchon's heroine Oedipa Maas in the postmodernist novel The Crying of Lot 49. As we shall see, when Oedipa Maas in her growing distress reaches the absolute limits of her knowledge, she utters the anguished question: '**Shall I project the world?**' (The Crying of Lot 49, 1979: 56; Author's emphasis). 4)

Quentin and Shreve create their own world: leaving the intractable problems of attaining the reliable knowledge of our world behind, they improvise a fictional world, a Utopia of their own.

4) See the discussion of Pynchon's text in Chapter 7.

2.2 WAITING AS A THEATRICAL STRATEGY IN MODERN DRAMA

By breaking through the crust of stage conventions to the shifting core of psychological reality, Beckett's play Waiting for Godot (1965) presents itself as another example of a text displaying modernist trends. The crucial element in Beckett's Waiting for Godot (1965) is its foregrounded epistemological concern, the presence of psychological essence of a specifically new literary convention of representation where the new form of human existence is a sustained metaphor about human life in a world where author, characters and spectators (or readers) all intermingle in a new age of suspicion: the foregrounded epistemological element finding its expression in the question of questions of who man really is. By confronting his audience with this crucial question, Beckett foregrounds the fundamental ontological discontinuity between reality and divinity. 5)

His play Waiting for Godot (1965) is regarded as the prime example of the so-called **Theatre of the Absurd** which phrase was coined by Martin Esslin (1976). He derived his label from a seminal collection of essays called The Myth of Sisyphus, written in 1940 by Albert Camus. In order to define man's feeling of exile, meaning 'man in a strange world he cannot comprehend', Camus reiterated the feeling of absurdity. Confronting the impenetrability and incomprehensibility of the new world, man experiences a sense of alienation.

5) He, like many other authors, was fascinated with existentialism. Society's norms and ideals were questioned with renewed vigour. Concepts like 'God', 'morality', 'humanity' became subject to adverse scrutiny.

This alienation penetrates even the most familiar objects, so that these familiar objects become undomesticated and unfamiliar and therefore fear-provoking. Camus's concern is summarized thus:

The absurd, for Camus, is an absence of correspondence between the mind's need for unity and the chaos of the world the mind experiences ...

(Esslin, 1976: 36; emphasis MW)

In this statement the tension between the actual and the ideal is pointed out, it is almost dramatized. The verbal pattern in Beckett's Waiting for Godot (1965) serves to emphasize the physical act of waiting, which is the concern of the play. That the two tramps are still waiting at the end of the play is an indication of the nullity of things which adequately expresses the epistemological despair man experiences in a world he cannot comprehend any longer. Although nihilism is a central theme, Beckett presents, even dramatizes, the fact that man can never accept to be nihilist: the refusal to surrender to the sense of meaninglessness is implied by the fact that the two main characters, the clown-like figures, the tramps, continue to wait. 6)

Some of the codes distinguished by Fokkema (1991: 74-76) for the purpose of determining the differences between realist, modernist and postmodernist techniques of presenting literary character, can be used to explain Beckett's portrayal

6) Nihilism is explained in Section 3.1 Philosophy-Nietzsche and Nihilism.

of characters in the play:

(a) the social code defining the characters' homeless, desperate, anguished and uncertain condition;

(b) the code of description which signifies the realistic portrait in describing the characters' appearance, their torn and tattered clothing as well as their mannerisms;

(c) the psychological code revealing the characters' distraught inner conflicts, and finally

(d) the code of metaphor and metonymy ensuring that significance be attached to environmental and external indicators such as those effected by the stage setting, for example the road in the 'heart of nowhere', and the insignificant, meaningless cross. 7)

All this is exemplified in the common concern of the two clownlike tramps whose sign-function is to represent mankind. Their shabby, dilapidated clothing is indicative of their physical and mental state of deprivation.

From this it follows that Beckett is not concerned with man as an individual. Beckett's realistic description of the awkward clownish figures half mockingly, half-seriously, mirrors the struggle man has with the material world. By reducing his characters to clowns, Beckett foregrounds the 'laugh-

7) See discussion in Chapter 4, **Representation of character in literature.**

able' aspects of man's experience where questions about man's knowledge of the world or his true identity apparently result in ridicule. The inference of the psychological trait is indicative of the characters' universalized, specific elemental facet of their inner life and, as they represent mankind, of the human condition; in Vladimir's words:

...at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not.

(Beckett, 1965: 79; emphasis MW)

The stage image is that of a country road, a tree which could be anywhere. Symbolically and according to the code of metaphor and metonymy in Fokkema's semiotic model, the two tramps Vladimir and Estragon represent mankind on the road of life. They are 'in the heart of anywhere'; there is no beginning nor end of the road as suggested by the stage directions. The stage space is completely empty apart from a tree which symbolizes the passage of time. The empty space symbolizes the isolation the two tramps find themselves in. Simultaneously this enhances the feeling of dependence on each other.

In spite of the tree being dead in Act I and now having fresh green leaves, Estragon feels that nothing changes their situation:

Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful.

(Beckett, 1965:41)

With this utterance Beckett dramatizes the experience with

deadlocked time. The static situation of time is brilliantly mirrored by the act of waiting, as while we wait:

all other action is suspended, except 'the action of time itself'.

(Esslin, 1976: 37)

In undergoing the act of waiting with his tramps, Beckett reflects the drama man experiences as he is confronted with the concept of time. The different aspects of time are expressed in the parodies elaborating small social rituals and physical pre-occupations acting as a means with which to fill in time. The reference to eternal time emerges when Vladimir's attempt to establish a closer relationship is abruptly deflated by Estragon:

Vladimir: ... So there you are again.

Estragon: Am I?

Vladimir: I'am glad to see you back. I thought you were gone forever.

Estragon: Me too.

Vladimir: Together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this. But how? (He reflects.)
Get up till I embrace you.

Estragon: (irritably) Not now, not now.

(Beckett, 1965: 9)

The involvement of the two tramps, each with his own physical discomfort (Estragon has problems with his feet, Vladimir with his bladder), is satirically expressed in the repetitive pattern of the dialogue:

Vladimir: It hurts?

Estragon: Hurt! He wants to know if it hurts! ...

Estragon: It hurts?

Vladimir: Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!

(Beckett, 1965: 10)

For no apparent reason, the subject changes and the concept of 'eternal time' springs up when Vladimir adds a new feature: the theme of redemption by alluding to the biblical story of the two thieves who were crucified with Christ. This new subject releases a tension between the physical and the metaphysical which is felt and further developed in the response of each tramp with regard to the Bible. Estragon only remembers the coloured maps, the responses registered being purely sensuous. Vladimir is persistently occupied with the story of the two thieves. He struggles with conventional Christian terminology which indicates his uncertainty in grasping the meaning of the terms involved. The constant uncertainty of the appointment with Godot, as well as Godot's unreliability and irrationality clearly demonstrates the futility of hope:

The act of waiting for Godot is shown as essentially absurd.

(Esslin, 1976: 56; Author's emphasis)

Biblical allusions are echoed throughout Waiting for Godot. However, these should all be designated to the enigmatic mystery of man's metaphysical destiny. From the dramatic context within which biblical allusions occur it is clear that

Beckett conveys an essentially modern vision of uncertainty. These put all belief in the traditional old religious frame of belief into question. Whether or not Godot is God is not so much the concern of the play, but rather the act of waiting:

...Godot simply represents the objective of our waiting - an event, a thing, a person, death. Moreover, it is the flow of time in its purest, most evident form. If we are active, we tend to forget the passage of time, we pass the time, but if we are merely passively waiting, we are confronted with the action of time itself.

(Esslin, 1976: 49; Author's emphasis)

The ultimate impact of Waiting for Godot (1965) is created by the symbolic dimension of the play. Its creator does not show himself and thus the search goes on and on. The striking impact of the play can be traced to its effective use of active stage images which symbolize man's despair, his tragic dilemma.

Much more can or should be said about this play. However some of the salient points, I think, have been highlighted: they symbolize the deepest fears and anxieties experienced by man:

... which have been only vaguely experienced at a half-conscious level, (constituting) a process of catharsis and liberation analogous to the therapeutic effect in psychoanalysis of confronting the

subconscious contents of the mind.

(Esslin, 1976: 70)

The awkward, clownish and simultaneously tragic characters become one actant as they have one central aim which is to represent mankind in their struggle to find out the meaning of life. At the same time it is their function to make the spectator or reader critically aware of the belief that it is man and his social structure that create happiness or misery. 8)

Shorn of all certainties, dramatists like Beckett are confronting a world in which a decentralized self is a common denominator. Man is unable to believe in his own reality and as a result becomes a problem to himself. Logically, human nature is not a fixed entity, but a result of that which society, education and environment make of him.

8) That happiness or misery lies entirely in the hands of man, is one important feature of Nietzsche's 'superman' and concept of Nihilism. See Section 3.1 Philosophy Nietzsche and Nihilism.

2.3 CONFUSION IN THE DETECTIVE STORY

As has been noted in Section 2.1, the logic of 'difficult to solve' questions is that of the detective story, the epistemological genre par excellence. In Eugene Ionesco's detective story Victims of Duty (1962), the same confusion in a somewhat different environment as in Waiting for Godot (1965) is evident: it has its beginning as the sole detective arrives at a flat, looking for the neighbours, but they are out. He wants to find out whether the former occupant of the Choubert's flat spelled his name 'Mallot' with a 't' or 'Mallod' with a 'd'. The answer he receives is indicative of the confusion:

Why, yes, of course, you're right", how do I know?
 how do I know? ... How do I know?...I don't know
 how I know.

(Ionesco, 1962: 119; author's emphasis)

The detective, who looks such a nice young man, very soon involves Mr Choubert in something about which he is totally ignorant as he never knew Mallot or Mallod. However, the detective cleverly orders Mr Choubert to delve into his subconscious, as the answer of the problem can surely only be found there. The detective becomes a psychoanalyst, the identity between the detective play and the psychological drama is perfectly demonstrated.

Beckett's detectives Watt, Malone and Molloy in his trilogy of novels of the early 1950s, or the sole detective in Sarraute's The Unknown Man, do not find what they are look-

ing for. The typical preoccupation with this dilemma points to the central concern: personality as it used to be known does no longer exist. As a consequence of losing individuality, identity is lost. Characters become formless, actants, so-called 'textualized' entities: semantic aspects in Beckett's artistic creations are organized around issues of epistemological doubt and introspective reflection. Employing this new modernist technique, Beckett has illustrated the ontological discontinuity of stable reality and the problematic concern with instability in the form of communication failure and disintegration of personality; the focus of presentation shifting to an 'inner life' determined by psychological dominance.

Finally, critical analyses differing one from the other, it is virtually impossible to come to an unequivocal conclusion about the modern literary texts discussed above, as they in themselves offer no definite conclusion or resolution of the issues with which they deal. Yet it can be said with certainty that the modernist text foregrounds the concentration on the self: the inner reality of character reveals all the complexities and incoherences of a psychological essence; according to Fokkema's (1991: 73) semiotic model, the psychological code which reveals the character's distraught inner conflicts, enhancing the awareness of psychological essence.

The discussion of the modern literary text with a shift to essential psychological convention in the form of dramatic theatrical representation draws attention to the central theme of this thesis: the problematic nature of man mani-

festing itself as a matter of consequence in literature.

It should be clear that issues of epistemology are central to the modernist texts referred to in the foregoing discussion. Having established its literary manifestation, we next turn to the philosophical underpinning of man's experience of uncertainty and despair, as well as the psychological explanation for abnormal behaviour caused by such experiences by looking at some external theories in this regard.

CHAPTER 3

SOME EXTERNAL THEORIES

3.1 PHILOSOPHY - NIETZSCHE AND NIHILISM

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), was a German philosopher of aristocratic Polish extraction. He was born in Roecken near Luetzen, his father being a clergyman. After a brilliant university career at Bonn and Leipzig at the age of twenty-four he was appointed professor of Greek at Basle. Owing to ill health he resigned (retired) from this post in 1879. In 1889 he had a mental breakdown. He remained insane for eleven years, and died in 1900 in his sister's home in Weimar. As the key to his philosophy, it should be added to these biographical details, that his whole life was a struggle against such sicknesses as neuralgia and insomnia.

The meaning of Nihilism is best explained by analysing the the word nihil (latin) meaning nothing. It is a philosophic term which dates back to the twelfth century and signifies the sceptical attitude of mind which questions everything, especially existence itself. When traced back to more modern times, it is realized that nihilism represented an amorphous body of social and political discontent manifesting itself among Russian educated classes. Its contemporary progress in Russian intellectual circles can be attributed to Turgenev's famous novel, Fathers and Sons in which, since the main protagonist of the creed does not recognize any authority and doubts any hitherto known principle and

value, he asserts the freedom of sovereign individuality or of the sovereign individual. Nihilism was an originally philosophical and literary school without any political significance. However because it was given a political direction, its aim was to reconstruct a communist society. In attaining that end, the nihilists did not scruple to use the most violent means. The most prominent victim was Tsar Alexander II, who was assassinated together with his family on 13 March 1881. Nihilism also became a synonym for **anarchism** as Nietzsche proclaimed himself as Antichrist.

Nihilism can be summarized as having the following meaning:

1. In a certain sense, a negative doctrine, which rejects current beliefs, religion or morals; it denotes a scepticism that denies certain types of existence.
2. Nihilist doctrines of extreme revolutionary characteristic features; in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Originally used in small groups which repudiated the established order and its standards. Existential nihilism denies the right of man over anything but his own life. 1)

The nihilistic view envisages different images of modern man preoccupied with the problem of **being** (Dasein), which

1) Nietzsche and Nihilism adapted from The Third Edition of Everyman's Encyclopaedia London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., and Grabert-Mulot-Nuernberger, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur: Philosophie der Jahrhundertwende, 1978.

poses, in certain circles, a complexity in itself.

Nietzsche's philosophy is characterized by his belief that humanity is composed of two types which are fundamentally different from each other: the weak versus the strong, the slavish versus the masterful, the mob versus the aristocratic few. In the struggle between these two opposing fundamental types, each would seek to impose its morality on the other in order to depreciate those qualities in its opponent which are dangerous to it. Thus the weak would commend the qualities of meekness and compassion, they would extol poverty and renunciation.

According to Nietzsche, Christianity arose among the slave population of Rome and because Christianity exercised this slave morality he opposed it and declared himself an Antichrist. He revalued all values in the light of the morality of the strong. He was of the opinion that God does not exist, in fact God died. Consequently, mankind must surpass itself as it is only the strong, dominant, the superman that can survive. These ideals are reiterated with powerful eloquence in his many books, but most emphatically in the lyrical and epigrammatic Thus Spake Zarathustra which is essentially psychological. 2)

At the turn of the century the impact of Nietzsche's philosophy had its start. During this time the newly established German empire together with other great European powers were

2) A complete edition of Nietzsche's works in English (18 volumes) has been edited by Dr. Oscar Levy (1909-12) see also E. Bentley, The Cult of the Superman, 1947.

striving towards their imperialistic phase. At the same time many people had patriotic feelings of ecstasy and jubilation on the progress of the sciences, trade and commerce and civilisation. It was then that Nietzsche propagated the end of a great period in history: 'God is dead ... do we not err through an eternal empty space? Does the empty space not aspire us? Must the lanterns not be lit already in the morning hours? Can we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers, who bury God?' 3)

He only recognized one possibility to move away from materialism, realism, scepticism and resignation in order to gain a solid world-view: nihilism had to become a reality leading to a new affirmative way of life, which he praised like great heroic poetry.

3.1.1 The impact of Nietzsche's philosophy on literature

Nietzsche's philosophy had a great influential power on man and therefore on literature. He radically uncovered false values, requested extreme fundamental re-evaluations of all hitherto acknowledged values which he contrasted with a powerful and determined life-philosophy. This new concept of life-philosophy characterized to a great extent the world-view of the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The power of his wide range of influence was also felt in the dominant perspectives on litera-

3) My own translation of Nietzsche's quotation from Grabert-Mulot-Nuernberger, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur: Philosophie der Jahrhundertwende, 1978:246-7.

ture.

The nihilistic trend in literature is evident in many different forms. It can be argued that in Beckett's Waiting for Godot (1965), the nihilistic influence is to be attributed to the emptiness of space, Nietzsche's 'empty space' which must, according to him, be 'filled with power'. Evident in this play is the absurdity which expresses itself in the waiting of the clown-like figures, (characters who become actants) for nothing at all: whether it is Godot or God, it is in both cases absurd to wait for someone who does not make an appearance. As a play with existentialist features we have to assume that the point of departure is the fact that God = Godot is dead because, according to Nietzsche, God is 'dead' (existential-nihilistic trend), according to Freud, God is 'unconscious' (psychoanalytical trend). The only positive influence such a literary text, which signals **waiting** as something **absurd**, can have on the spectator/reader is its motivation to action: man must, first of all, not accept the state of powerlessness, he must become self-sufficient, taking his 'fate into his own hands'.

Even the joyously 'God is alive-proclaiming' Christians, who cannot begin to comprehend the motives of the Anti-Christ, have to be realistic enough to admit that in order to be helped, one must help oneself: prayer alone does not help, but prayer and deed certainly may. Thus as far as existentialist nihilism is concerned, the 'help yourself' tenet can actually be viewed as a positive point. This leads to the philosophy of existentialism per se.

Existentialism is a post-war philosophy which is closely related to nihilism and which became popular in France after the liberation in 1944 especially among European intellectuals. The main representative of existentialism is Jean-Paul Sartre, a French novelist, dramatist and philosopher born in Paris, who advocated his philosophy in a series of successful plays, books and essays. Existentialism may be defined as a school of thought based on the conception of the absolute senselessness of existence, and therefore absurdity of anything in connection with life, and with the universe. It negates all creation and thus all morale or, as Sartre puts it 'all human activities are equivalent, all are destined by the principle of defeat.' 4) One of the basic principles of existentialism and nihilism is that man can shape his own destiny by exercising his will in the face of the given life-potentialities. Existentialism's main premise, its point of departure is that man exists. It emphatically denies predestination, another characteristic of nihilism with its conception that because there is no God (God is dead), man has to help himself. Man has freedom of choice and of action, and the action of each man, if subjectively inspired, inspires and influences others. Consequently every individual is completely responsible to humanity as a whole. Existentialism denies dogmatic solutions of eternal questions of ultimate origins or endings. A man is free to choose his faith. Sartre asserts that an existentia-

4) Adapted from the Third Edition Everyman's Encyclopaedia. 1949-50 by Ridgeway Athelstan. Also see Friedrich Nietzsche Die Geburt der Tragödie in Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Band III, Teil 1, G. Colli und M. Montinari, Berlin/New York: 1972.

list can either be a christian or an atheist. Like Nietzsche, he is also an atheist, although his followers included catholics until existentialism was condemned by Rome in 1948.

Sartre supports his philosophy with the theory of complete atheism and advocates the blind following of one's instincts and primitive impulses. This contradicts the belief that man is alone on earth with God as his Judge.

The difference between nihilism and existentialism is that whereas nihilism advocates power and strength in man as super-being, existentialism refutes the sublime in man and chooses to portray man only in his misery. Hence Sartre's plays in which he, in the language of existentialist philosophy, tells of the extreme mental and physical suffering and human sadness. Dramas of frustration are staged in an existentialist conception of hell. In this regard Ionesco stated that the language of society must be broken down, because it contains nothing but 'cliches, empty formulas and slogans'. 5)

The philosophy of existentialism underwent sustained criticism from catholics because of its denial of theosophy, as well as from communists, as the latter considered it to be incompatible with Marxist dialectical materialism.

The existentialists of today insist that man must disregard the abstractions, generalizations and enquiries into 'essen-

5) Adapted from Esslin (1976). Also see Das Abenteuer Ionesco: Beitrage zum Theater von heute, Zuerich 1958, and Kaufmann, NY (1957) From Dostoevsky to Sartre.

tial' qualities. Man should rather concentrate on existence in and for itself. Particular experiences which motivate man to make choices are of significant value to the existentialist, as it is choosing rather than thinking that interprets the tenet of an existentialist attitude because it is through experiences that we are able to feel and exhibit our individual distinctiveness. Experiences are therefore revelatory of our true nature, they are moments in which we truly exist, experiences of Existenz (Kierkegaard).

Existentialism is thus a philosophy which claims to be concerned with actual life, as it is lived and not with abstractions. It is significantly concerned with the implications of such moments when life is lived in some revealing way which differs from mere living. The difficulty with this logical analysis arrives when the existentialist selects as revealing such experiences which are in no way universal and when they take these unacceptable experiences to establish new repellent systems as if these were revelatory of the predicament of mankind. This was actually Kierkegaard's attitude, from whom the existentialists borrow their characteristic features, according to Kierkegaard's attitude in the mode of philosophy in which the contrast between mere existence and significant existing is exemplified.

Martin Heidegger, whom Sartre follows, however argues with consistent existentialist logic on the existence of an other: meaning that he is absolutely convinced that the rhetorical question of whether there may be something else than

nothing is still hovering somewhere in space. 6) Heidegger, who became prominent when he published his chief contribution to philosophy Time and Being (7) which is mainly concerned with the problem of 'being in the world', also has the reputation of being an atheistic existentialist, together with Sartre and even Kierkegaard.

Existence in Heidegger's sense means 'man's determination to stand out into the truth of being'; should man fail to transcend the limits of the world, he is condemned to death and nothingness. He must then experience the anguished state of 'nothingness', he must first exist in the nameless, not for its own sake, but to arrive at the conviction that this nothingness is the path to being. However the problem whether a man shall be or not be is an event which takes place by experiencing that which is dreaded most, supposedly fear. The outcome with the struggle of fear or dread will determine whether or not man is released from nothingness and with it perceives its other side of being, Heidegger's famous and well-known other, which I would argue is significant of that which gives man a meaning in life.

Heidegger's nihilistic outlook is comparable to Dostoevsky's interpretation of suffering. To Russian authors the portrayal of the topic of suffering awakens conscious

6) In this respect his thought is similar to Lacan's when he speaks of the subject's entry into the symbolic order as being reduced to a signifier in the field of the 'other'. See my discussion on Jaques Lacan, Section 3.2.2 Language and the unconscious.

7) Heidegger (1963): Sein und Zeit. Tuebingen.

thought, a feeling for the sufferer and it simultaneously has the power to redeem evil.

Heidegger is of the opinion that God is absent from the world and that man has lost his dignity. It is not certain whether God will reappear or man will ever regain his dignity. The thought of God seems to have no place in Heidegger's philosophy, apart from the fact that the question remains as a possibility.

3.1.2 Fin de siècle - Nietzsche and Schopenhauer's influence at the turn of the century

With his novel Buddenbrooks, which was first published in 1901, Thomas Mann narrated the story of people who reside in a world which underwent a new meaning, due to a more advanced technology and industrial expansion, but also due to the influential power of such great philosophers as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Their philosophical interpretation of the world as they perceived it, became so powerful that it affected the lives of many at the end of the century. The end of the century became the much talked about 'fin de siècle' or 'Endzeitstimmung', an end-time mood of which the French comedies were symbolically descriptive as the period of decadence, signifying the decline in morals.

A European literary movement at the end of the nineteenth century which originated from the awareness of appertaining to an excessively refined and increasingly declining culture reflected a mood of discontent, a mood of pessimism, disunion and psychologically troubled psychic condition.

It was the time when artists became ensnared by drugs and endeavoured by their eccentricities to seek the attention of the public. 8)

8) Decadence is still very much prevalent in modern/post-modern literature, the artistic ideal being the production of morbid, pathological perverse and confused types of narration; to a lesser extent this phenomenon is, inter alia, also evident in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1982), in which one of the characters, Mr Compson, is ensnared by the philosophy of nihilism with Nietzsche as main perpetrator. See the analysis of this novel in Chapter 6.

In attempting to describe the meaning of the 'fin de siècle', the influential power of Schopenhauer's philosophy which is closely linked to the mood of decadence will be discussed, in order to establish a better understanding of the persisting condition of an end-time mood of exhaustion, manifesting itself in man and consequently in literature.

Although Arthur Schopenhauer's (1788-1860) philosophy is based on one of the most renowned German metaphysical philosophers Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), insofar as it is of the realm of idealism, it differs in that it is a philosophy of pessimism: according to Schopenhauer, the subconscious will strives to realize itself in an independent existence, and is thus forever frustrated. From these frustrations there is no escape, hence pain and sorrow are unavoidably arising. 9)

An escape from these is only possible through forms of idealism, such as the arts, ethics, aesthetics, and religion. The mediator between mankind and the idealism of life is the human genius. Schopenhauer's goal is universal pity. Having achieved this, the personal will is annihilated, and the world of appearances becomes a world of non-existence and therefore sorrow ceases. Thomas Mann described the effect Schopenhauer's philosophy had on him as 'ein metaphysischer Rausch' ... 'eher leidenschaftlicher als eigentlich philosophischer Art', (a metaphysical intoxication, rather of passionate than of philosophical nature'). 10)

9) Schopenhauer's notion of 'no escape' is adequately described in Mann's Buddenbrooks (1982) in Jean Buddenbrook's statement that man is 'paralysed vis-a-vis his fate'.

10) Die neue Rundschau, 1930: 742.

Schopenhauer's influence manifested and reflected itself in German and French literature, with a feeling of decadence being particularly prominent in the work of Baudelaire and a sense of the ephemeral, the 'Vergaenglichkeit', permeating Thomas Mann's work, as is evident, for example in his novel Buddenbrooks (1982). The back-drop of historical transience was the much talked about 'fin de siēcle' or 'Endzeitstimmung': during this time one wanted to break with the hitherto known tradition, hence one looked for new forms of expression, as one simultaneously searched for a new 'Lebensinhalt', a new reason to live.

Consequently, one could say that the end of the century did not only mean:

- a) the end of a social and cultural superior mode of existence
- b) the end of the bourgeoisie (Buerkertum) and its decline through its industrialization, but it also meant:
- c) its own cultural over-refinement, which finds its utmost expression in the systematic foregrounding of the incapability to cope with life.

In the Buddenbrooks (1982) the 'Endzeitstimmung' 'fin de siēcle' or mood of despondency, the loss of courage or hope influenced by Schopenhauer's philosophy, is perfectly reflected in the character of Thomas Buddenbrook. It is believed to be an echo of the author's own pessimistic, disil-

lusioned view of life. Whereas the symptoms of exhaustion echo throughout the whole story, the first generation only rather vaguely touched this topic by indirect suggestion. It is the first, older generation of the Buddenbrooks who are portrayed as steadfast, realistic, 'down to earth' people, 'masters of their lives'. Only gradually does this characteristic steadfastness disappear to show signs of exhaustion in the third generation. Driven by the conviction that all efforts are ultimately in vain, futile and useless, Thomas Buddenbrook, 'consumed with gnawing fears', shows symptoms which are of a psychological nature, and which sadly lead to destruction. The author transfers his own feelings of pessimism to the fictional character of Thomas Buddenbrook, who is unable to overcome 'the world of appearance', reminiscent of Schopenhauer's philosophical view of only being able to overcome the world of appearance through forms of idealism.

By penetrating into the deepest layers of the dying Hanno's mind, the son of Thomas Buddenbrook, the narrator does not only masterfully portray the disintegration of the Buddenbrook family line, but he reflects the mood of total exhaustion, the final epitome of the so-called 'fin de siècle'. It is thus significantly through the Buddenbrooks, but particularly through the characters of Christian, Thomas and Hanno Buddenbrook, that Mann interprets the signs of decadence as a process of exhaustion, a European cultural symptom of over-refinement, a mood of uncertainty and fatigue which manifested itself more and more.

As a typical concept capturing the appearance of the 'fin de siècle', one consequently meant a class of cultured people who endeavoured to find a more refined personal intellectuality: one oscillated between the ecstasy of life, aversion and sensuous refinement.

Thomas Mann remained captivated by the problems of the cultural decline. In his essays, political publications and speeches he described the concept of this epoch as a 'fop-pish rule' with which the bourgeois period 'died away'.

The novel Buddenbrooks with its clearly defined 'life-like' personalities, had become very popular because one could identify with the characters. The people also recognized the mood of an epoch which was to reach its finality. 11)

In this time where our relationship to reality is produced by our own consciousness rather than as a response to a pre-existent state, the concept of objectivity is called into question. Indeed, the notion of truth itself becomes problematic. In a realistic world of values, how can any interpretation of reality claim to be objectively true? Once we can accept that the view of our experience of reality is **subjectively mediated** and often chaotic and irrational, the notion of literature as a 'reflection' of reality is undermined. This is where the shift from tradi-

11) Having reached its one hundredth birthday recently, Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks is once again very much in demand. I am indebted to Dr. Manfred Eickhoelter of the Kulturstiftung der Hansestadt Luebeck, Heinrich und Thomas Mann Zentrum, for letting me have a photo of the Buddenbrook House.

tional realism to new literary forms and strategies emerge. They evolved to accommodate the concerns which are portrayed in such literary works to be discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, namely Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks (1982), Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1982) and as a representative of the postmodernist trend in fiction Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 (1979).

3.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO FREUD'S PSYCHOANALYTICAL THEORY

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who is universally recognized as the originator of psychoanalysis, created the main model of the psychodynamic or depth psychology school, the emphasis being on the biological aspect of humans. Freud, together with Jung and McDougall, continued the medical tradition, stressing the importance of individual totality which is also called the holistic tendency.

Although Freud's psychoanalysis is not to be regarded as synonymous with psychology, it is nevertheless the theory which explains the total individual role of unconscious motivation and emotional processes in the formation and development of personality. Human problematic behaviour is explained in terms of the complex organization and integration of conflict between various inner structures. This comprehensive theory provides explanations for everything from the most trivial behavioural disorder to the severest individual and cultural phenomena.

Freud's conceptual idea of man is that of an energy system in man which (energy) is used for different purposes. In his conviction that, as a reaction to life or reality, man is motivated by unconscious forces, his drives or so-called instincts, Freud is both deterministic and irrationalistic.

His emphases are mainly on sexual needs originating from the life drive or Eros and aggressive drives underlying the death drive or Thanatos. As man wants to fulfil his drives, but in doing so may be in constant conflict with society, he

is aspiring to homeostasis for the sake of pleasure and avoidance of pain. This is called the hedonistic principle.

According to Freud's theory, neurosis, as well as positive aspirations such as achievement, all originate from activating energy by the instincts. Freud describes the **psyche** in terms of the **conscious**, that of which man is consciously aware, and the **preconscious**, the need which must be brought to consciousness, that is to the surface, through attention, and the **unconscious**, meaning the contents beyond consciousness which are repressed, but which in certain circumstances surface, that is become conscious. Unconscious human motivation is of great importance, as it has a determinative effect on human behaviour which expresses itself by means of such things as the slip of the tongue, dreams, somnambulance, hypnosis and neurosis.

Freud's personality structure is explained in terms of three functional concepts: a) The **id** which forms the biological basis of behaviour, directing psychological energy, which is based on the **pleasure principle**, consequently demanding instant gratification of either sexual or aggressive drives ('**Triebe**'). b) The **superego** which represents man's moral functions, namely his conscience. This moral function depends on the **control principle** in conformity with social norms. c) The **ego** which functions according to the **reality principle**, controlling acquisition of norms and behaviour which are socially accepted.

According to Freud's principles, man tries to channel biol-

ogical impulses (id-impulses) into acceptable behaviour. In so doing he satisfies that which Freud calls the **superego**. The ego is a so-called 'weak mechanism' which is constantly at the mercy of the urges of the biological, the id impulse and the restrictions of the **superego**. When, for example, the ego and **superego** are overruled by the drives of the id, conflict and anxiety arise as a result. This conflict is then handled by means of **psychological defence mechanisms**, such as projection, repression, reaction formation and others. The dynamics of behaviour, or motivational factors are due to energy being released under pressure from the instincts or from unconscious motives. These are mainly sexual and aggressive needs.

Freud calls the psychological energy of the life-instinct, and the sex-drive especially, the **libido**. Consequently, **constitutional determinants** are stressed, as man is regarded as a proactive being reacting to his subjective experience. The ultimate emphasis is thus on psychological energy, instincts, id and psychosexual development, which are viewed as being inherent or biological. Man responds to these and as he does so man's behaviour pattern is determined accordingly. As it is Freud's opinion that external events and objects stimulate libido, he acknowledges that people behave reactively to environmental stimuli, that is, to objective experience.

Early childhood experience and environmental determinants have an impact on the behaviour of man in later years. Un-

consciously motivated behaviour is believed to be due to the repression of the id impulses by the ego and superego.

Thought processes develop from a primary to a secondary stage. Whereas the primary thought processes remain principally in the unconscious where reality and fantasy are indistinguishably mingled, the secondary thought processes indicate that man differentiates himself from his environment, outgrowing his early self-love, that is, narcissism. Outgrowing means acquiring motor skills and language proficiency, anticipating events and being able to control needs. The ego is developing at the same time, while the superego leads to integrated values, a better acceptance of the ego with its restrictions and its aspirations.

Freud attributes a major role to the development of instincts which centre on certain erotic zones of the body. These are the mouth, anus and genitals, which (zones/areas) shift with age. The various stages of psychosexual development are closely linked with this process: namely the oral, anal and phallic (infantile or pregenital) stage, mainly the first five years, when sexual satisfaction is auto-erotically obtained, that is, when it is obtained from his own body. Then the consolidation state, approximately 6 years to puberty, and the genital stage (puberty) arrive.

In Freud's genetic approach attention is drawn to development in early childhood, particularly to the first five years. The outcome of events during these years manifest themselves in later life and in adult behaviour. Parental

influence is very strong during the phallic phase. During this period the measure of a healthy sex role and sexual identification will decide whether an Oedipus complex, that is an identification with the parent of the opposite sex is resolved to ensure that sex role behaviour in later years will conform to accepted norms. Freud's term fixation means that healthy development was arrested during one of these stages. Behaviour such as sexual deviations, aggression, nail-biting, bed-wetting, smoking habits are explained in terms of unresolved childhood conflicts. 12)

Mental health is closely linked to the concepts of structure, dynamics and development. The roots of psychopathology can be traced to the past. It is determined that conflicts arose from fixations because instincts remained unsatisfied. However as instincts still demand satisfaction, these belong to the present, although they are repressed by the ego and superego. Such repressed needs, conflicts and frustrations may manifest themselves in subsequent behaviour such as aggression, anxiety and/or neurosis. The cause of anxiety being of particular importance to Freud, he maintains that it is the ego's defence against threatening situations. According to Freud, infants have their first experience of anxiety as a result of traumatic experiences of the environment which are set into action by the birth trauma. Separations, such as being left alone in the dark, or maternal

12) Both fixation and early childhood behaviour feature in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, discussed in Chapter 6.

deprivation are the cause for even greater anxiety. Freud's 'Fort Da' Game, for example a toy (or anything else) which is given to a child, causes joy, however, when it is taken away, it causes anxiety.

Freud's definition of realistic anxiety takes place when the ego is threatened by external environmental conditions, neurotic anxiety, when the ego-control is threatened by the id impulses and moral anxiety, when the ego is threatened with punishment by the superego which expresses itself in guilt feelings. 13) Individuals turn to various ego defences or psychological defence mechanisms in order to cope with anxiety and other conflicts. The Freudian psychotherapy or psychoanalysis aims to afford the patient an insight into his own unconscious motivation by means of transference effects between patient and therapist.

The Freudian theory, that is, the psychoanalytic school, had a great influence on the development of psychology. It stimulated general research so that Freudian concepts and methods such as clinical observation, case studies, dream analysis and psychoanalysis are part of contemporary psychology to this day. Critics highlight Freud's deterministic view of man as an irrational creature ruled by instincts,

13) In Mann's Buddenbrooks, Thomas Buddenbrook is prone to realistic anxiety, whereas both his brother Christian and his son Hanno suffer from neurotic anxiety, the latter exemplifying the extremity of his condition. Moral anxiety will be explained with reference to Quentin's moral anxiety in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury. See the discussion of these novels in Chapters 5 and 6 in Section B.

his vague and speculative concepts and his attempts to explain everything in terms of a single frame of reference, that is, as defence mechanisms. (Morgan, 1981: 527)

It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that as far as Freud was concerned, the study of the unconscious, that is the study of the psyche, was the determining factor for many mysterious elements manifesting themselves in human behaviour and hence also in literature. Thus, he maintained that unconscious feelings and ideas had a great influence on behaviour.

Freud studied hypnosis and hysteria under Charcot, the famous Parisian neurologist, who taught that hysteria is of psychological origin. He soon developed his own technique of free association for hypnosis which would subsequently become the principal method of psychoanalysis. This new method was based on the principle of association but with the emphasis on association of unconscious ideas or desires: the patient was required to express any thought which came to mind, no matter how peculiar or how intimate it may be, its object being to recall suppressed thoughts or memories to the conscious mind. What Freud almost in every instance found was that free association returned the patient to his childhood. Furthermore, many of the patient's repressed thoughts and memories had sexual implications.

Although the originality of Freud's theory involving the sexual element was unquestioned, his statements were consid-

ered provocative and even objectionable, during the first decades of this century. His ideas however guided psychological thinking into hitherto unknown areas. Due to his views on the conscious and unconscious aspects of personality and on anxiety, the concept of **defence mechanism** had its beginning. These principles are familiar to every student of psychology today, in fact it was Freud who greatly contributed to the understanding of normal and abnormal behaviour.

The theories of psychotherapy and neurosis were established by Freud's friend and colleague Josef Breuer who studied the neurotic symptoms of patients. With it a philosophy was established which is still prevailing in our society today. From these therapeutic experiences it soon became evident that mental health is closely related to the concepts of structure, dynamics and development. Eleven years after the breakthrough and great discovery, Breuer and Sigmund Freud published a provisional survey of the results of their joint research. A **brief summary** thereof is as follows:

1. Every psychiatric condition characterized by excitability, sensory and motor disturbances such as hysteria results from an injuring experience, that is, a trauma.
2. Such an experience, which results in hysteria, is so intolerable that it is excluded in the totality of life, as it cannot be digested. This consequently results in becoming subcon-

scious, meaning that the injuring experience, is pushed into a subconscious state.

3. However that which is pushed aside still exists as it is an intensely emotional experience. Thus, this repressed experience will sooner or later come to the surface in another way, so diverse in experience that it is not recognized, but it appears as a symptom; for example, it is better not to drink (Breuer's patient) than to be made aware of the experience by drinking. It is more acceptable for the patient to have the symptom(s) than the emotion.
4. However, if the emotion can be expressed, the symptom disappears 'immediately and definitely'.

(Adapted from: Ueber den psychischen Mechanismus hysterischer Phaenomene, Neurologisches Zentralblatt: 1893) 14)

As they soon realized that it was apparently not so easy to cure these symptoms, they had to eliminate the words 'immediately and definitely'. Symptoms did disappear for a length of time, if a patient had the ability to remember and express the attached emotion. However, the patient still needed the presence of one particular person. In the case quoted above, Breuer's patient only began to talk after she felt his hands. Neither Breuer nor Freud could explain this phenomenon. Breuer's theory of neurosis was that every neurosis had its origin in a traumatic experience. The therapy for neurosis lies therein that the trauma which is always to be

14) See Freud, S. 1945: Gesammelte Werke, Band 2 & 3. London.

located in the past, must be brought to remembrance, and the emotion must be expressed as forcibly as possible.

The significance of psychoanalytical literary criticism and Freud's venture into the field of literature will be highlighted in the next section.

3.2.1 Psychoanalysis and literary criticism

As a result of recent developments in both psychoanalytic theory and literary criticism, the critical focus in psychoanalytical literary criticism shifted from the psychology of the author, or his stand in, the character, to that of the reader, and then to the relations between author, reader, text and language. Most traditional psychoanalytical criticism focused on the author and the contents of the literary work. These are the most limited and problematical kinds, as to psychoanalyze an author is at least speculative.

It is also problematic as far as the relevance of authorial intention is concerned. Commenting on the unconscious motivations of characters, or on the psychoanalytical significance of objects or events in the text, the psychoanalysis of 'content' may be of limited value as well, since 'hunting for phallic symbols', may classify qualities to one single denominator only, thus reducing the meaning of the literary work.

In the past, Freud's venture into the field of literature was viewed as being limited to these two, abovementioned modes. In these Freudian analyses, literary texts are ex-

plicated in terms of psychoanalytic procedures in order to expose literary psychic deviations and their motivation. The essays Freud wrote on Michelangelo's statue 'Moses' and on a short novel by Wilhelm Jensen entitled Gradiva, 15) analyse the author as he reveals himself in the novel. It simultaneously examines unconscious symptoms manifest in art, as these are manifested in life. Amongst literary critics, it was felt that the materiality of the artefact itself, with its specific formal constitution, tended to be overlooked.

Freud's opinion of art was that the artist, like the neurotic, is oppressed by unusually powerful instinctual needs. As these needs cannot be fulfilled, they are channelled from reality to fantasy. He calls such 'channelling' which is affected or brought about by the author 'the softening power of artistic form', that which affects a pleasure in the reader, a 'fore-pleasure' (Vorfreude).

As for jokes and their relation to the unconscious, Freud maintains that jokes express a normally censored, aggressive or libidinal impulse. This is however made socially acceptable by the joke's form, its wit and word-play.

To assume that Freud viewed the artists as only being neurotic would be incorrect, as Freud in his masterpiece The Interpretation of Dreams (1967) suggests that the essence of a dream is not the raw material or latent content, but the

15) Freud, Sigmund (1945) Gesammelte Werke, London. Band 2 und 3: Die Traumdeutung, Band 7: Der Wahn und die Traeume in W. Jensens Gradiva: Der Dichter und das Phantasieren.

dream-work itself; it is the 'practice' which is the object of his analysis. It is in fact one stage of the dream-work, the 'secondary revision', which consists in the reorganization of the dream so that it can be presented in the form of a relatively consistent and comprehensible narrative. The dream is systematized by a secondary revision, gaps (indeterminacies) are filled in, smoothed and formed into a 'more coherent fable'. The fact that Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams is regarded as a masterpiece of psychoanalytical theory, and his conviction that nothing should be evaluated in 'isolation', at least highlights Freud's standpoint on the importance of analytical findings:

We must be careful, however, not to pursue these hypotheses too far beyond their first logical links, or their value will be lost in uncertainties. Even if we make no false inferences and take all the logical possibilities into account, the probable incompleteness of our premises threatens to bring our calculation to a complete miscarriage. No conclusions upon the construction and working methods of the mental instrument can be arrived at or at least fully proved from even the most painstaking investigation of dreams or of any other mental function taken in isolation.

(Freud 1967, 167: 511; Author's emphasis)

In order to achieve a valid result on the investigation of dreams or any other mental function, he furthermore maintains that it is necessary to correlate all the established

implications derived from a comparative study of a whole series of such functions.16) Consequently, the psychological hypotheses to which man is led by an analysis of the processes of dreaming must be left in suspense, until they can be related to the findings of other enquiries which seek to approach the, what he calls, 'kernel' of the same problem but from another angle. Taking the afore-mentioned into account, it is argued that Freud's psychoanalytical investigation does not only concentrate on phallic implications, but takes various scientifically implicated facts into account. He ventures into the field of literature basing his investigation on a comparative study of a whole series of functions. Even for the Freudian analyst literature should not only be a reflection of psychic reality, but a form of production.

In order to describe the relief which takes place in the reader during the reading process the 'tools' of psychoanalysis may be advocated to be 'used' in order to 'open' up the reader to the world of fiction and inner reality: the literary work should appeal to the superego, the ego and the id. In other words all these components should be activated, that is, set into motion, thereby recalling Freud's 'softening power of artistic form'.

However, these engagements depend upon an important condition: different appeals within the literary work must be

16) Freud's important statement 'the incompleteness of psychology on dreams (1967: 510) will be discussed in Section 3.2.2.

in 'some kind of cipher', that is, these must be codified to some extent, for the more open or direct they are, the less effect they have on the reader. The effect is indeed enhanced if they assume the degree of complexity which is evident in life itself, between superego, ego and id. The literary work seems to attain its desired effect by demanding of the readers such activities that will make it possible for the firm hierarchy of the constituent parts of the psyche to be opened up. This will have an effect of liberation as during the reading process, the reader focuses entirely and extensively on the inner happenings and as such draws attention to the often rapturous illuminations of the character's innermost being.

A discussion of the return of psychoanalysis according to Freud's theory of the unconscious in language, which has been initiated by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, will follow in the next section.

3.2.2 Jaques Lacan - language and the unconscious

The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) has initiated the return of psychoanalysis according to Freud's theory of the unconscious. He has, simultaneously, reformulated this theory radically. For Lacan the unconscious is more than the source of primal instincts that are randomly connected to ideas and images. The unconscious is both structured like language and, simultaneously the product of language.

In my discussion, I shall focus predominantly on the linguistic aspect of Lacan's distinction between the 'imaginative' and 'symbolic' stages in the subject's development from infancy to puberty and adulthood, as his issue is to articulate psychoanalysis with linguistics.

According to Lacan, the unconscious is not only structured like language, but it only comes into existence at the moment when the subject gains access to language, that is when its transference is 'the enacting of the reality of the unconscious' (Lacan, 1978: 174).

With the subject's entry into the symbolic order it is reduced to a signifier in the field of the 'Other'. This relation between the subject as the signifier and the unconscious as the discourse of the 'Other' can be explained in terms of Lacan's definition of the subject according to which the subject conceives the desire to be reunited with the 'Other' as a result of the lack it experiences. In the signifying net-

work of the unconscious every word indicates the absence of whatever it stands for. The expression of a desire in language is at the same time an admission of deficiency or lack as the absence of one can only be replaced by another that again signifies an absence. The notion that the unconscious is structured like language and comprises a network of signifiers represents a reformulation of Freud's theory of unconscious language utterances. For Lacan every single linguistic expression, whether written or spoken, is influenced by the unconscious. This implies that the unconscious is present in all language utterances, and not merely in dreams, word-play or figurative language as one might think Freud would have it.

This reformulation of Freud has had a profound impact on literary studies, insofar as the redefinition of key concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis resulted in a reappraisal of text and reader oriented theories of literature.

Instead of the Freudian probing of the neurotic psyche of either the writer or the character, for example Hamlet's Oedipus complex, the emphasis of literary criticism has now shifted to the operation of the text, and more particularly to the effect the text has on the reader, a reader who now acts the part of an analyst but who is nevertheless influenced by the text at the same time.

Psychoanalytic approaches are, generally speaking, centred on interpretation. However, while Freudian readings interpret, inter alia, literary texts to reveal Oedipus complexes,

Lacanian analyses are preoccupied with signifying chains. As examples of Lacanian readings in which the play of elusive signifiers are traced, one could cite Lacan's own illuminating readings of Edgar Allan Poe's The Purloined Letter or Shakespeare's Hamlet (see Lacan, 1966); one could also refer to Shoshana Felman's (1985) brilliant rereading of Henry James's ambiguous short story The Turn of the Screw, in which meaning is constantly deferred because the master signifier, the phallus, could be the screw, the mast or the Master and therefore is caught up in a signifying chain with continual sliding signifiers which prevent the text from stopping at a final, literal fixed signified or meaning. Thereby it purposely fails to clarify 'once and for all' the existing opposing interpretations of the text: the governess is genuinely trying to save her charges from evil, meaning the ghosts exist, or the governess is hopelessly neurotic, meaning that the ghosts are a projection of her repressed passion for the absent Master. By concentrating on how the text signifies rather than what it signifies, Felman also illustrates how the text affects the reader. It follows that one could come to the result that the reader begins as analyst, just as the governess begins as detective, and ends up as analysand. Thus, instead of the reader getting hold of the story, the reading of this excellent text has the effect of the story getting hold of the reader. This being an example of a non-reductive psychoanalytic reading of Henry James's text, shows that psychoanalysis does not merely 'reflect' a particular 'neurotic reality', but rather involves the reader in the intricacies of the text.

Turning now to Freud's analysing of dreams, an interesting phenomenon in the enigma of fire reveals itself. It is an attempt at explaining the remarkable dream of a fire burning a corpse. 17) In this instance, the preliminaries to this model dream are as follows:

A father had been watching beside his child's sick-bed for days and nights on end. After the child had died, he went into the next room to lie down, but left the door open so that he could see from his bedroom into the room in which his child's body was laid out, with tall candles standing round it. An old man had been engaged to keep watch over it, and sat beside the body murmuring prayers. After a few hours' sleep, the father had a dream that his child was standing beside his bed, caught him by the arm and whispered to him reproachfully: 'Father, don't you see I'm burning?' He woke up, noticed a bright glare of light from the next room, hurried into it and found that the old watchman had dropped off to sleep and that the wrappings and one of the arms of his beloved child's dead body had been burned by a lighted candle that had fallen on them.

(Freud, 1967: 509; author's emphasis)

Freud uses this dream to analyse the question of awakening, as well as the relations between sleep and waking life.

17) Freud, The Psychology of the Dream-Process Chapter VII in The Interpretations of Dreams, 1967: 509-511.

Having recognized that the dream was a process with a meaning which could be inserted into the chain of the dreamer's **psychical experiences**, he simultaneously admitted to have wondered why it was that a dream occurred at all in such circumstances 'when the most rapid possible awakening was called for' (Freud, 1967: 510). At the same time of admitting that there is no hard and fast explanation to the phenomenon, he established a theory, namely that 'this dream, too, contained the fulfilment of a wish':

The dead child behaved in the dream like a living one: he himself warned his father, came to his bed, and caught him by the arm, just as he had probably done on the occasion from the memory of which the first part of the child's words in the dream were derived. For the sake of the fulfilment of this wish the father prolonged his sleep by one moment. The dream was preferred to a waking reflection because it was able to show the child as once more alive. If the father had woken up first and then made the inference that led him to go into the next room, he would, as it were, have shortened his child's life by that moment of time.

(Freud, 1967: 510)

The problem with this explanation is however not to be underestimated. It may indeed be possible to have control over one's subconscious state of sleep, in this case 'for the sake of fulfilment of a strong wish to be the cause of wake up'. But how is it possible that the father's subconscious

dreamstate 'allows' him to imagine in his dream that his child stands beside his bed, catches his arm and whispers reproachfully 'Father, don't you see I'm burning?' Besides 'wishful thinking' in his dream, should one not consider that there may be other explanations?

Although Freud comes upon a dream which, according to him, raises no problem of interpretation, its meaning being obvious, he is yet doubtful because he realizes

'...the incompleteness of our psychology of dreams'.

(Freud, 1967: 510)

Although all investigations have led towards 'the light-towards elucidation and fuller understanding', Freud admits that as soon as they endeavoured to penetrate more deeply into the mental process involved in dreaming, 'every path will end in darkness':

Thus the psychological hypotheses to which we are led by an analysis of the processes of dreaming must be left, as it were, in suspense, until they can be related to the findings of other enquiries which seek to approach the kernel of the same problem from another angle.

(Freud, 1967: 511; emphasis MW)

Freud's investigation of 'what causes us to wake up' and 'what prevents awakening' is, according to Aleid Fokkema (1991: 138) picked up by Lacan and is displaced somewhat in a new way by the question 'where is the reality in this ac-

cident'? Other questions arise, such as whether reality of our desire 'writes us of the order of the fire of our sleep', or of the order of the fire to which we awaken?' (Fokkema, 1991: 138). One should also ask oneself where exactly the fire is in this dream adventure, and which is the real fire? Is it the fire burning the living person in the dream, or the one burning 'by metonymic repetition' the corpse of the child in the next room? If this is so then the fire would 'create a mental image of fatally consuming the body of a **dead love**. Fokkema (1991) feels that the 'rhetoricity of the Lacanian fire,' but also the rhetorical 'burning' involved in every text, occurs precisely at the level of just such a missed encounter, of an **unarticulated** but dynamically metonymic, encounter between sleep and waking' (1991: 138-139).

Upon contemplation, one can agree with Lacan's suggestion to this 'sovereign significance' namely: 'Where is the reality in this accident, if not that something even more fatal is being repeated by means of reality, a reality in which the person who was supposed to be watching over the body still remains asleep, even when the father reemerges after having woken up? Thus the encounter, forever missed, has occurred between dream and awakening, between the person who is still asleep and whose dream we will never know and the person who has dreamt merely in order not to wake up...' (Quoted by Fokkema, 1991: 139).

One can, at this instance, accept Lacan's explanation, namely that it is only in the dream that this truly unique en-

counter could occur. For no one, no conscious being can say what the death of a child really is, except the father of the child himself. As even an atheist's concept of God is that he is not dead, but that God is unconscious (Freud). 18) Thus Lacan's view that Freud protects the father makes sense. One could perhaps pose another question, namely: is the unconscious in us not perhaps the voice of God?

Fokkema maintains that Lacan's question is not a philosophic one 'what is the (im)proper meaning of the fire?' but rather a question that could be called literary. It is the question par excellence of the textual, or the rhetorical: 'where is the fire that consumes, that burns us?' This question is however felt to be a question of undecidability, as the fire is certainly burning in both rooms, in sleep and also in waking life. It is a fire which shifts in a dynamically metonymic burning that 'catches all around us', only because we have to admit (like in a certain sense Freud does) that we cannot know where it is: 'In this entirely sleeping world only the voice is heard, Father, can't you see I'm burning? This sentence is in itself a firebrand-of-itself bringing fire where it falls and one cannot see what it is burning, for the flames blind us to the fact that the fire bears on the real' (quoted by Fokkema, 1991: 139).

Lacan's approaching of the 'kernel' of the problem is philosophical. It looks beyond its means into the depth and leads us to the conclusion that nothing is impossible. However,

 18) It may be of interest to know that, according to the Red Indian race, unconsciousness means 'the world of the spirits'.

it simultaneously draws our attention to the consideration of the unconscious in language, to the 'Other'; foregrounding, as it were, the degree of complexity which is evident in life itself: for the fire, according to Lacan, can never be located by the discourse of meaning. The reader can only be gently led to an understanding of the phenomenon; thereafter, an interpretation of the dream is left to each individual.

To bear down, according to the page, on the white which inaugurates it, its simplicity, in itself, forgetful even of the title which would speak too loudly; and when there is aligned in a break, the least, disseminated break, chance vanquished word by word, indefectibly the white returns, gratuitous before, certain now, to conclude that nothing is beyond, and to authenticate silence.

(Quoted by Fokkema, 1991: 139)

The transferential operation Lacan has effected in the theoretical field is delicately skilful. By endeavouring to penetrate more deeply into the mental process, it holds the undeniable 'privilege of the Other'.

The portrayal of the inner life of characters in Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, with its obvious psychological implications, will be the topic of discussion in the next section.

3.3 SIGMUND FREUD AND THOMAS MANN - PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN BUDDENBROOKS

Seeing that the focus on the inner life of characters, the portrayal of their innermost feelings and thoughts in other words, is a major topic of this literary enquiry, it is appropriate that the reading of some literary texts in terms of Freud's psychoanalytic theory will be considered to enhance a keener awareness of human relations as the source of psychological insight; especially as the inner voice itself is a generally accepted psychological reality.

Literature has always been closely related to psychology, particularly because, as has been mentioned above, the psychoanalytical theory is the study of human behaviour explaining the total individual role of **unconscious** motivations and emotional processes in the **formation and development of personality**. Thus, human problematic behaviour is explained in terms of the complex organization and integration of conflict between various inner structures, providing comprehensive explanations for everything from the most trivial behavioural disorder to the severest individual and cultural phenomena.

Dealing with the inner human truth, expressed through the inner voice, the source of psychological insight proceeding from the areas of conscious or unconscious experience, reinforces and enriches both the narrator's role as interpreter of human nature, and enriches the reader at the same time. Whatever the author's intentions, modern literary texts deal with the inner human truths. The narrator's role

is to interpret the self, while simultaneously creating vast impulsive forces of imagination and according to modernist trends, attend to the reflection of a chaotic inner self.

The view of reflecting the subconscious became a dominant literary feature which opened literature to a disordered associative structure, best explained by means of psychoanalysis.

Although one author, namely Thomas Mann, publicly distanced himself from psychology in 1910, which was part of his move towards neo-Classicism, Mann's attitude towards psychology changed in the period 1895-1930. This change of attitude was as a result of Mann learning to understand human nature better through Freud and his fascination with Nietzsche and Schopenhauer as philosophers of decadence. He was of the opinion that the poets and philosophers have opened up the unconscious to him. 19)

Mann participated in the general modification and adaptation of Freud's teaching. In Buddenbrooks (1902) Mann began to concentrate on the hidden side of characters; these are, as far as outward appearance is concerned, normal and more often than not, successful people. He makes it his task to unmask these 'outwardly-with-themselves-satisfied' citizens, which one may call a psychological unmasking of the inner, hidden self.

As example of the aforementioned, the relations to psychol-

19) Adapted from Starobinski, Psychoanalyse und Literatur 1970.

ogy in the works Death in Venice, the Joseph novels, The Magic Mountain and Buddenbrooks are extensive. The Magic Mountain preceded Mann's work on Freud in which he acknowledged psychoanalysis as one of the principal weapons of an enlightenment in the struggle against European fascism. This is a part of Mann's work on Freud which is best known. The 'chaotic depths of human nature' is expressed in later novels, whereas both Buddenbrooks and The Magic Mountain may also be viewed as a distinctive challenge to psychological readings.

Psychological short stories of which Mann was said to be the master, aimed at unmasking hypocrisy and weakness. He applied this technique of unmasking to characters who made a show of being outwardly satisfied, but who, because of their strange behaviour, drew attention to themselves. From Nietzsche he also learnt a more general approach to the unconscious, using the terms from Nietzsche's Die Geburt der Tragödie (1972).

Although Thomas Mann's disposition towards the Freudian theory was by no means all positive, his insistence on the necessity of a knowledge about 'the chaotic depths of human nature' are expressed in his later novels only. In the Buddenbrooks (1982) psychological implications are expressed through the medium of third-person narration, with an omniscient author taking pains to explain the causes of characters' behaviour to readers. Although the reader is thereby acquainted with the 'inner life' of a range of characters, this method self-evidently has to be distinguished from that

of interior monologue, where the illusion is created that the reader attains 'direct' access to a character's mind, without a mediating narrator. 20)

Abnormal psychological manifestations in the form of degeneration are especially evident in the bizarre forms of Thomas's brother Christian's inner psychological neurotic landscape, (Buddenbrooks 1982: 28) and in Thomas Buddenbrook's son Hanno. 21) These neurotic forms originate from activating energy by the instincts which culminate in neurosis.

Christian's neurosis, his mental disorders show themselves in his excitability, his compulsions and obsessions, his sensory and motor disturbances such as the twisting of his face, his hysteria evident in the incessant fear of getting ill as well as his obsession to observe and describe in detail his inner life and bodily sensations. His suppression at admitting his incompetence at business due to his physical and mental weakness of which he is aware, makes it impossible for him to meet the task of achievement set by his fore-fathers to a self-disciplined life-style in order to preserve the family business. His imaginary perceptions, his hallucinations take on such forms that he sees a stranger on his sofa who nods his head at him. When he passes the window he has the sudden urge to jump out of it. These ex-

20) Faulkner's attempt at a more 'direct' and 'unmediated' portrayal of the inner life of characters in The Sound and the Fury is discussed in Chapter 6.

21) These will be discussed in greater detail in the comprehensive analysis of Mann's novel in Chapter 5.

tremely bizarre forms are indicative of the typical manifestations of neurotic fears. When these reach a psychotic stage, he gives up his business activities to concentrate more on theatrical farcical activities. His ridiculous, unnatural behaviour is also the reason which leads to a gradual separation from his family.

According to Thomas, his brother's place is that of a comedian in a 'café chantant' (Mann, 1982: 245). Friends and acquaintances call him 'Hans Quast, ein laecherlicher Mensch' (Mann, 1957 German edition: 267). 22)

Thomas Buddenbrook's psychological conflicts are of a different kind. They arise from, amongst others, instincts which remain suppressed, unsatisfied: he turns away from his first love, because she is a sales-girl who is unable to contribute towards the family business in the form of a substantial dowry. The family however, according to the custom of the time, expects Tom to marry a young lady of 'some standing', coming from a 'reputable house'.

When he eventually chooses his lady she has quite a substantial dowry, her father being a millionaire. Tom's family considers this an 'appropriate' marriage, as her dowry simultaneously adds a considerable amount of Kurantmark to the family business. But the marriage is unhappy; after his wife Gerda gives birth to their son Hanno, she turns out to

22) For a detailed description of Christian's "Krankheitser-scheinungen", "die albernen Ergebnisse einer widerwaertigen Selbstbeobachtung", his attitude towards his family, the firm and his friends, see also the German edition of the novel, Mann, 1957: 284-287.

be cold and distant towards Thomas. When he becomes aware of her disposition towards him, he begins to suffer, in silence, as he realizes that his longing for true love has not materialized. His suppressed longing for love culminates in depressions. As a psychological defence mechanism to cover up his feelings of rejection and (as he thinks) inadequacy, he begins with exaggerated activities, noticeable to all his friends and family, which eventually turn into obsessions: Man wusste sogar, dass er taeglich, manchmal sogar zweimal am Tage, das Hemd wechselte und sich das Taschentuch und den a la Napoleon III. ausgezogenen Schnurrbart parfuemierte. (Mann, 1982: 226). 23)

His disappointment with Hanno, who is incapable to attend to the family business, and realizing the limitations of his own abilities, lead to an increasingly nervous disposition. As a result his health deteriorates and a realistic anxiety sets in, increasingly taking hold of him as time goes by. 24) When his strength weakens, and his painful endeavours to do justice to the task of preserving the family business fail, a visible exhaustion sets in which he, for the sake of appearance tries to cover up. Realizing that his exhaustion is so overpowering that all efforts to keep up a sane appear-

23) "Wenn das Merkwuerdige zu beobachten war, dass gleichzeitig seine "Eitelkeit", das heisst dieses Beduerfnis, sich zu erquicken, zu erneuern, mehrere Male am Tage die Kleidung zu wechseln, sich wiederherzustellen und morgenfrisch zu machen, in auffaelliger Weise zunahm, so bedeutete das, obgleich Thomas Buddenbrook kaum siebenunddreissig Jahre zaehlte, ganz einfach ein Nachlassen seiner Spannkraft, eine raschere Abnuetzbarkeit" (Mann, 1957: 383).

24) Freud's realistic anxiety takes place when the ego is threatened by the external environment.

ance are in vain, a psychological defence mechanism sets in. He turns to Schopenhauer's philosophy which manifested itself increasingly in the minds of many and which influenced other great philosophers such as Nietzsche as well and certain great musicians, at the end of the nineteenth- and the beginning of the twentieth century when pessimism became a general trend of the time.

Thomas Buddenbrook became fascinated by this 'philosophy of pessimism' which advocates a liberation from frustration. The longing for liberation from his painful existence manifests itself in form a death-wish (Todessehnsucht, Freud's Death Drive 'THANATOS') taking hold of Thomas, eventually overpowering him.

Hanno, Thomas's son was incapable to cope with life already in his early childhood. The signs of decadence he shows are described by an audible narrator who concentrates fully on the observable as well as on the inner conditions of this character. The observable conditions are those of the decay of Hanno's teeth, his small, weak and delicate body. The inner conditions become evident in his extreme, in his father's opinion, almost abnormal love for music, in his intense disinterest in school and in the family business. His daily tasks, especially attending school, become painfully unbearable to him.

When he becomes seriously ill, he willingly departs from a harsh world into "the cool shadows (of) peace" (Mann, 1982: 583).

The rhetoric with which Hanno's condition is almost poetically described, is also indicative of Freud's notion that the voice of conscience (the superego) is constituted through the internalization of the author's voice:

When the fever is at its height, life calls to the patient: calls out to him as he wanders in his distant dream, and summons him in no uncertain voice. The harsh, imperious call reaches the spirit on that remote path that leads into the shadows, the coolness and peace. He hears the call of life, the clear, fresh, mocking summons to return to that distant scene which he had already left so far behind him, and already forgotten. And there may well up in him something like a feeling of shame for a neglected duty; a sense of renewed energy, courage, and hope; he may recognize a bond existing still between him and that stirring, colourful, callous existence which he thought he had left so far behind him. Then, however far he may have wandered on his distant path, he will turn back - and live.

(Mann, 1982: 582,583)

Hanno, however, shudders when he 'hears life's voice'. He does not turn back, but finds refuge in the 'shadows, the coolness of peace'.

To Hanno Buddenbrook, the last link of the Buddenbrook line, life is unbearable, the concept of time, the 'here and now', becomes a painfully threatening experience from which he,

not unlike his father, subconsciously seeks to be released. Subsequently, a longing for the release from these shackles, these unbearable bonds, develops.

Thomas Mann, who can be viewed as a narrator determined to give expression to his characters' silent thoughts, was very much aware of Freud's norms of psychoanalytical investigations. In The Unconscious (1957: 187) Freud maintains that the processes of the unconscious system "are timeless". To a greater extreme than Thomas, Hanno was living in a timeless, dream-like world, a world of his own making. He created this subjective world as a defence mechanism, against a realistic world in which he was a stranger. In the character of Hanno, Mann succeeded in portraying the ultimate epitome of decadence.

The realistic anxiety culminating in the subconscious desire for elimination as manifested in Thomas Buddenbrook and then, to a much greater severity in Hanno, highlights a psychosomatic condition which is a predominating thematic motif in the novel of the demise of the Buddenbrook family. It manifests itself preeminently as from the third generation of this family.

This review of psychoanalytical enquiry will serve as a preview and preliminary outline of the terrain which will unfold in my discussion on the fin de siècle and the demise of the Buddenbrook family in Chapter 5.

In the foregoing discussion it has been shown how the theories of, inter alia, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud

have influenced literary production at the turn of the century and, in particular, how they have been captured in Thomas Mann's novelistic portrayal of the decline of a once influential family. If it can be argued that nihilism and existential despair provide a context for the beliefs which determined, to a great extent, the destiny of the Buddenbrook family; it is also true that the underlying causes of the physical and spiritual disintegration of individual members of that family seemingly require a psychoanalytic explanation. Having shown how some philosophical and psychological theories may be relevant to an understanding of man's response to the fundamental questioning of formerly unassailable beliefs and values brought about as a result of accelerated change on many levels in society, the next chapter focuses on issues pertaining to the fictionality of literary characters per se - their approximation to 'people' despite their textual embeddedness, modes of depicting the 'inner life' of characters and the reader's construction of literary character. Bearing in mind the main literary texts under consideration in this study, it will be shown how the reader's construction of a literary character is mainly influenced by two factors: on the one hand, textual indicators provided by means of direct and indirect characterization determine the reader's evaluation of a character as 'type-like' or 'individual-like'; on the other hand, the 'image' the reader eventually forms of a character of necessity also depends on a consideration of philosophical and psychological evidence to be gleaned from extra-literary sources. Consequently, the comparative reading of Thomas Mann's

Buddenbrooks, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 in Section B of the study will be informed by the philosophical and psychoanalytical theories discussed in the previous chapters; and it will also be based on the account of the representation of character in fictional works provided in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

REPRESENTATION OF CHARACTER IN
LITERATURE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Theories on the depiction of character in literature can be divided into three broad categories: traditional views in which the resemblance of literary characters to actual people is stressed, structuralist views in which character is seen as subordinated to its role or function in the plot and postmodernist views in which the 'identity' per se of character is questioned, in that it is seen as a textual construct, as 'existing' by virtue of the words in the text. In this study, aspects of all of these views will be used, depending on the nature of the literary text and the means of depicting character in any particular instance. Broadly speaking, the differences among these theories can be summarized according to whether the focus is on the resemblance of characters in literary works to 'real' people, or, alternatively, whether the subordination of character to structure and language is stressed. In traditional theories on narrative it was taken for granted that characters, although construed through words, sufficiently resembled real people for readers to be able to identify with them, to evaluate their actions or to empathize with their fortunes or misfortunes. This notion has come under attack not only in the focus on function and textuality rather than person and psychological depth in structuralist and semiotic studies, but

also in the attempts by postmodernist theorists 'to explode our sense of the coherence and unity of the self - of the identity with the self with itself - and of the human subject as a viable focus of meaning' (Hochman & Wachs, 1990: 392). However, despite arguments stressing the textuality of character or the fragmentation of the subject in poststructuralist theory or postmodernist discourse, Aleid Fokkema, in her study on Postmodern character (1990: 18) stresses the fact that the so-called traditional view which held 'that characters represented human beings, that novels were about people, and that psychological motives sustained plots' is still widely adhered to.

Without attempting a detailed survey of theories on the representation of character in literature, the following issues will be addressed in this chapter in an attempt to account for the perception that characters in literature are simultaneously 'life-like' and 'text-embedded': the distinction between different types of character, depending on either their resemblance to real people of flesh and blood or their function as linguistic constructs existing by virtue of the words alone; techniques of characterization and different strategies whereby the reader may construct an 'image' of a character; and, bearing in mind the emphasis on psychoanalytic theory, strategies whereby a character's 'inner life' may be portrayed.

The above issues will inform the reading of Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 in Section B of the

study, where it will be shown that an understanding of the novels not only depends on the assumption that literary characters do resemble 'real people' to some extent, but that it also relies on the recognition that any literary character, regardless of how 'life-like' it may appear, remains a construct that is artificially created through words and therefore firmly embedded in the text. These two seemingly irreconcilable views represent the values in 'life' and 'literature' referred to in the title of the study - whereas the assumption that literary characters resemble real people justifies the focus on philosophical and psychological views, the acknowledgement of the fictional context of the 'individuals' encountered in literary texts requires a study of the representation of character in literature.

4.2 FROM TYPE TO INDIVIDUAL

4.2.1 'Flat' and 'round' characters

Arguably the most influential traditional view of character is that proposed by E.M. Forster in his Aspects of the novel (1970, first published in 1927; all references refer to the 1970 edition). In the two chapters entitled 'People', the author outlines his well-known conceptional typification of characters as being either flat or round. According to Forster (1970: 75), flat characters are 'constructed round a single idea or quality'. This characterization can be formulated in one single phrase or in one sentence.

In support of his typification he quotes Mrs Micawber's mode

of expression from Charles Dickens's David Copperfield: 'I will never desert Mr Micawber'. This continuously repeated line seemingly entirely seizes up Mrs Micawber's character, as it reveals her one and only concern. Apparently, this continuously repeated phrase is all the reader needs to understand her; with this information he can readily assess her character.

Dickens's ability of presenting a vision of humanity that is far from being shallow, despite his dependence on the portraying of types and caricatures, is a great acknowledged achievement. However, it is considered to be a greater achievement to create round or multidimensional characters, as these have the ability to change. Jane Austen, Defoe, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy are some of the authors whose common concern is the portrayal of life-like characters who have the quality of individual beings with distinctive, interesting attributes and qualities. Consequently, they are capable of change.

Forster's analyses of Jane Austen's portrayal of characters (1970: 83), wherein he draws attention to readers' readiness to identify with fictional characters, simultaneously applies to authors such as those quoted above, who strive to create round, or multidimensional characters, as these multidimensional characters, not unlike Austen's characters, are equipped for an extended life.

It follows that the complexity of the multidimensional character becomes a source of interest to the reader because

of the surprise momentum, as 'it has the incalculability of life about it - life within the pages of a book' (Forster 1970: 85). It is important for our purposes, given the emphasis on psychoanalytical theory, to have a closer look at Forster's distinction between people in real life and the life-like characters the reader encounters in fictional works. The difference lies in the potential to learn much more about the characters between the covers of a book than would ever be possible for people in real life, regardless of how well we may think that we know them. Forster, (1970: 54) maintains in this regard that it is their manner of portrayal in a novel that sets novelistic characters apart from real-life people, or historical figures, in that contrary to real-life situations, where our knowledge of other people is at best only approximate and dependent on external signs, 'people in a novel can be understood completely by the reader, if the novelist wishes; their inner as well as their outer life can be exposed'.

At a first assessment, Forster's distinction between flat and round characters seems straightforward. In Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, for example, Jason Compson often expresses his bias and frustration by a randomly repetitive expression 'once a bitch always a bitch' (1982: 163). His thoughts are punctuated with similar cliches. His vocabulary and sentence structure furthermore reveal a lack of intelligence and education. His tendency to make inappropriate generalizations and the egocentricity he displays are also indicative of his brutality which is his only outlet for

outrage at the apparent injustice he imagines to have suffered.

Similarly, were it not for Benjy's severe retardedness, his repeated monotonous, fixed unrational phrases would also make him a stereotypical character, perceived as 'flat' (Forster, 1970) or a 'pure type' (Fishelov, 1990). However, to whatever degree such an evaluation could be correct, due to his severe retardedness such an assessment would demand or at least have to be complemented by a detailed psycho-analytical investigation, as his inner life is made known to the reader.

It follows that Forster's distinction has a limited explanatory value, since the portrayal of their inner life automatically elevates seemingly 'flat' characters to at least a degree of 'roundness'. However, despite its limitations, the necessity to show how different types of character could indicate different functions in the narrative text remains a useful analytical tool. In this regard, one is reminded of Henry James's distinction between characters that are 'of the essence' as opposed to those that are merely 'of the form' - whereas the first category would coincide with Forster's category of 'round' the second points to a supportive role, in that they are considered to be the 'wheels of the coach' that keep the narrative going and serve to support the main characters (quoted by Fokkema, 1991: 22-23).

As we shall see, a major problem with the application of Forster's categories, which is also implied in James's distinction of different functions, is the fact that such hier-

archization tends to be regarded as an evaluative rather than an analytical distinction. In the next section we shall have a closer look at attempts to develop a more useful categorization of literary characters.

4.2.2 Criticism and refinement of Forster's categories

Forster's categories have been accepted and simultaneously discredited in the critical discourse on narrative theory and structure. Although Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 40-41) recognizes the 'pioneering importance' of his distinctions, she nevertheless argues that the expression 'flat' evokes the idea of a two-dimensionality devoid of depth. Flat characters, such as those created by Dickens, are arguably 'not only felt as very much 'alive' but also create the impression of depth'. One may add that they do create the impression of depth despite simultaneously giving the impression of being typically flat characters constructed round a single idea or quality which can be formalized in one single phrase or sentence and which therefore excludes any experience or development.

In her second objection, Rimmon-Kenan's argument seems clearly to be on Forster's distinctive division between 'flat' and 'round'. According to her, this distinction is reductive as it blots out 'the degrees and nuances found in actual works of narrative fiction' (1983: 40). In her third and last objection she argues that Forster confuses two criteria which do not always overlap. She substantiates this claim in that she draws attention to Forster's 'flat' char-

acters as being both simple and developing and his 'round' characters complex and developing. She argues that these do not necessarily co-exist as fictional 'round' characters do not always experience a development and are therefore not complex; on the other hand, 'flat' characters which are simple do however sometimes experience a development.

Some of Rimmon-Kenan's (1983) objections to Forster's categories have been addressed in subsequent attempts to refine Forster's well-known distinction between flat and round characters. In Pickrel's (1988: 182) reconsideration of the terms he suggests that Forster's pair be replaced by the terms 'essentialist' (for 'flat') and 'existential' (for 'round') respectively:

... an essentialist character is one whose 'essence precedes existence', whose nature is a given that remains largely (essentially) unchanged by the experience it passes through, whereas an existential character is the reverse - for him or her 'existence precedes essence'; his or her nature is shaped by experience ...

(From: Journal of Narrative Technique, 18(3): 181-198)
(emphasis MW)

In a more sophisticated perspective on 'flat' or 'essentialist' characters, Margolin (1990) adds a more substantive quality to the distinction between 'type' and 'individual', in order to incorporate both literary and social and, as would be applicable for Benjy, Jason, Quentin and Mr and Mrs Compson in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1982), the

needed psychological consideration, embodying:

... either a recurrent literary pattern/stereotype or social or psychological model occurring in a society's encyclopaedia and supposed to represent in an exhaustive manner a property syndrome that is widespread in human society. Examples for the former are the clown, the fool, the sentimental lover or suffering artist. For the second, the bored suburban housewife, retarded child, fanatic revolutionary, or greedy stockbroker.

(Margolin, 1990: 453-452; emphasis MW)

Faulkner's portrayal of Mrs Caroline Bascomb Compson in The Sound and the Fury (1982) coincides with that of social climber and hypochondriac, an inadequate mother to her children abnegating her responsibilities. She fits into Margolin's category of the 'bored suburban housewife'. However, taking into consideration that she is a hypochondriac, provision should most likely have to be made for psychoanalytical considerations.

It should be clear from the foregoing that a distinction between degrees of 'flatness' and 'roundness' in the portrayal of literary character can be functional despite the fact that Forster's original distinction needs to be refined. It is also important to keep in mind that the distinction should be seen as functional rather than evaluative and that the preference for 'round' or 'flat' characters would vary according to the requirements of a particular mode of writ-

ing. So, for example, Pickrel's perspectives on the flat or essentialist characters are significant insofar as they are seen to be subjected to their appointed roles within the plot. They simultaneously often introduce a self-conscious awareness of the writing act, because they 'manifest an almost inescapable affinity for exploiting the linguistic medium - for making us aware that they are creatures of words' (1988: 189); to which one may add that post-modern writing exactly illustrates what is now meant by the definition of 'creatures of words'. 1)

A functional improvement of Forster's categories is that put forward by David Fishelov (1990: 423-424) 2) who addresses the third weakness referred to by Rimmon-Kenan by replacing Forster's dichotomy with intersecting axes which make Fors-

 1) A telling example of the self-conscious awareness of character being a literary construct rather than a reflection of a living person, is found in Milan Kundera's post-modernist text The Unbearable Lightness of Being (1984: 39), where he offers the following information about the creation of the two main protagonists: 'It would be senseless for the author to try to convince the reader that his characters once actually lived. They were not born of a mother's womb; they were born of a stimulating phrase or two or from a basic situation. Tomas was born of the saying "Einmal ist keinmal". Tereza was born of the rumbling of a stomach'. We will consider the text-embeddedness of character when commenting on the representation of Oedipa Maas in Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 in Chapter 7.

2) Harvey (1965) and Hochmann (1985) also attempt to improve on Forster's classification. Accordingly, Harvey introduces four categories: i) the protagonist, as the background figure ii) the Jamesian ficelle and the card. The first two categories show similarities with Forster's round and flat characters respectively, whilst the remaining two can be seen as intermediate categories. Hochman's classification consists of eight categories of oppositional pairs: stylisation versus naturalism; coherence versus incoherence; wholeness versus fragmentation; literalness versus symbolism; complexity versus simplicity; transparency versus opacity; dynamism versus stasis and closure versus openness.

ter's classification of flat and round characters more accessible in conjunction with the representation of character on both the textual and the constructed levels of a narrative text. By doing so, Fishelov devises a descriptive classification which provides the possibility to consider both the 'typical' and the 'individual' properties of a fictional character. His observation that the tension between type and individual is evident in every character depicted in a literary work of art can only be supported.

Fishelov simultaneously draws attention to reader participation in that the reader's construction of a literary personage as either 'type-like' or 'individual-like' is taken into account. The perception of type and individual in literary discourse depends, of course, upon reader participation or reader activity. According to Fishelov the reader tends to attribute a certain stereotypical characteristic such as, inter alia, jealousy, naivety, stupidity to a character, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the genuineness of an individual which does not merely represent a certain social, psychological or physical quality. His basic classification thus takes into account the 'life-like' qualities of characters as well as the recognition that they are artificially created as linguistic constructions.

In Fishelov's opinion and in order to prove Forster's qualification regarding the extent to which characters may be sensed as more or less "life-like", consideration must be given to whether the character is perceived as flat or round on the textual level and whether the character is perceived

as flat or round on the constructed level. Thus, Fishelov adds to Forster's categories of flat and round characters the following textual and construction levels:

	Flat- Construction level	Round- Construction level
Flat- Textual level	"Pure" type	Type-like individual
Round- Textual level	Individual-like type	"Pure" individual

According to this table, Fishelov distinguishes four types: a) 'pure' types; b) type-like individuals; c) individual-like types and d) 'pure' individuals. The four parameters of the diagram given above, is explained as follows by Fishelov (1990: 426):

Textually flat means a one-dimensional appearance of a character in the text; the character is depicted from only one perspective, always says the same things, attention is called to only one of the character's traits, etc. Textually round means a rich and elaborate appearance that a character gains over the course of the text; we know the character's name; we learn of the character's thoughts, see him in different situations, many traits of him are told to us, etc. Constructionally flat characters stand for some simple category (moral, social, aesthetic, etc.) into which we can fit the character in question after constructing data from various levels of the text

(dialogue, description, action, environment, and so forth). **Constructionally round** is the classification to use when we cannot reach a constructed type.

(Author's emphasis)

In trying to find examples from literature with which to explain Fishelov's categories, it is advisable to remember that Fishelov alerts us to the facts, already noted above, that each literary character probably contains both 'type-like' and 'individual-like' properties and that readers accordingly tend to look for both typical and individualistic traits in their construction of literary characters on the basis of textual evidence. In Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, for example, there are numerous characters of which the reader learns quite a lot from textual evidence - not only their names, but also their family trees, occupations and beliefs are disclosed in the course of the text; in addition, the reader encounters most of these characters at different stages in their life when they experience moments of great happiness or of disillusion, illness or death. Given the amount of textual detail devoted to these characters, they can easily be described as **textually round** in Fishelov's terms. In the reader's construction of character they would, however, not all be designated as **constructionally round**, since only a few are presented as true individuals who would not fit the category of constructed type (the successful businessman, the upright citizen, the competing rival, the faithful wife, the unfortunate divorcee, etcetera). Indeed,

in Thomas Mann's depiction of the family history, it would appear that those characters whose minds become 'transparent' in Dorrit Cohn's (1978) sense of the word, and whose thoughts, feelings and fears are best known to the reader, 3) would emerge as constructionally round characters, thus 'pure' individuals because they have been singled out for special attention (the third generation Thomas Buddenbrook and his son Hanno for example). It follows that the reader would probably be inclined to view most of the characters in Buddenbrooks as 'individual-like types', since they would appear to be constructionally flat, despite their elaborate depiction on the textual level.

By contrast, those characters which become known by one or more traits only, for example Tony's second husband with his strange appearance and his almost unintelligible dialect characterized by often repeated phrases; or sickly Klothilde, characterized by her old maidish looks and her eating disorder, could most probably be termed 'flat' in Forster's sense of the word, since they are both textually and constructionally flat.

The 'type-like individual' may be more difficult to spot, since the reader is not given much detail on the textual level and yet the character would appear to be more than a 'pure' type, for example, Tony's first and second husband, who are only later exposed as being dishonest, underhanded

3) See Section 4.4 below for an outline of Dorrit Cohn's analysis of different strategies for conveying the 'inner life' of characters in her Transparent Minds (1978).

and deceiving.

In trying to find examples for Fishelov's categories from Buddenbrooks, the contemporary reader cannot but be struck by Thomas Mann's almost inexhaustible array of especially 'individual-like types'. However, what in a lesser artist may have led to a 'flat' or uninteresting depiction of mere types, becomes in the Buddenbrooks a brilliant display of the author's observational powers with regard to the Central European culture at the turn of the century. Although not depicted in any psychological depth, as is the case with those characters whose inner life is revealed to the reader, these meticulously described figures provide a rich and varied image of an entire community caught in the demand for economical, social and political change to which they would respond with varied success. A closer look in this regard will reveal the way in which the author wishes the reader to regard Mr Hagenstroem. The omniscient author takes pain in describing him as a 'parvenu', a new rich man whose repulsive appearance matches that which he stands for in the eyes of the honest burgher. He is a man who gets rich through devious ways, such as money manipulations and therefore could be regarded as the befitting embodiment of Margolin's 'greedy stockbroker', and as such he should be viewed as the representative of what was then understood to be a 'new hateful world order'. Moreover, by juxtaposing him with decent burghers who earn their living in an honest way, he is depicted most effectively as someone not to be trusted. By this most effective, superlative direct description of Mr

Hagenstroem on the textual level, the author reflects the well-established citizens' epoch-making view-point, namely the sentiment with which the citizens attributed bestial characteristics to the new-rich, which was simultaneously understood to be 'a constant reminder of the reaction against a new unrefined epoch' (Mann, 1982: 218/463). 4)

It should be clear from the above that Fishelov's categories could be a useful tool in analysing the devices favoured by an author in the depiction of literary character. If the range of categories distinguished with reference to Thomas Mann's Buddenbooks serves the purpose of alerting the reader to different possibilities on a scale from 'pure type' to 'pure individual', then the following example taken from Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse (1977) illustrates the importance of keeping in mind Fishelov's cautionary observation that most characters would display both typical and individualistic traits. As indicated above, textual markers focus on different situations through which the reader is acquainted with many different character traits. For example, a textually round character which gets a rich and simultaneously ironic attention on the textual level is Mrs Ramsay.

4) This fact finds its emphasis in, and is simultaneously... strengthened by, the foregrounded expression of the recurrent 'beast-metaphor', and 'Kanailien-metaphor', which originated from Julius Kroeger, the representative par excellence of a vanished cultural tradition; Jean Buddenbrook's father in law. When Julius Kroeger is hit by a stone which was thrown at the carriage by a rebel, as Jean Buddenbrook takes him home from a counsellor's meeting, the old gentleman calls the rebels 'Die Kanailie', thereby expressing the opinion of the middle class burghers of the 'fin de siecle', who viewed these people and the uprising as a new villainish, unrefined epoch which 'could not be trusted'.

At a first assessment one would be inclined to think that she is the typical example of the "individual-like type", as she is the portrait of perfect womanhood, although Woolf points out that the perfection was entirely depending upon the dominance of the man versus the subordination of the woman in the patriarchal world of the Victorian era. With perhaps a tinge of irony the authoress describes the attributes which cause the reader to recognize in Mrs Ramsay an almost 'too perfect' epitome of the ideal Victorian wife and mother:

She is intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily; if there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it - in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all - I need not say it - she was pure.

(Woolf, 1943: 150; emphasis MW)

That this portrait of 'perfect womanhood' cannot be sincere, gradually dawns on the reader once it becomes clear that Mrs Ramsay's sense of self-denial masks her true character and that she suppresses or redirects her own needs and creativity. The story of Grimm's fairy tale she reads to her son James is that of the Fisherman's wife who is a greedy character. The greed of this character finds an echo in Mrs

Ramsay's feeling that she was not satisfied with what she had, but also did not quite know what she wanted. She is not unaware of this aspect of her character:

Wishing to dominate, wishing to interfere, making people do what she wished - that was the charge against her, and she thought it most unjust.

(Woolf, 1977: 92)

Although the reader initially cannot but arrive at the well founded conclusion that Mrs Ramsay is an individual-like type, in Fishelov's sense of the term, her moral integrity and her unyielding desire to be of assistance to her family and friends, her dissatisfaction with life shown in the above example eventually force the reader to construct another image of Mrs Ramsay, an image which yields a complex personality. It follows that Mrs Ramsay's dual character elicits a complex response which makes it impossible to restrict her image to that of a constructed type characteristic of the Victorian era's 'portrait of womanhood'.

The value of distinguishing between typical and individualistic traits in the same character should be clear - Mrs Ramsay's complex personality enables the reader to construct an image of the ideal Victorian type of woman whilst it simultaneously exposes that image as undesirable in that Mrs Ramsay, the individual, is dissatisfied with the image of womanhood which governed her behaviour and attitude in accordance with the predominant patriarchal values of the Victorian era.

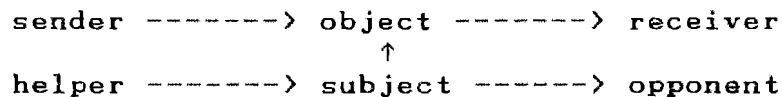
4.2.3 Actantial roles

The distinction of various types of literary characters, especially Fishelov's categories of 'pure' types and 'individual-like types', can be compared to formalist and structuralist studies focussing on the different roles characters are supposed to fulfil with regard to their function in the structure of a narrative text. In his pioneering study of the structure of Russian folk tales, Propp (1968; first published in Russian in 1928) differentiates between seven general roles, namely the villain, the donor, the helper, the sought-for-person and her father, the dispatcher, the hero and the false hero. Different roles could be realized by different characters in different tales, for example the hero could be the third son of a king or a person from humble descent. The villain could be anything from the wicked stepsisters in Cinderella to dragons and other monsters who would eventually all be defeated by a hero, mostly with the assistance of a supernatural element such as a fairy godmother or some natural force, such as a thunderstorm or a flooding river.

Propp attributes importance to the inference that functions can be abstracted as general entities from a variety of concretisations of any particular role, meaning that character is subordinated to the action it has to carry out in the role assigned to it in the plot.

The subordination of character to action is subsequently developed in the structuralist model put forward by Grei-

mas's (1966), in which a differentiation is made between **acteurs** (actors) and **actants** (actants). **Acteurs** or **actors** (also called **personages**) are endowed with specific qualities in different narratives whereas **actants** refer to classes of actors who share some characteristics, such as participating in similar functions in the story. Due to this, actors who can include human beings as well as inanimate objects, are numerous, whereas actantial roles are comprised of six entities, as indicated in the following diagram:



In Propp's model one character may carry out more than one function, a group of characters may be assigned to the same role. On the same premise, Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 35) remarks that 'the same actant can be manifested by more than one acteur and the same acteur can be assigned to more than one actant'.

An example may be quoted from Alan Paton's short story The Waste Land (1979). One should bear in mind, of course, that it is part of the reader's role to participate in the construction of a mental image of the character(s) which is derived from the particular narrative text, as well as from the reader's storehouse of knowledge of the world or reality. In other words, the interaction between text and reader is of significant importance. 5)

5) The reader's role in the construction of character is discussed in more detail in Section 4.5 below.

In Paton's story the reader will have to shift between two opposing perspectives or focalizations which the narrator provides in i) the protagonist, a father, and ii) his son who is represented by the collective attitude of the gangsters. In the story, an old man is about to be robbed by a gang whose leader is unbeknowningly to the old man his own son. Whereas the father is characterized as a hard working and law-abiding citizen, this image is starkly contrasted with that of his son as the merciless leader of a gang of thieves.

The subordination of the actantial roles of the father (victim) and the gang led by his son (perpetrators) to the action, can be explained by a brief summary of the story. After having received his wages, the old man is on his way home from work. While waiting for a bus in a dilapidated place, he is confronted by a gang of youngsters who are after his money. The gang-leader who is his very own son knows that his father would have the pay envelope in his pocket. The old man who wants to get away is unable to open a door leading to his escape.

Words such as 'the barred door that would not open before a man was dead', solemnly convey the poignant agony of the old man's shock, the dreamlike awareness of the danger with which he is confronted. The state of his impotence through the shock he is experiencing is expressed in his speechlessness 'his mouth was already dry, his heart was pounding in his breast, something within him was crying out in protest against the coming event' (The Waste Land, 1979: 194).

Freddy, the son of the old man, the leader and his helpers form one gang and are, due to their lack of decency, their criminal ruthless intention, actants whose functioning role concretizes into anti-social criminal activity. Their function denotes the common purpose, in this case a group of people fulfilling the same function or sharing the same role in a story.

The contrast between the father and his son may, for example, be described in terms of the opposite actantial roles they fulfil; on the other hand, the son and the youths taking part in the attack on the father may be characterized in terms of their similar actantial role.

Margolin's (1989: 4) view that an actant may experience some 'qualitative semantic concretization, turning it into a bundle of social functions', as well as the fact that standardised and stereotypical attributes combined with the norms of action, appropriateness, expectation and values associated with stereotypes become the determining features of character precisely qualify the above example. It is, as Margolin (1989: 4) aptly describes, the 'coupling of social role and standardized properties' which is a clue to the text's ideology.

The different types and roles outlined in the previous sections not only serve to create an awareness of a text's ideology, but they are also relevant to the reader's construction of character based on textual evidence. Before elucidating the reader's role in distinguishing between typical and individualistic traits or determining the actantial roles of

one or more characters in a literary text, we turn, in the next section, to the textual evidence available to the reader in his or her construction of character.

4.3 TECHNIQUES OF CHARACTERIZATION

4.3.1 Introduction

Bearing in mind the difference between traditional and structuralist views of character, one may surmise that the reconstruction of character from its portrayal in the text may yield what would appear to be diametrically opposite results: either the construct resembles a human being in one or other aspect (Fishelov's 'type-like' or 'pure' individual) or the construct serves to subordinate character to a particular function or role (comparable to Fishelov's 'pure' or 'individual-like' type). As has already been argued above, the reader should be alert to the possibility that both 'type-like' and 'individual-like' characters may be functional in narrative texts, so that it seems advisable to consider ways whereby the seemingly divergent views may be reconciled. Following Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 35) in this regard, diametrical views could be reconciled provided the reader accepts that character and action are interdependent and that the subordination of either action to character or character to action can be considered as relative types of narrative rather than absolute hierarchies. 6)

6) Rimmon-Kenan quotes James's famous dictum in The Art of Fiction (1953: 597-598) about the inseparability of character and action to illustrate her point: 'What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?'

The structuralist distinction between actant and character or personage is based on the distinction between different levels in the narrative text: the underlying story, signified or *histoire*, which consists of the 'material' of the narrative (the events or action as well as the various actants), and the concrete narrative text, signifier or *récit*, which denotes the story events as they have been artistically arranged in a narrative text. 7) For our purposes it is important to remember that whereas an actant on the underlying story level is defined in terms of his or her general actantial role, 'the personage or character is definable in terms of his distinctive traits and specific function as perceived by the reader' (Bal, 1978: 84), Margolin provides a more technical definition and sees 'character' or 'person' as:

designating a human or human-like individual, existing in some possible world, and capable of fulfilling the argument position in the propositional form DO(X) - that is, a Narrative Agent (=NA), to whom inner states, mental properties (traits, features) or complexes of such properties (personality models) can be ascribed on the basis of textual data.

(Margolin, 1989: 205; emphasis MW)

This brings us back to Fishelov's (1990) contention that a

7) I shall assume familiarity with Gérard Genette's systematisation of structuralist theory in his Narrative Discourse as well as with syntheses incorporating his ideas together with those of other narrative specialists (Bal, 1978, 1984, 1985; Chatman, 1978; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983).

detailed and diversified portrayal on the textual level could create the impression of a 'life-like' individual in the reader's constructed image of a character. It remains for us to have a closer look at the character indicators that could be operative on the textual level. Following Margolin (1986: 206) we may think of the image that the reader eventually forms of the character as a signified, for which some textual elements serve as signifiers; the information given in the literary text usually covering the following areas:

(a) Narrative propositions about dynamic elements: the traditional triad of word, thought, and deed - that is, the verbal, mental, and physical acts of a narrative agent where the substance and manner of the act as well as their interrelations and their context serve as sources for property attribution.

(b) Narrative propositions about static elements associated with the narrative agent: his name, appearance, manners, customs, and habits; his natural, man-made, and sociocultural milieu; and the various metaphorical designations for his actions, looks, properties, mentality, and so forth. All of these static elements have an indicial status with respect to the agent in question.

(c) Formal textual patterns such as the grouping of narrative agents; the analogies, parallels, or contrasts among them generated by such groupings;

repetitions and gradations; parallel plots and embedded stories; the utilization of intertextually familiar epithets and formulas.

(Structuralist Approaches to Character in Narrative. The State of Art, 1989: 13)

The information mentioned in the first two categories above is usually either explicitly stated in the text or else it is indirectly presented. In fact, in determining the textual sources of information about a character's properties, there seems to be a general agreement among narratologists that they consist of two basic types: **direct definition**, consisting of explicit characterization statements made by the narrator about a character or by a character about herself or any other character; and **indirect characterization**, entailed or implied in or inferable from textual data of various kinds. It is usually maintained that direct definition is characteristic of more traditional forms of narrative, such as novels written in a realist mode, whereas indirect characterization is associated with modernist texts. The following extract from Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks certainly serves to illustrate the direct information conveniently provided by the narrator throughout the novel as an aid to the reader in distinguishing between the numerous characters. It is at the beginning of the novel that the reader becomes acquainted with Johann Buddenbrook, the patriarch of the family. After describing a family scene in the landscape room in the impressive Buddenbrook mansion, the narrator offers the following information, of a mainly

direct nature, about the patriarch of the family:

The truth was, the old gentleman hadn't a good word to say for Ida Jungmann. Not that he was narrow-minded. He had seen something of the world, having travelled by coach to Southern Germany in 1813 to buy up wheat for the Prussian army; he had been to Amsterdam and Paris, and was too enlightened to condemn everything that lay beyond the gabled roofs of his native town. But in social intercourse he was more apt than his son to draw the line rigidly and give the cold shoulder to strangers.

(Mann, 1982: 10,11; emphasis MW)

Although there are also indirect indicators of his character in the above extract, referring to his actions, these are offered as motivation for the direct statements provided by the narrator, thereby making it unnecessary for the reader to infer a trait such as 'enlightenment' from his travels and involvement in the war and thus actually rendering explicit also the actions of the old gentleman.

Although explicit information could be a valuable strategy, it should be stressed that the reader's acceptance of a direct presentation depends on the reliability of the narrative informer. If the particular informer is authoritative and impartial, the reader will most likely than not be inclined to accept the information. Should the character however offer explicit information about himself, or should the nature of the character be determined by other characters

who may be prejudiced, the reader will have to carefully consider the reliability of the supplied data within its context, whereupon he has to make his own inferences. The reliability of explicit characterization can be determined by comparing it with the evidence suggested by indirect characterization, such as a character's actions, speech, external experience and environment.

If compared to Buddenbrooks, Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury relies to a far greater extent on indirect presentation as a means of familiarizing the reader with the characters depicted in the text - not only are actions as a rule neither explained nor interpreted but the reader often has to infer characteristics from the thoughts or speech of characters. Particularly, in the case of Benjy, depicted as a retarded child and adult in the different time frames of the novel, the reader has to infer from Benjy's often distorted perspective on and experience of his world that, for example, he is both lovable and fiercely loyal to his sister, Caddy. Similarly, Luster's idiosyncratic and ungrammatical speech provides indirect evidence of both his nationality and his level of education. At the beginning of the novel reference to 'caddie' by some golfers he and Luster are watching triggers Benjy's grief for the sister who formed the centre of his childhood:

Then they went on, and I went along the fence.
Luster came away from the flower tree and we went
along the fence and they stopped and we stopped
and I looked through the fence while Luster was

hunting in the grass.

'Here, caddie.' He hit. They went away across the pasture. I held to the fence and watched them going away.

'Listen at you now.' Luster said. 'Ain't you something, thirty-three years old, going on that way. After I done went all the way to town to buy you that cake. Hush up that moaning. Ain't you going to help me find that quarter so I can go to the show tonight.'

(Faulkner, 1982: 11)

Compared to the extract from Thomas Mann's novel, it is clear that 'indirect' textual indicators prevail, whereas even 'direct' information, such as Benjy's age and his inappropriate behaviour as commented upon by Luster, is drawn into the mode of indirect presentation, where the reader has to become actively involved in trying to construct an image of the characters presented through their actions, words and thoughts.

Although indirect presentation is far more common in narrative than direct definition, both of these possibilities could be considered with regard to Margolin's (1989: 13) systematization of textual indicators as consisting of narrative propositions about either dynamic or static elements associated with an agent or character. The third area distinguished by Margolin concerns the grouping of characters into actantial roles - this became clear, for example, in the two actantial roles distinguished in the Alan Paton

story above: the youths grouped together in the role of perpetrator in opposition to the father in the role of victim. Whereas not all of the areas distinguished by Margolin may be operative in all narrative texts, the reader will discriminately use relevant information provided on the textual level to construct the image of a character or group of characters in any particular instance.

4.3.2 Dynamic elements

Although Margolin (1989: 13) speaks here of the 'verbal, mental and physical acts of a narrative agent ...', the reader will usually associate a dynamic portrayal of a character with his actions rather than with words or thoughts. Actions can be either habitual, something that forms part of a character's routine, or they can be of the non-routine type, usually triggered by unexpected circumstances. Whereas habitual actions will point to a stable trait to be associated with a character, the one-time or non-routine action could be as functional in exposing a particular trait. In Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, for example, Thomas Buddenbrook had consistently, in his business dealings, refrained from any underhanded or shady dealings and had, in fact, always strongly opposed any notion that a business man might be associated with dishonesty. Proof of this is to be found, for example, in his fight with his brother Christian after the latter had made an indiscrete remark reflecting on the good name of the company. Yet, there is one incident where he allowed himself to be persuaded by his sister Tony secret-

ly to buy the crop of a farmer experiencing financial difficulties for a very reasonable price with a view to making a profit at a later stage. Although this action is uncharacteristic, and although he suffers the consequences when the crop is destroyed by a hailstorm before he could sell it, it serves to illuminate another aspect of his character - a desperate attempt to regain some of his former initiative and not succumb entirely to a feeling of despair. If compared to the following example of Dilsey's painful slowness, due to her physical exertion, it is clear that Thomas Buddenbrook's despair is to be attributed to his mental exhaustion.

An interesting example of the changes in obviously habitual actions indicative of a lifetime of dedicated service is to be found in William Faulkner's repeated reference to Dilsey's painful slowness as a result of physical deterioration:

she (carried) an open umbrella now, ... Then she closed it ... and picked up the umbrella and got it open at last and returned to the steps ... she turned slowly and descended, lowering her body from step to step, as a small child does, her hand against the wall.

(Faulkner, 1982: 241-242)

The passage above will arouse the reader's empathy. Together with Dilsey's altruistic actions, her tears at the Easter service which are not for herself but for her employers and last but not least her portrayal as a surrogate mother to

the Compson children are signals in the literary text which allow the reader to arrive at the conclusion that Dilsey is indispensable: her character is that of continuity and moral strength despite her limited physical abilities and social standing.

It follows that the reader should take into consideration both routine and non-routine actions when trying to construct an image of a character. Following Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 61-62), habitual and non-routine actions, these may be further explained as consisting of the following categories: an act of commission, meaning that the character carries something into effect, an act of omission, meaning the character leaves something undone, something the character should have carried out; there is also the contemplated act referring to an unrealized plan or intention of the character.

A character's speech, including speech voiced in monologue and dialogue or thoughts expressed as interior monologue, can be indicative of a trait or traits both through its content and through its form. In Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks speech patterns, the use of certain words and phrases, or the avoidance of crude jokes normally serve to distinguish between different classes of people (the aristocratic Buddenbrook family contrasted with some of their guests or in-laws). In one notable instance, a character's idiosyncratic speech serves to mark his dubious 'status' as an outsider:

'Munich is no commercial town. Everybody wants his

peace and quiet and his beer - nobody gets dispatched while he's eating; not there. You're a different cut here - Holy Sacrament!' ... 'tain't so bad as it sounds.

(Mann, 1982: 253,254)

Indeed, Permaneder's often repeated 'Oh Lord, ... 'Lord, ...' and 'Holy Sacrament', though considered to be inappropriate and insensitive, is smoothed over as being indicative of the behaviour of people from the South, because both Madame Buddenbrook and Thomas think it advisable that Tony should marry again. This much the reader can infer from a bit of dialogue between Madame Buddenbrook, Thomas and Tony in which commentary on his dialect and manners is provided:

'But I think, Tom, he ought to stop swearing,'
went on the Frau Consul with mild disapproval.

'If I understood him correctly, he kept using
the words Sacrament and Cross.'

'Oh, that's nothing, Mother - he doesn't mean anything by that.'

'And perhaps a little too easy-mannered, Tom?'

'Oh, yes; that is south-German,'
said the Consul, breathing the smoke slowly out
into the room.

(Mann, 1982: 255-256)

And a bit further on Tony's defensive reaction in an exchange with Tom clearly points to the general feeling of embarrassment caused by Herr Permaneder's speech and manners:

'... But this much I do know: and this much I am
going to say: that in this life it does not depend

on how things are said and expressed, but on how they are felt and meant in the heart; and if you make fun of Herr Permaneder's language and find him ridiculous -'

'Who? Why? Tony, what an idea! Why are you getting excited - ?

'Assez,' said the Frau Consul, casting an imploring glance at her son. It meant 'Spare her!'

'Please don't be angry, Tony,' he said. 'I didn't mean to provoke you. And now I will go and see that somebody from the warehouse brings Herr Permaneder's trunk. Au revoir.'

(Mann, 1982: 256; Author's emphasis)

By contrast, the use of idiosyncratic dialogue (Luster's ungrammatical use of English) and interior monologue (Benjy's association of his sister triggered by the reference to 'caddie') 8) serve to create an awareness of the pain and disillusion experienced by individual members of the Compson family in the extract quoted above from William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury. We could say, then, that the textual signals, indicated by means of the representation of speech or thoughts, serve to suggest external social stratifications of the main characters in the case of the Buddenbrooks, whereas in Faulkner's novel the extreme despair inherent in the transparent minds of the Compson family and their servants is portrayed.

8) The representation of consciousness in literature will be discussed in Section 4.4 with reference to Dorrit Cohn's Transparent Minds (1978)

4.3.3 Static elements

Whereas a person's actions, words and thoughts are perhaps the most important indicators provided on the textual level, there are numerous other indicators which should help the reader to form an impression or opinion of a character. In fact, quite often indicators such as the character's name, appearance and sociocultural milieu help the reader in arriving at a fairly complete notion of the character in question. A closer look at name-giving in the novels by Thomas Mann, William Faulkner and Thomas Pynchon, representative of a realist, modernist and postmodernist text respectively, quickly reveals the dissimilarities between different modes of writing. In Buddenbrooks the continuation of the family name is very important in the successive generations depicted in the novel. The name which is always coupled to a title, for example, 'the consul' or 'the senator', serves to establish its identity in the mind of the reader, but also suggests something about the 'Zeitgeist' of a foregone era. It was particularly during this time that a name coupled to a title, which was characteristic of a unique period, revealed a vanishing cultural tradition of the continent. It was a time when people valued and respected citizens who served their community in a responsible manner. It was and still is in some cultures common practice to address the nobility and renowned personalities by their titles.

In a novel such as The Sound and the Fury, which is based on a new, totally different American culture, the mode of address is in stark contrast to the mode of address used in

the old established European culture. 9) Thus, names of characters in The Sound and the Fury certainly have a much more informal and therefore intimate sound (Benjy, Caddy, Queenie). Indeed, the almost suffocatingly close interrelationship between family members, especially the Compson children, is the focus in a novel intent on making the reader a co-participant in exposing the pain, confusion and disillusion experienced by the characters. In the realist text the main protagonists pinpoint stages in the progressive decline of a family, which is itself placed within the context of a broad kaleidoscope of people encountered in the novel. By contrast the focus is constantly on individuals in the modernist text, to the extent of presenting the events from four different perspectives, each limited to his or her own experience of life as either a child or an adult during the limited timespan of one day for each of the four sections presented in detail in the text. Whereas the identity of the characters in these two novels may be taken as a given, since they resemble 'real' people to some extent despite the divergent convention employed in the two texts, it is the notion of the possibility of a distinctive identity itself that is questioned in Thomas Pynchon's postmodernist text, in that the name given to the protagonist, Oedipa Maas,

 9) The informed reader who has a good storehouse of knowledge (of the different cultures), is able to do justice in evaluating the characters and consequently the novel under discussion. Where, for example, the 'polite form' of address, ('Sie') and the coupling of a title reveal the influence of a culture on its people, the informed reader of the Buddenbrooks, realizes that the novel had become a great success because it is a unique record of a time period with which the reader, familiar with the customs and peculiarities of the foregone era, could identify.

foregrounds the textual rather than the 'biological' origin of the character, as no informed reader of literature can possibly overlook the reference to Sophokles's Oedipus.

Besides namegiving, character traits which help to establish the identity of a character in the reader's mind may also be suggested by a description of the external appearance of a character or by a depiction of his or her environment. Thomas Mann excels in detailed and telling descriptions of the numerous characters in Buddenbrooks by providing minute detail about a character's 'appearance, manners, customs and habits' as well as 'his natural, man-made and sociocultural milieu' (Margolin, 1989: 13). Let us turn again to the depiction of one of the characters which perhaps just escapes being restricted to a 'pure' type in that, as has been argued above, he would probably emerge as an 'individual-like type' in the reader's construction. This is the introduction given to Herr Alois Permaneder from Munich, Tony's second husband, on his first visit to the Buddenbrook mansion:

He was a man of forty years. Short-legged and chubby, he wore a wide-open coat of brown frieze and a light flowered waistcoat which covered the gentle protuberant curve of his stomach and supported a gold watch-chain with a whole bouquet of charms made of horn, bone, silver, and coral. His trousers were of an indefinite grey-green colour and too short. The material must have been extraordinarily stiff, for the edges stood out in a

circle around the legs of his short, broad boots. He had a bullet head, untidy hair, and a stubby nose, and a light-blond curly moustache drooping over his mouth made him look like a walrus. By way of contrast, the imperial between his chin and his underlip stood out rather bristly. His cheeks were extremely fat and puffy, crowding his eyes into two narrow light-blue cracks with wrinkles at the corners. The whole face looked swollen and had a funny expression of fierceness, mingled with an almost touching good nature. Directly below his tiny chin a steep line ran into the wide neck-cloth: his goiterous neck could not have endured a choker. In fact, the whole lower part of his face and his neck, the back of his head, his cheeks and nose, all ran rather formlessly in together. The whole skin of the face was stretched to an immoderate tightness and showed a roughness at the ear-joinings and the sides of the nose. In one of his short fat white hands the visitor held his stick; in the other his green Tyrolese hat, decorated with a chamois beard.

(Mann, 1982: 249)

Clearly, as with the presentation of his idiosyncratic and almost unintelligible dialect quoted above, the description deliberately focusses on those details about his external appearance and dress that would make him appear totally alien, indeed almost comic, when compared to the company

normally kept by Madame Buddenbrook and her family. That he eventually escapes being a caricature characterized by the 'inappropriate' phrase he keeps repeating, is probably due to his unexpectedly honourable behaviour in granting Tony a divorce and promptly returning her dowry after the marriage had failed. This example is indicative of the extensive reliance on description as an indicator of character traits in Thomas Mann's lengthy chronicle of the gradual decline of the Buddenbrook family. Together with direct definition, dialogue and omniscient probing of some characters' thoughts and feelings, description is indeed a major characterization technique in the novel.

Description could also be highly suggestive in a novel which focusses predominantly on the portrayal of consciousness as in the following extract from Faulkner's modernist text:

... she had been a big woman once but now her skeleton rose, draped loosely in unpadded skin that tightened again upon a paunch almost dropsical, as though muscle and tissue had been courage or fortitude which the days or the years had consumed until only the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts, and above that the collapsed face that gave the impression of the bones themselves being outside the flesh, lifted into the driving day with an expression at once fatalistic and of a child's astonished disappointment ...

(Faulkner, 1982: 236; emphasis MW)

Clearly this is an informed description offered by the narrator and bordering on direct definition in that he seems to interpret, for the reader, the significance of the signs of outward deterioration in Dilsey, the faithful negro servant and surrogate mother to the Compson children. The description of her expression is no longer exterior, but interior when it is explained as being '... at once fatalistic and of a child's astonished disappointment ...' (Faulkner, 1982: 236). The reader cannot but feel compassion and pity for an obviously faithful servant grown old and wasted in the service of the Compson family. This is, of course, reinforced by the indirect textual signals provided by a depiction of the painful slowness of her actions referred to above.

The so-called static elements associated with a character could also include reference to the environment, which could serve as a kind of 'trait-connoting metonymy' (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 66). Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse contains a telling example of the interarticulation between a character and her environment in that the light-beam of the lighthouse is indicative of the symbolic implications of the light in a spiritual sense. The simile 'like her own eyes', she meets her own eyes, is a marker in the text which can be interpreted as a spiritual experience; it is a unique experience during which (destructive) time is captured in one split moment. For Mrs Ramsay this moment lasts forever, eliminating the threat of flux, the fearful threat of the passing moment of mortality.

Having dealt with textual data available to the reader when constructing an image of a character in a literary text, it remains for us briefly to outline the textual strategies which are usually taken to be typical of postmodernist writing.

4.3.4 Postmodern textual strategies

In the opposing notions governing different conceptions of literary character, namely that they are either believed to be 'life-like' (traditional view) and detachable from the text or else seen as reducible to a particular role in and inextricable from the narrative text (structuralist models), postmodern narrative strategies tend to underline an extreme view of the text-embeddedness of literary character by foregrounding the so-called dependence of the depiction of 'human beings' on the words determining their 'existence' in the text. This insistence on character as a linguistic construct rather than character as a recognizable 'human being' results in a transgression of a number of narrative conventions in postmodernist texts. It is for this reason that critics tend to define postmodern character in terms of what it lacks as opposed to some implied relevant norm held in realist and modernist literature.

In this respect Margolin's (1989: 9-24) proposed 'dynamic structural model', where character is described as a 'non-actual individual', may be a helpful indication enabling the reader to determine in what ways and to what extent postmodernist literature shifts from the perception of character

in realist and modernist literature. Margolin's five minimal conditions for the recognition of an individual on the narrated sphere are existence, identity, uniqueness, paradigmatic unity and continuity:

- 1) existence, or the possibility of confirming the membership of an individual X in a narrative domain W_n ;
- 2) identity, or the possibility of determining some of the properties of the individual in each state of affairs of the narrative;
- 3) uniqueness, or the possibility of distinguishing the individual from all other participants in the same state of affairs;
- 4) paradigmatic unity, or the possibility of ordering the individual's properties in each state of affairs into a pattern of some kind; and
- 5) continuity, or the possibility of linking the various temporal phases of the individual into a global pattern of properties.

(Margolin, 1989: 9-24)

In view of the fact that realism usually fulfils the requirements of all five conditions, and modernism often fails to include the last two, the postmodernist position appears as extreme, in that most postmodernist writers sometimes undermine all five conditions, thereby effectively causing 'the death of character'.

In her study on Postmodern Characters (1991) Aleid Fokkema

notes that coherence and psychological motivation are the two main conventions distinguishing realist texts. If we look at Margolin's conditions in terms of these conventions, it should be clear why realist writing usually observes all five conditions: whereas coherence would be enhanced by the first four conditions of 'existence', 'identity', 'uniqueness' and 'paradigmatic unity', psychological motivation, or action according to established rules of cause and effect, underlies the condition of 'continuity'. In Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks we have already seen how his depiction of numerous characters, whether they be 'individual-like types' or 'type-like individuals', rests on the assumption that characters not only have distinct personalities and clear identities, but that they can also be expected to act in accordance with certain values adhered to within families or social stratifications. We have also seen how the focus on the portrayal of the often disturbed inner life of the members of the Compson family in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury illustrates the profound questioning, by characters, of the justifiability of order and continuity, thereby undermining the last two conditions distinguished by Margolin. In its negation of the notion of a stable, representational character, or of identity per se, postmodernist writing would appear to constitute a more radical shift than that represented by the transition from realist to modernist literature. Even so, one should heed Fokkema's (1991: 58) observation that the boundaries between these modes of writing are not always as clear cut as general opinion would have it and that some critics are of the opinion:

that either a notion of a stable, representational character was challenged long before postmodernism, or that in a good many postmodernist texts a significant number of the old conventions of character persist. There is, in other words, no consensus that postmodernism presents a radical break with earlier conventions of characterization.

(Fokkema, 1991: 58)

In order to make it possible for the reader to study the differences (and sometimes the correspondences) between postmodernist texts on the one hand and realist and modernist literature on the other, Fokkema develops a semiotic model of character in which she distinguishes a number of codes that can be either observed or transgressed in the depiction of literary character. The usefulness of these codes for the reader's understanding of character is explained as follows:

The presence of some codes, and the absence of others, condition, for instance, the absence or presence of a psychological essence, of coherence or of fragmentation: in other words, our reading of a character as representational or otherwise.

(Fokkema, 1991: 73)

Codes are, according to Fokkema, either denotative or connotative. The sign 'character' is however mostly connotatively constructed and can either be specifically literary or its presentation can rely on general conventions based in reality. These conventions determine our perception of the world

in general and may even appear to be universal, 'cross cultural' codes. Following Margolin, Fokkema (1991: 74) maintains, however, that so-called cross cultural codes are usually more often than not restricted to a specific period or culture. For example, in Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks we have an excellent example of an extended and meticulous portrayal not only of the destiny of a family, but also of the cultural codes specific to the period at the turn of the century. In reading this novel at the turn of the next century, a contemporary reader cannot but be conscious of the nostalgic disclosure of the conventions which determined the behaviour of people in a foregone era.

Fokkema distinguishes six codes which are mostly used for signifying character traits. Of these, the most universal code is the logical code. It makes provision, for example, for one and the same character not being both human and superhuman, or understood to exist and not to exist, in a literal sense, etcetera.

The code that ensures a general mimetic effect is what Fokkema labels the biological code. It is a tacit or implied convention in most literary texts which suggests that characters are born of 'real parents' and fulfil biological functions. Fokkema quotes a violation of the code presented in a typical postmodern instance where 'one of the characters in a novel realizes that it is actually 'written', or has a typewriter as origin (Fokkema, 1991: 75). We may add here the telling example taken from Milan Kundera already referred to where he explicitly denies the biological code

in insisting that the main protagonists in his postmodernist text The Unbearable Lightness of Being were 'born' of a linguistic phrase.

A general convention which is widely applied in literature is the psychological code which rules or governs the assumption of traits or the presence of an 'inner life'. Given our emphasis on psychoanalytic theory in this study, this code obviously presents a logical link between the external theories discussed in the previous chapter and the conventions governing the depiction of literary character being addressed in the present chapter. The psychological code is also of special importance because of the emphasis on the portrayal of the inner life of characters, especially in modernist literature, but apparent in all three of the novels under consideration in this study. 10)

Although a character's inner life is normally depicted by giving the reader access to his or her thoughts and feelings, a textual indicator such as speech may also, in conjunction with thoughts, feelings, acts or even descriptions, reveal something of the inner life of a character. An example of incoherent speech representation expressed in monologue interior is evident in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1982), in which one of the Compson sons Quentin records his thoughts on the day of his suicide. His mental verbaliza-

10) This will be discussed in more detail in the next section in terms of Dorrit Cohn's influential study of the depiction of the 'inner life' of characters in various modes of writing, including realist, modernist and postmodernist conventions.

tions reveal a stunted emotional development: his recorded thoughts switch at random between the past and the present, revealing an innermost tension, a dilemma due to depressive neurosis.

Like the psychological code, the social code also has both general and literary attributes. It is this code that will ensure that significance is attributed to the name of a character, or to its speech, thereby connoting class, race or religion. It is also this code which will result in the character being allotted a place in society. As an example, we may note here the speech of the black characters in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury - the ungrammaticality and unfinished sentences denoting their level of education and their designation as a lower class in society. Note also, the description of Herr Permaneder in Buddenbrooks - we have already seen how his idiosyncratic speech, together with his description, render him an 'alien' in the company normally kept by the Buddenbrooks.

The fifth code is the code of description, which will generate the realist 'portrait' of character and describe its physique, clothes, mannerisms and which will perhaps supply the 'unnecessary details' that are typical of the realist text. This code is used as a literary convention. Again, we have already come across numerous examples in Buddenbrooks, illustrating that description is indeed a major realist literary convention in the depiction of character.

The sixth code is the code of metaphor and metonymy which

invites attaching of significance to natural elements such as stormy nights, as is evident in Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks (1982) in most of the portrayals of death scenes in the novel. This becomes particularly clear, for example, on the occasion of the Consul Buddenbrook's death: momentarily before he dies the narrator adds a dramatic dimension in the form of a stormy night to the story which effectively emphasizes the dramatic occasion.

It should be clear from the above that Fokkema's distinction of different codes can be a useful tool in determining both the observance and the transgression of narrative conventions in realist, modernist and postmodernist texts. So far, I have focussed primarily on the (selective) observance of narrative conventions in realist or modernist literature. The deviation from accepted conventions, or the transgression of codes determining the representation of character, will be discussed in more detail at a later stage. 11)

4.4 PORTRAYAL OF THE 'INNER LIFE' OF LITERARY CHARACTERS

It has always been accepted, by authors and readers alike, that narrative fiction can provide access to the mind of one or more characters in a manner that would be unthinkable in real life. As we have seen, for Forster (1970) this distinguishes literary characters, even if they are depicted in a manner that would render them 'round' or 'life-like', from the human beings we encounter in real life and whom we can

11) See the reading of Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 in Chapter 7 of the study.

never come to know as well and as intimately as the fictional character whose thoughts, emotions and feelings are known to us. That this convention is characteristic of narrative fiction, is made clear by Thomas Mann's contrasting of drama, which in his judgement can at best manage 'the art of the silhouette', with narrative, which yields a portrayal of individuals enabling the reader to perceive 'narrated man as round, whole, real, and fully shaped' (quoted by Cohn, 1978: 5). In her detailed study of the depiction of consciousness in literature, Dorrit Cohn (1978: 4) refers in this regard to the invocation of 'unreal transparencies' which point to '...the singular power possessed by the novelist: creator of beings whose inner lives he can reveal at will'.

Drawing on a broad range of literary works from various periods, cultures, styles and traditions, Cohn (1978: 14) develops a typology with which to account for the importance of the 'mimesis of consciousness' in the history of the novel. Taking into account stylistic, contextual and psychological aspects, she identifies three basic types of the presentation of consciousness for both third and first person narration (the latter is given in brackets in the summary below):

1. Psycho-narration: the narrator's discourse about a character's consciousness, (this would become self-narration in autobiographical first person novels);
2. Quoted monologue: a character's mental discourse; (self-quoted in unmediated first person

narration);

3. Narrated monologue: a character's mental discourse in the guise of the narrator's discourse; (self-narrated in first person narration). (Adapted from Cohn, 1978: 14) 12)

She coins the term psycho-narration to account for the the indirect narration (as opposed to 'direct' presentation), by an omniscient authorial voice, of a character's inner psyche, thereby identifying both 'the subject matter and the activity it denotes (on the analogy to psychology, psychoanalysis)' (Cohn, 1978: 11). This is, of course the

12) Were it not for Cohn's separate treatment of types of consciousness presentation in first person context in the second section of her book, these basic distinctions could be compared to the traditional typology of omniscient, first person and figural narrative situations proposed by Stanzel (1971). I shall assume familiarity with both general studies on narrative theory, such as those by Franz Stanzel and Gérard Genette, and linguistic and other analyses of forms of speech representation in narrative. Referring to speech representation only, Genette's corresponding terms for Cohn's typology can only be cited here: 'narratised' discourse or dialogue summarised by the narrator for Cohn's 'psycho-narration'; 'imitated' or 'reported discourse', dialogue recorded by the narrator, for Cohn's 'quoted interior monologue' and 'transposed' discourse, dialogue rendered in the free indirect voice of the narrator, more or less preserving the characters' own words, for Cohn's 'narrated monologue'. Cohn's (1978: 11) main objection to Genette's terms is that it 'carries too far' the correspondence between spoken discourse and silent thought, in that whereas it stands to reason that speech is, by definition, always verbal, the question of whether 'thought is always verbal is to this day a matter of definition and dispute among psychologists'. Genette's (1980) later rejoinder to this criticism is that it is unnecessary to have a separate category for a 'narrative of thoughts', since 'narrative always reduces thoughts either to speeches or to events'. These terminological differences, though interesting in themselves, need not concern us here. Given the extended analysis of techniques for the portrayal of consciousness provided in Cohn's (1978) study, this section will follow her distinctions in broad terms.

technique followed by Thomas Mann whenever he deemed it advisable - over and above the meticulous description or extensive dialogues (sometimes monologues) used throughout the novel as major techniques of characterization - to enter the mind of one or other of the Buddenbrooks, thereby allowing the reader access to that character's most private thoughts or feelings. Quoted monologue is Cohn's (1978: 13) preferred term for direct thought-quotations which are characterized by the twin denominators of 'the reference to the thinking self in the first person, and to the narrated moment (which is also the moment of locution) in the present tense'. Furthermore, this overarching grammatical structure 'differentiates the most direct technique from the other techniques for rendering consciousness in third-person context'. Due to the familiarity of the term 'interior monologue' for the kind of associative, illogical and spontaneous thought quotations characterizing, for example, the inner psyche of the Compson children in the Faulkner novel under discussion, she proposes that the combined term 'quoted interior monologue' be adopted if and where required. Finally, narrated monologue is the term proposed by her for the intermediate technique of combining third-person reference with directness of presentation, thereby indicating a 'position astride narration and quotation' (1978: 14). Frequently termed 'free indirect discourse/speech (style indirect libre and erlebte Rede in French and German respectively), this technique is linguistically the most complex of the techniques distinguished by her, in that 'like psycho-narration it maintains the third-person reference and the tense of nar-

ration, but like the quoted monologue it reproduces verbatim the character's own mental language' (1978: 14). This is, of course, the typical narrative situation encountered in so-called figural novels, such as the Pynchon text under discussion, where the reader has the illusion of having direct access to Oedipa Maas's 'own mental language', but contrary to Faulkner's use of the first person, in ostensibly allowing Benjy, Quentin and Jason to speak for themselves in the interior monologue of the first three sections of The Sound and the Fury, Oedipa's thoughts are produced via the narrator's discourse in the third person.

4.4.1 Psycho-narration

Despite the paradox that lies at the heart of presenting characters as 'life-like' and somehow approximating human beings in real life by means of a technique that is essentially 'unrealistic', Cohn observes that most writers on the novel have taken the transparency of fictional minds for granted. The exception in this regard being the investigation of this problem by the literary theorist Kaete Hamburger, who regards the representation of characters' inner life as 'the touchstone that simultaneously sets fiction apart from reality and builds the semblance of another, non-real reality' (Cohn, 1978: 7).¹³ Based on this argued interdependence of narrative realism and the mimesis of con-

¹³) Originally published as Die Logik der Dichtung (1957), Hamburger's influential study was subsequently published in English as The Logic of Literature, translated by Marilyn J. Rose (Bloomington, Indiana: 1973).

sciousness, other theorists and authors started to speak of the 'inward turn' of narrative, culminating in the stream-of-consciousness technique favoured by Joyce and his contemporaries.

Important for our purposes is her mention of the fact that Thomas Mann advocated a principle of internalization that initially gave impulse to express the outer adventures of the epic hero into the inner adventures of the Bildungsheld. In this respect Schopenhauer's philosophy with which Thomas Mann was fascinated, predicted the moderns clearly: 'The more inner and the less outer life a novel presents, the higher and nobler will be its purpose' (Quoted by Cohn, 1978: 9). This cannot be emphasized enough. Being thus influenced, Thomas Mann reintroduced 'an audible narrator into third-person fiction, and put him at the service of individual psychology' (Cohn, 1978: 26). In the excellently portrayed 'Schopenhauer' sequence in Buddenbrooks, Thomas Mann enlightens the reader that Tom's knowledge, his vision, did not come to him in words and consecutive thoughts, but 'in sudden rapturous illuminations of his inmost being' (Mann, 1982: 507). Additionally an intruding - or what Cohn calls an 'audible narrator', informs the reader that Tom was now:

free, already actually released and free of all natural as well as artificial limitations. The walls of his native town, in which he had wilfully and consciously shut himself up, opened out; they opened and disclosed to his view the entire world, of which he had in his youth seen this or that

small portion, and of which Death now promised him the whole. ... He was no longer prevented from grasping eternity. Nothing began, nothing left off. There was only an endless present; and that power in him which loved life with a love so exquisitely sweet and yearning - the power of which his person was only the unsuccessful expression - that power would always know how to find access to this present.

(Mann, 1982: 507,508; emphasis MW)

4.4.2 Quoted/autonomous interior monologue

Defending her decision to distinguish between interior monologue occurring either in third or first person narration, Cohn (1978: 15) argues that there is a radical dissymmetry between the technique and the genre (emphasis MW): whereas the direct expression of a character's thought (in first-person form) will always be a quotation within a surrounding narrative context, hence a quoted monologue, a sustained and independent interior monologue (such as Benjy's self-quotation in The Sound and the Fury) represents a narrative genre 'constituted in its entirety by the silent self-communion of a fictional mind'. She observes that despite the fact that the technique and the genre share some psychological implications and stylistic features, their narrative presentations are entirely different:

the first is mediated (quoted explicitly or implicitly) by a narrating voice that refers to the

monologist by third-person pronoun in the surrounding text; the second unmediated, and apparently self-generated, constitutes an autonomous first-person form ...

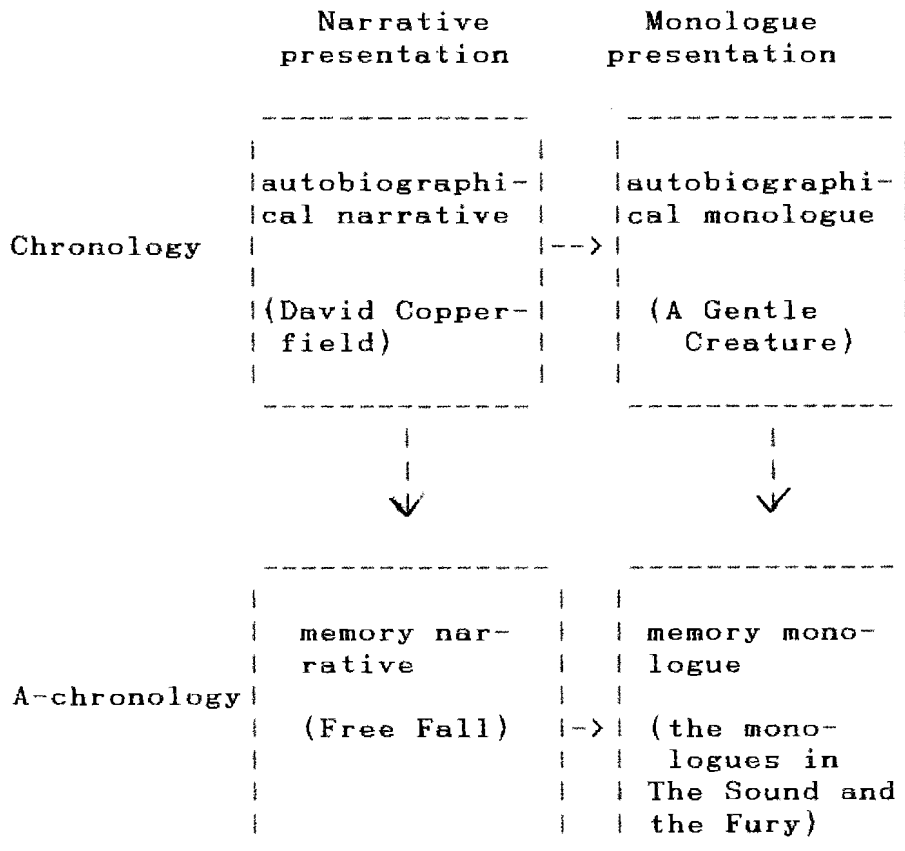
(Cohn, 1978: 15)

For our purposes, the shared psychological implications are more important than the differences in narrative presentation. Furthermore, since the first three sections of the Faulkner novel under discussion clearly belong to the second category of unmediated and ostensibly self-generated self-quotation, 'interior monologue', for our purposes, will be taken as referring to an 'autonomous first-person form'.

Under *Psychological Implications*, Cohn (1978: 77) observes that the concerns with 'psychological credibility stand in striking contrast to Faulkner's autonomous monologues: the self-address of a speechless idiot (Benjy in The Sound and the Fury) or of a dead woman (Addie in As I Lay Dying) are radical departures from monologic versimilitude that are difficult to imagine in the context of a third-person novel, where we expect figural language to be as real as its fictional speaker' (emphasis MW). As for reflecting psychological reality in literary texts, she notes, amongst others, that if the quoted-monologue technique implies the mimesis of a real language, the model for that language in the real world is strangely elusive: 'Unlike fictional dialogue, which imitates a readily observable aspect of human behavior, fictional monologue purports to imitate a concealed linguistic activity whose very existence cannot be objectively at-

tested. This does not mean, however, that inner language is purely imaginary: writers and readers alike know it exists, even though they have heard it spoken only by their own inner voices' (emphasis MW). She observes that contrary to reputation, the phenomenon that interior monologue imitates is 'neither the Freudian unconscious, nor the Bergsonian inner flux, nor even the William Jamesian stream of consciousness, but quite simply the mental activity psychologists call interior language, inner speech, or, more learnedly, endophasy' (1978: 77,78).

In the chapter entitled 'From Narration to Monologue' Cohn (1978: 184) provides the following graphic schema:



Describing the difference between conventional narration,

such as, reflected in the writings of David Copperfield, where the facts are related in the sequence of their development, like Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks and contrasting it with Faulkner's 'a-chronological' writing The Sound and the Fury, it becomes clear that Faulkner undertakes to reflect an imprint or impression of a memory, which Cohn aptly calls a 'memory monologue'. She furthermore emphasizes that using the method of describing, the intent is also essentially mimetic here: however the model is not autobiographical communication (telling one's story), it is actually the 'self-involvement of memory' (Cohn, 1978: 184; emphasis MW). This imitation of a solipsistic process forces upon itself not only a fractured chronology, but also imposes a fragmentary coverage. Blanks or indeterminacies remain. The only 'temporal continuity that memory monologues present is the spontaneously remembering mind'. Because in this 'variant of autonomous monologue the mind is trained exclusively on the past, the remembered events are tied only to each other, and not to a chronologically evolving time-span of silent locution'. Memory monologues are consequently freer than other retrospective fictions and autonomous monologues, although they reflect simultaneous experiences. Cohn (1978: 185) observes that Quentin's monologue in The Sound and the Fury, for example, is far more disjointed than Molly Bloom's sustained autonomous interior monologue in the well-known Penelope section in Joyce's Ulysses, which is usually regarded as 'a locus classicus the most famous and the most perfectly executed specimen of its species' (Cohn, 1978: 21). Consequently, the structural and textual position of Faulk-

ner's texts on the generic map of approaches according to the diagram reproduced above is clear.

As a retrospective form whose basic tense is in the past, the memory monologue is the variant of the autonomous monologue that comes closest to autobiography, while at the same time creating the illusion of the "uninterrupted unrolling" of a thought process.

(Cohn, 1978: 185)

Thus, as already observed, the narrative technique employed for Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, conforms closely to the term **memory monologue**: Cohn's notion that critics who simply call these texts interior monologues, 'without qualification, miss the peculiarity of their structure as widely as do those who simply call them first-person narratives' (Cohn, 1978: 247), makes logical sense. The terms, 'interior monologues' and 'first-person narratives', which according to Cohn do not 'fit comfortably' will nevertheless be used - as will Cohn's terms 'memory monologue' and 'autonomous monologue', when discussing William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury.

4.4.3 Narrated monologue

Cohn (1978: 100) defines this type of the portrayal of the consciousness of a fictional character, where a transformation of figural thought-language into the narrative language of third-person fiction is effected, '...as the technique for rendering a character's thought in his own idiom while maintaining the third-person reference and the basic tense

of narration'.

In order to illustrate the 'directness' of access to the character's thoughts, as opposed to psycho-narration where the mediation of the narrator or omniscient authorial voice is considered to be integral to the portrayal, she points out that the above definition implies that a passage in narrated monologue could easily be 'translated' into interior monologue if the third person should be replaced by the first person and the tense changed to the present instead of the past. Indeed, should the reader wish to determine whether a given sentence or passage belongs to the character's rather than the narrator's domain, a passage in third person could be 'rewritten' in first person to test the validity of this perception.

The following example from Joyce is used by Cohn, amongst others from Woolf and Kafka, to illustrate the technique:

3. Joyce's Stephen Dedalus waiting for confession:

The slide was shot to suddenly. The penitent came out. He was next. He stood up in terror and walked blindly into the box.

At last it had come. He knelt in the silent gloom and raised his eyes to the white crucifix suspended above him. God could see that he was sorry. He would tell all his sins. His confession would be long, long. Everybody in the chapel would know then what a sinner he had been. Let them know. It was true. But God had promised to forgive him if he was sorry. He was sorry. He clasped his hands

and raised them towards the white form, praying with his darkened eyes, praying with all his trembling body, swaying his head to and fro like a lost creature, praying with whimpering lips.

(Quoted by Cohn, 1978:102; Author's emphasis)

Cohn (1978: 102) points out that the emphasized passage cannot be read as a standard narration, but that, instead, narrative language appears in such passages 'as a kind of mask, from behind which sounds the voice of the figural mind'. However, it is important to keep in mind that its mid-position between psycho-narration and quoted monologue would preclude any easy 'translation' of narrated to quoted monologue simply by changing the grammatical markers of person and tense. In this regard Cohn (1978: 105) stresses the unique meaning and function associated with the intermediate position assigned to narrated monologue:

...in its meaning and function, as in its grammar, the narrated monologue holds a mid-position between quoted monologue and psycho-narration, rendering the content of a figural mind more obliquely than the former, more directly than the latter. Imitating the language a character uses when he talks to himself, it casts that language into the grammar a narrator uses in talking about him, thus superimposing two voices that are kept distinct in the other two forms.

(Cohn, 1978: 105)

Cohn also convincingly shows that the greater flexibility of

narrated monologue depends on the third-person context, as '...the continued employment of third-person references indicates, no matter how unobtrusively, the continued presence of a narrator' (1978: 112). This merging of two voices of the character and the narrator is precisely what is exploited in the self-conscious discourse used in postmodernist texts to reflect on the process of storytelling and writing. For example, if compared to the Joycean extract above, it soon becomes clear that what further complicates passages making use of a similar technique in postmodernist writing is their often speculative nature, not merely disclosing the thoughts of a character, but also using this portrayal as a vehicle for self-conscious reflection on the story and, by implication, the constructedness and artificiality of the writing process itself. When Oedipa Maas attends a play in one of many futile attempts to solve the mystery of the references to 'Tristero' she was encountering everywhere, the narrated monologue gradually slips into reflection on the significance of the events that had occurred up to that point:

So began, for Oedipa, the languid, sinister blooming of The Tristero. Or rather, her attendance at some unique performance, prolonged as it were the last of the night, something a little extra for whoever'd stayed this late. As if the breakaway gowns, net bras, jewelled garters and G-strings of historical figuration that would fall away were layered dense as Oedipa's own street-clothes in

that game with Metzger in front of the Baby Igor movie; as if a plunge towards dawn indefinite black hours long would indeed be necessary before The Tristero could be revealed in its terrible nakedness. Would its smile, then, be coy, and would it flirt away harmlessly backstage, say goodnight with a Bourbon Street bow and leave her in peace? Or would it instead, the dance ended, come back down the runway, its luminous stare locked to Oedipa's, smile gone malign and pitiless; bend to her alone among the desolate rows of seats and begin to speak words she never wanted to hear?

(Pynchon, 1979: 36; emphasis MW)

Passages as the above abound in Pynchon's text. Indeed, it seems as if the insistence on the fabricated nature of imagining an inner psyche for a literary character would be particularly appropriate to the manner in which Oedipa Maas's thoughts and feelings are presented to the reader in The Crying of Lot 49. As Cohn (1978: 5-6) reminds us, the novelist's power to reveal the inner life of characters, '...depends on what writers and readers know least in life: how another mind thinks, another body feels. In depicting the inner life, the novelist is truly a fabricator. Even as he draws on psychological theory and introspection, he creates ...imaginary psychology ... the psychology of possible human minds...'. Despite Oedipa being informed about psychology, and despite her reliance on a shrink, she is depicted as an individual unsure of her own identity and con-

scious of the fact that her psychologist deliberately wants to use her as a case study in experimenting with the pills she refuses to take. As her whole world seems to be disintegrating and she herself is depicted as vacillating between 'reality' and 'fantasy', increasingly being propelled towards a state bordering on paranoia and delusion, the reader is made aware of the artificial, if not totally fabricated nature, of both her quest to sort out the mysteries surrounding the role of executor of a will having been thrust upon her, and her largely futile attempts at establishing her own and other people's identities with reference to the traces left to her in documents of both an ostensibly authentic and a clearly 'fictional' or even 'fabricated' nature. Having outlined the means whereby different types of character are depicted in literature in the previous sections, it remains for us to consider briefly how the reader would use textual clues about a character's actions, words and thoughts to construct, in his or her mind, an image of that character.

4.5 THE READER'S CONSTRUCTION OF CHARACTER

In considering the manner in which the reader will try to construct an 'image' of a character based on its textual presentation, we will determine to what extent it is possible, as Forster (1970: 54) maintains, that '...people in a novel can be understood completely by the reader, if the novelist wishes; their inner as well as their outer life can be exposed'. In the previous sections of this chapter on the

representation of character in literature we have focussed on types and actantial roles, techniques of characterization and the portrayal of consciousness in narrative texts. These aspects do not only determine the textual presentation of character in literature, but they also present the textual indicators crucial to the reader's construction of the 'image' of a character that will eventually emerge from the work. Given the focus on both external theories (philosophy and psychoanalysis) and theories dealing specifically with the narrative conventions determining the presentation of literary character in this study, one may assume that the reader's construction of character will accordingly be determined by external as well as text-internal factors. As we shall see in the discussion of Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 in Section B of this study, the reader's construction of character will indeed be determined by both text-internal indicators and text-external considerations. For example, whereas textual indicators provided by means of direct and indirect characterization may be expected to determine the reader's evaluation of a character as 'type-like' or 'individual-like', the 'image' the reader eventually forms of a character will of necessity also depend on a consideration of philosophical and psychological evidence to be gleaned from extra-literary sources. Margolin (1986: 205-206) maintains that the reader's construction of character from textual data is a complex process which requires two distinct activities: characteriza-

tion is a first order activity concerning the process whereby individual traits are assigned to a character, whereas character building or portraiture is a second order activity involving the ascription of complexes of traits to a character. The first involves the abstraction of character traits, inferred by the reader from all of the textual evidence provided with regard to a literary character's typical and individual traits, its designated role in the text and the portrayal of its actions, speech and consciousness (see sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 above). In this regard it is important to remember that Fishelov's (1990) incorporation of both textual and constructed levels in his distinction of 'type-like' and 'individual-like' characters (see 4.2.2 above) enables the reader to arrive at a non-reductive view of character where the duality of the conception of character as informed by both text-embedded and life-like indicators is reflected in most theories on fictional character, regardless of whether they be derived from traditional, semiostructural or postmodernist paradigms.

Margolin's second order activity requires that various characteristics be grouped together so as to arrive at an image of a character based on both typical and specific traits serving to distinguish a character from other characters in the text. He defines this more complex activity as follows:

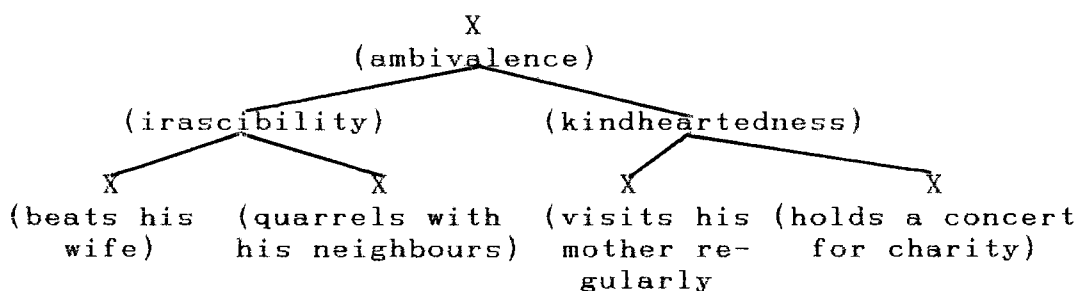
Character-building consists of a succession of individual operations of characterization, together with second order activities of continual pattern-

ing and repatterning of the traits obtained in the first order operations, until a fairly coherent constellation or trait paradigm has been arrived at.

(Margolin, 1986: 205,206)

This involves a process whereby the abovementioned fairly coherent cluster of trait patterns should result in an overarching image of a character. For example, the process of character building as far as Benjy in The Sound and the Fury is concerned is established by linking textual data such as his looks, his manner of impaired speech, his abnormal behaviour and actions into a unifying category, namely that of his being a mentally retarded person, thereby eliciting a sense of extreme discomfort with his condition, sometimes bordering on rejection, of most of the family with the exception of Caddy and Dilsey.

For an outline of the process of character-building Margolin subsequently refers the reader to Rimmon-Kenan's (1983: 37, 38) diagrammatic representation of the reader's abstraction of generalizing qualities from indicators or signals underlying the characterization techniques of Margolin's first order activity referred to above.



(Adapted from Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 37-38)

As an explanation she provides the example of a character whose daily visits to his mother will be grouped together with his daily quarrels with her. As such it can be generalized as "X's relations with his mother" and labelled as "ambivalent". If X's relations with his mother are established with similar generalisations about his relations with his wife, his boss, his friends, a higher category would be established and indicated as "X's relations with people". A higher category which extends past the concept of characterization could be established if a combination with other aspects of the same order of generalisation is contemplated, such as "X's worldview, manner of speech, actions" (1983: 37-38). This leads to potential constituents of "non-character constructs", as, for example, the work's ideology, style or action.

The latter becomes operative once the reader is able to determine that a particular world view has shaped the destiny of the characters in a novel. As we have already noted above, the decline of the Buddenbrook family in Thomas Mann's novel can be explained in terms of the existential despair ascribable to Nietzsche's philosophy, *inter alia*. This also serves to show how the reader's construction of character, moving from characterization to character-building, will inevitably link up with the larger context in which the work has been produced, thereby showing how external evidence could complement text-internal indicators.

SECTION B. ANALYSIS

ORIENTATION

In this section a more extensive analysis of selected aspects of the three novels under discussion will be attempted, showing how an informed reading of the texts of necessity depends on familiarity with some contemporary philosophical and psychological ideas in order for the reader to understand the motifs of despair, anguish and uncertainty highlighted in these novels from different literary contexts and traditions. Whereas Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks epitomizes German writing in the realist tradition at the turn of the nineteenth century, the contemporary novels by the American authors William Faulkner and Thomas Pynchon reflect some salient changes in narrative conception and fictional writing as exemplified in modernist and postmodernist trends in the twentieth century. The literary manifestation of prevalent ideas and ideologies will be explained with reference to different ways of depicting character in the three novels - ranging from a comprehensive view of clearly identifiable personalities spanning various generations in Buddenbrooks, to a detailed account of the inner turmoil as experienced by individuals in the Compson family associated with certain past events relived in the course of a highly limited present time-span in The Sound and the Fury to an apparent confused and confusing focus on multiple identities operative within both 'real' and 'imagined' time frames in The Crying of Lot 49.

Given the focus on extra-literary as well as narrative specific theories in Section A of this study, the comparative reading of the novels by Thomas Mann, William Faulkner and Thomas Pynchon in this section will be informed by the philosophical and psychoanalytical theories discussed in the second and third chapters; and it will also be based on the account of the representation of character in fictional works provided in the fourth chapter in this study. In respect of Buddenbrooks, for example, it has already been shown how the notions of nihilism and existential despair provide a context for the beliefs which apparently determined, to a great extent, the destiny of the Buddenbrook family and how the behaviour of individuals in that family can be explained in terms of psychoanalytical concepts. 1) It has also been shown how theories on the depiction of character can inform the processes whereby the reader's construction of the 'image' of a character is determined. This construction of a literary character is mainly influenced by two factors: on the one hand, textual indicators provided by means of direct and indirect characterization determine the reader's evaluation of a character as 'type-like' or 'individual-like'; on the other hand, the 'image' the reader eventually forms of a character of necessity also depends on a consideration of philosophical and psychological evidence to be gleaned from extra literary sources. 2)

In this regard the psychological concept of transition is

1) See particularly Sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in this regard.
 2) See in this regard Chapter 4 generally, with special reference to Section 4.5.

central to the main topic of the study, in that it underlies the perceived 'inward turn' of narrative expressed in the so-called stream-of-consciousness novel in a typically Joycean mode of writing.

It was argued that the changing role of art came about due to the accelerating speed with which man had to adapt to his increasingly changing environment; that the speed with which he was confronted did and still does not afford him the time to adequately adjust to the changes. As a result neurosis sets in causing noticeable complexities in life-style. Narrative style and content reflect these phenomena in the novel, which exhibit the author's perception of the aforementioned changes that have influenced human behaviour.

As has already been shown, Dorrit Cohn's study traced the tendency towards an 'inward turn' in narrative in realist novels in the use of the technique of psycho-narration, whilst simultaneously distinguishing different techniques for a more direct portrayal of the inner life of characters, such as the use of quoted interior monologue in first person narration and the exploitation of narrated monologue in third person texts in modernist and postmodernist writing respectively. If Thomas Mann's use of psycho-narration to disclose the inner life of the main protagonists in his vast array of characters and character types signals the beginning of the 'inward turn' in narrative, then William Faulkner's extensive use of interior and memory monologue to portray the turmoil and uncertainty experienced by the first person narrators focuses almost exclusively on the dis-

closure of the inner life of selected characters. In a sense mixing the styles of omniscient narration and direct portrayal in his use of narrated monologue, Thomas Pynchon's text adds the complication of self-reflective writing to the portrayal of the inner life of a character in both his questioning of the concept of identity and his emphasis on the constructedness of writing.

In looking globally at the different narrative styles displayed in the three novels under discussion, it becomes clear that increasing instability in modern man's world is matched by different techniques of responding to external change. So, for example, the chronological presentation of events in Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks suggests that literature could still reflect or imitate reality in an objective manner, implying that there was (still) an existing objective reality to be reflected. This perceived reality of the time is presented by means of a chronological sequence, a well-structured plot and a convincing characterization, some kind of authority and literary truth, albeit with certain unmistakable signs of a changing reality, expressed in the explicit 'beast' metaphor by Mr Kroeger, the son-in-law of Jean Buddenbrook. This metaphor should be understood as a symbol and turning point towards an unstable reality necessitating psychoanalytical enquiries.

By contrast with the coherent presentation of events, perceptions and feelings in Buddenbrooks, Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury deliberately foregrounds a fragmented reality perceived differently in the troubled minds of the three

Compson children featuring as first person narrators in the novel. In addition, the nihilist views adhered to by Mr Compson present a consciousness which calls the concept of objectivity into question, thereby rendering as problematic the notion of 'truth' in a relativistic world of shifting values. In reading this novel it becomes clear that modern literature reflects man's insecurity. His experience of reality is subjectively mediated in literature, and more often than not it is portrayed as chaotic and irrational, thereby undermining the traditional view of literature as a reflection of reality.

Turning now to the fiction which is primarily characteristic of and drawing attention to its own status as a subjectively created system known as postmodernist or metafictional writing, Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 is shown to be a type of literature which no longer pretends to imitate or represent the real world, but which reflects the ultimate acceleration of changed transition, the psychological outer and inner limits of life. The representative of this type of life is Oedipa Maas, whose paranoia is due to her frustration with a reality which she finds distorted, unstable and dislocated.

This postmodern literature is a mode of narration which self-consciously, almost proudly, shows itself off as an invented system. It challenges the reader's expectations, exposing or subverting literary conventions the reader had formerly taken for granted. This results in the narrative codes having to be decoded. The reader has to take over responsi-

bility for 'the act of decoding', the act of reading:

Disturbed, defied, forced out of his complacency,
 he must self-consciously establish new codes in
 order to come to terms with new literary pheno-
 mena . . .

(Hutcheon, 1984: 39; emphasis MW)

It should be clear that a study of the three novels reveals that we have moved from control to anarchy, that an accelerated transition was brought about through the shifting values in life as reflected in literature.

The above issues will inform the ensuing reading of Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49. It will be assumed that an understanding of the novels not only depends on the perception that literary characters do resemble 'real people' to some extent, but it also relies on the recognition that any literary character, regardless of how 'life-like' it may appear, remains a construct that is artificially created through words and therefore firmly embedded in the text. These two seemingly irreconcilable views expressed in contemporary theories on literary character simultaneously reflect the values in 'life' and 'literature' referred to in the title of the study - whereas the assumption that literary characters resemble real people justifies the focus on philosophical and psychological views, the acknowledgement of the fictional context of the 'individuals' encountered in literary texts explains the focus on the representation of

character in literature. In this regard it is noticeable, for example, that death is a central theme or motif in all three texts. However, the reader is confronted with different conceptions of death which reflect different cultural or time-specific orientations towards both physical and mental health and illness. Moreover, different characterization techniques influence the reader's perception of the attitudes towards the events which result in the death of one or more characters. It follows that in a comparative reading in terms of a shared motif or theme the reader will have to take cognizance not only of external theories, but he will also have to consider different narrative strategies determining the portrayal of character in literature.

More specifically, as regards the reader's construction of character, aspects of theories on literary character will be evoked as and when required by the nature of the narrative texts under discussion. So, for example, whereas typification and the distinction of actantial roles will feature more prominently in the analyses of Buddenbrooks and The Crying of Lot 49, it should be obvious that mimesis of consciousness is by far the most extensive and most pertinent characterization technique employed in The Sound and the Fury. Different narrative strategies, such as the presence or the absence of codes (Fokkema, 1991) or the means whereby a 'non-actual individual' (Margolin, 1989) may be discerned, will also be referred to, intermittently, in the ensuing comparative reading of the three novels under discussion. For example, in her study on Postmodern Characters (1991)

Aleid Fokkema notes that coherence and psychological motivation are the two main conventions distinguishing realist texts. Similarly, Margolin's conditions in terms of these conventions illustrate why all five conditions are normally observed in realist writing, in that whereas coherence would be enhanced by the first four conditions of 'existence', 'identity', 'uniqueness' and 'paradigmatic unity', psychological motivation, or action according to established rules of cause and effect, underlies the condition of 'continuity'. In Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks it has already become evident how his depiction of numerous characters, whether they be 'individual-like types' or 'type-like individuals', rests on the assumption that characters not only have distinct personalities and clear identities, but they can also be expected to act in accordance with certain values adhered to within families or social stratifications. It has also become clear how the focus on the portrayal of the often disturbed inner life of the members of the Compson family in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury illustrates the profound questioning, by the characters, of the justifiability of order and continuity, thereby undermining the last two conditions distinguished by Margolin. Not only order and continuity but indeed the notion of identity per se is undermined in The Crying of Lot 49 where instability is foregrounded in that the characters seldom are what they seem to be and sometimes change into multiple personalities involved in constant role-playing, so that the reader, together with Oedipa Maas, the protagonist, finds it increasingly difficult to distinguish between 'reality' on the

one hand and 'fiction' or even 'fabrication' on the other. It is usually argued that in its negation of the notion of a stable, representational character, or of identity per se, postmodernist writing would appear to constitute a more radical shift than that represented by the transition from realist to modernist literature. 3)

In addition, different techniques of characterization may, to a certain extent, serve to distinguish between different narrative conventions in realist, modernist and postmodernist writing. So, for example, it is generally held that textual sources of information regarding literary characters consist of two types: **direct definition**, consisting of explicit characterization statements made by the narrator about a character or by a character about herself or any other character; and **indirect characterization**, entailed in or inferable from textual data of various kinds. It is usually maintained that direct definition is characteristic of more traditional forms of narrative, such as novels written in a realist mode, whereas indirect characterization is associated with modernist texts. Whilst it is certainly the case that Thomas Mann avails himself of direct definition as and where appropriate, a differentiation between narrative conventions on the basis of direct and indirect definition has to be qualified in two respects: firstly, Mann uses almost all available techniques in his detailed portrayal of an entire 'community' of characters, including indirect de-

3) See the discussion in Section 4.3.4 on postmodernist narrative strategies; see also the analysis of Pynchon's text in Chapter 7.

definition (extensive description as well as dialogue and characters' actions) and the depiction of certain characters' inner life; secondly, whereas the focus in Faulkner's text, in his extensive and simultaneously intimate attempt at a mimesis of consciousness, is undoubtedly on indirect definition (dialogue and the unmediated portrayal of different characters' feelings and thoughts), direct definition is nevertheless significant, in that the reader's construction of the 'image' of Caddy is entirely dependent on how she is seen, described and judged by her three brothers. In contradistinction to the realist and modernist conventions adhered to in the abovementioned novels, salient characterization techniques in Pynchon's postmodernist text would appear to be namegiving, with a view both to the establishment of accidental roles and the undermining of stable identities, as well as foregrounding of the textuality of characters. 4)

An even more specific comparison could be attempted in terms of the basic forms for the depiction of the inner life of characters distinguished by Cohn (1978). So, for example, one may distinguish between realist, modernist and postmodernist techniques for the presentation of consciousness in terms of the categories of psycho-narration, autonomous interior monologue and narrated monologue distinguished by her. As we have already seen, these categories may be used to analyse the portrayal of the 'inner life' of characters in Buddenbrooks, The Sound and the Fury and The Crying of Lot 49 respectively - whereas Thomas Mann employs a tech-

4) See Section 4.3 above.

nique where the 'audible narrator' occasionally intervenes, William Faulkner creates the impression that the reader has direct access to the unmediated thoughts and feelings of three of the Compson children, and Pynchon exploits the convention of merging narrators' and characters' discourses in providing direct access to Oedipa Maas's mind, but employing the 'more objective or distant' third person (as opposed to the first person in Faulkner's text). 5)

It should be clear from the above that as far as the relation between theory and reading practice is concerned, the ensuing analysis of the three novels will be interactive in that not only the value of the theories for an informed reading of a narrative text, but also the light that a particular narrative strategy may shed on aspects of theories on literary character will be considered. For example, given the difference between the traditional and structuralist views of character, one may surmise that the reconstruction of character from its portrayal in the text may yield what would appear to be diametrically opposite results: either the construct resembles a human being in one or other aspect (Fishelov's 'type-like' or 'pure' individual) or the construct serves to subordinate character to a particular function or role (comparable to Fishelov's 'pure' or 'individual-like' type). However, as has already been argued above, the reader should note that most characters in literature display typical as well as individual traits; and,

5) See the outline of relevant aspects of Cohn's categories with reference to the novels under discussion in Section 4.4.

moreover, that both 'type-like' and 'individual-like' characters may function in the same narrative text, so that it seems advisable to adhere to an inclusive view of divergent views on character and characterization. 6)

It will be claimed, then, that the ensuing analysis of the three novels under discussion may contribute to theories on characterization in trying to make explicit the particular strategies uniquely exploited by Thomas Mann, William Faulkner and Thomas Pynchon. 7) It will also be assumed that different attitudes towards seemingly universal 'cross-cultural issues', such as the unavoidability of illness and death, reflect various narrative conventions informed by prevalent philosophies and different values in both 'life' and 'literature'. In this regard the texts chosen for discussion may be seen to represent the progression of the novel brought about by the accelerated tremendous speed of accumulation in all fields of knowledge in the last decades. These external developments caused major changes in the perception of reality. The transformation into an ever new present with its adjusted new perception of reality manifested itself in literature in the progression of the novel from omniscient and representational modes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to interior monologue and stream of consciousness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as reflec-

6) See especially the discussion of type and individual in Section 4.2.

7) An assessment of the possible contribution of this study to scholarship in general and to the study of narrative theory and conventions in particular will be outlined in the Conclusion to the study.

ted in modernist fiction and ultimately, in a more severely confused, dislodged, disorientated indiscriminate style, in post-modernist narration.

THE BUDDENBROOK HOUSE



Endearingly, named the **BUDDENBROOK HOUSE**, the building in Lueckeck's Mengstreet, was the property of the Mann Family from 1841 to 1891. Thomas Mann was born in this house in 1875. With permission to reproduce as illustration and with the compliments of Dr. Manfred Eickhoelter, Kulturstiftung, Senat der Hansestadt Luebeck, Amt fuer Kultur, Heinrich-und-Thomas Mann Zentrum.

CHAPTER 5

DECLINE OF A FAMILY IN THE
TRANSITION FROM STABILITY TO
UNCERTAINTY IN THOMAS MANN'S
BUDDENBROOKS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Thomas Mann's masterpiece Buddenbrooks (German edition 1957), subtitled Verfall einer Familie, is the story of a prosperous Hanseatic grain merchant family and their gradual disintegration, representing a transition from the steady bourgeois life of the nineteenth century to modern uncertainty, reflecting the predominant Zeitgeist at the turn of the century. As the novel is nearing its onehundredth anniversary, its topic is presently once again of great current interest.

Thematically this novel can be compared, to a certain extent, to William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury in that both novels focus on the disintegration of family life set within the context of a changed and changing life-style - in Mann's case the stable and prosperous bourgeois existence of the late nineteenth century and in Faulkner's case the disappearing Southern life-style in North America in the first decades of the twentieth century. However, whereas William Faulkner's text revolutionizes the fragmentary presentation of time as well as the apparent unmediated portrayal of the consciousness of even a retarded character like Benjy, Thomas Mann still belonged to the tradition of European re-

alism where characters lived their lives in a world where events could be chronologically arranged in a logical consistency of cause and effect. Nevertheless, due to the decadence of the time, Thomas Mann became interested in the philosophy of Schopenhauer and in Freud's theory of psychoanalysis influencing his personal viewpoint on the philosophy of life which reflected itself in his narrative style: still portraying the events of his narration in chronological sequence, he began to turn to reflecting the inner landscape of his characters, showing the philosophical and psychoanalytic influences 1) which reflect the decline of the once influential Buddenbrook family and mirrors the anxiety brought about by external changes resulting in the profound questioning of prevailing values. This transition to the reflection of the, *inter alia*, inner consciousness of his characters is generally regarded as being his own characteristic narrative style.

Thomas Mann thus narrated the story of people who resided in a world which experienced a new meaning under the influence of the great philosophers Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. It was the philosophical interpretation of the world as they perceived it, which became a great influential force in the lives of people at the end of the century, the much talked of 'fin de siècle'. Mann's narration was thus completely

1) The fascination with Schopenhauer's philosophy echoes, that is, reflects itself in Thomas Buddenbrook's visionary scene, which will be one of the topics of the ensuing discussion. On the theories of philosophy and psychoanalysis also see the discussion in Chapter 3.

permeated by this enchantment, even fascination with the so-called pessimistic philosophy and the people welcomed this novel because it reflected their way of life and they could therefore identify with the characters.

The story itself contains four generations: Johann Buddenbrook senior and his wife Antoinette, the Consul Johann Buddenbrook junior also called Jean, his stepbrother Gotthold; Johann (Jean), the Consul has four children, namely Thomas, Christian, Antonie, called Tony, and Clara. Thomas has one son only, Johann called Hanno. Christian and Clara had no children; Tony's children are only mentioned casually.

The plot covers forty years from 1835 to 1875, narrated in coherent order. The structural formation is extensively determined by Johann Buddenbrook senior, Johann (Jean) the Consul, his son Thomas, Christian who, due to his neurotic condition was the 'black sheep of the family', Clara and Tony.

The wife of Johann Buddenbrook senior is Madame Antoinette born Duchamps; the wife of Jean the Consul is Elisabeth (Betsy) born Kroeger and Thomas Buddenbrook's wife is Gerda born Arnoldsen. The name of Christian's wife is not mentioned. It is interesting that the representation of Tony's disastrous marriages may, especially now in this our time, be read as an indirect reflection on the unfairness of certain values which determined the existence of women. She concedes to the first marriage, after initial resistance to it, indicative of a rebellious spirit especially because she

fell in love with a medicine student, who could however not contribute to the family business. Thus to please her father and because she wished to have her name entered honourably in the chronicle of the Buddenbrook family, she succumbed to the will of her parents. Although the second husband, Mr Permaneder, is presented as almost a caricature in appearance and speech, 2) his obvious unsuitability is overlooked by the family members because it was considered to be of importance that the family may not be disgraced by a divorcée. The irony is that although Tony is very much like her grandfather, Johann Buddenbrook, suggesting that she might have been better equipped to run the family business than either of her brothers Thomas or Christian, she is prevented from making any significant contribution because of her imprisonment in the value system of the time which relegated very little freedom to women beyond their designated role as dutiful, respectable and suitable wives to their husbands.

The plot extends over four decades, thus respectively in one decade one of the abovementioned characters is the focus-subject, to a great extent reflecting the life-situations and conditions of each decade.

The foundation of the family dynasty was laid by Monsieur Johann Buddenbrook. The steadfast commencement of business was handled by Johann Buddenbrook with down to earth vigour and with unimpaired logical sense he successfully establishes the family empire. Monsieur Buddenbrook senior thus

2) See the discussion of description and speech on characterization techniques in Section 4.3.

epitomizes the steadfast order of reality upon which the wealth of the family is established. Being a proud man, true to his stable ways and traditional philosophy, it is in his time that the business is doing well and when he eventually dies at the age of 77, several months after his wife, he leaves nearly 800.000 Kurantmark, besides estate land property assets.

At the beginning of the unfolding story, he is the central focus point. Business is at its highest peak, and as a result Monsieur Johann Buddenbrook senior is in the fortunate position to acquire one of the most elegant and expensive houses in the city. 3)

At the occasion of a delightful house-warming party, the authoritative narrator mediates the reader's insight into the prevailing elegant, harmonious atmosphere of the brightly lighted dining-room, where the company had taken their places at the long table:

The tapestries in this room had a sky-blue background, against which, between slender columns, white figures of gods and goddesses stood out with plastic effect. The heavy red damask window-curtains were drawn; ... in each corner stood a tall gilt candelabrum with eight flaming candles, besides those in silver sconces on the table.

3) The old patrician style house is still admired in the present-day Germany, see photo at the commencement of this discussion. The 'Buddenbrook House' is the house in which Thomas Mann, the author of the novel, was born and where he spent most of his youth.

Above the heavy sideboard, on the wall opposite the landscape-room, hung a large painting of an Italian bay, the misty blue atmosphere of which was most effective in the candle-light. (Madame Buddenbrook) sat down between Pastor Wunderlich and the elder Kroeger, ... 'Bon appetit!' she said, with a short, quick, hearty nod, flashing a glance down the whole length of the table till it reached the children at the bottom.

(Mann, 1982 : 17)

The explicitly stated direct description of the old patrician style home, epitomizes the wealth and good fortune of the Buddenbrook family and their (almost too) perfect world. As time goes on, this perfect world reflects the values of an era which simultaneously becomes the determining subject of change by external factors; unbeknown to its people, it is to disintegrate towards a new vigorous capitalist bourgeoisie.

The first signs of disintegration are signalled in the description of the house-warming party and it is at this occasion that Herr Hoffstede asks the old Monsieur Buddenbrook when the house was originally built. Johann Buddenbrook explains that it was build:

'Anno ... let me see ... about 1680, if I am not mistaken. My son is better at dates than I am.'

(Mann, 1982: 18)

Whereupon his son, the Consul Jean Buddenbrook replies that

it was built in 1682:

'Ratenkamp and Company were just getting to the top of their form'. ... Sad, how the firm broke down in the last twenty years!'

(Mann, 1982: 18; emphasis MW)

After a certain distressing pause which ensues in the conversation, while the guests looked down at their plates pondering on the misfortunes of such a distinguished family who had built and lived in this house and had then to leave it 'broken and impoverished', the party went on (Mann, 1982:18).

The distress which had crept into the conversation was finally overcome after one definitely agreed that the disintegration of the firm was only due to the unfortunate decision to take a man into the business named Geelmaack, who brought 'painfully little capital into the business', and did not have the best reputation. Pastor Wunderlich, who was amongst the guests, expressed his view with a rhetorical question: 'even without Geelmaack, (surely) things would have turned out just as they did?' (Mann, 1982: 19), whereupon the Consul replied thoughtfully, addressing nobody in particular:

'But I do think that Dietrich Ratenkamp was driven by fate when he took Geelmaack into partnership. That was the way his destiny was to be fulfilled ...

(Mann, 1982: 19; emphasis MW)

With this remark, Jean, the son of the old patriarch intro-

duces a hitherto unknown idea which his father cannot fathom. He is not impressed with what he thought were his son's rather far-fetched ideas:

'Assez, Jean,' interposed old Buddenbrook, laying down his spoon. 'That's one of your idées ...'

(Mann, 1982: 19; Author's emphasis)

What the old Buddenbrook believes to be far-fetched ideas originated from the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy. This subsequent influence is to be more profoundly felt by Jean's son Thomas Buddenbrook in later years 4).

From the above discussion on the original solid state of the family business and the subsequent first signs of disintegration, it becomes evident that the son of Johann Buddenbrook, Jean Buddenbrook showed the first signs towards the progression of disintegration which was due to the 'spirit of the time', the 'fin de siècle' with its profound influence of Schopenhauer and the inevitable progression towards a completely new and more materialistic era, called 'the new capitalist bourgeoisie'.

The pessimism which became the general trend of the time at the end of the nineteenth century, manifested itself in Thomas Buddenbrook to such an extent that it leads to the 'desire for annihilation' or 'Todessehnsucht'. Due to the

4) See Chapter 3 Section 3.1.2 Fin de siècle - Nietzsche and Schopenhauer's influence at the turn of the century. For Thomas's more profound influence of Schopenhauer, also see Section 5.3 Towards inner Deterioration - Thomas Buddenbrook and the Desire for Death.

philosophical influence and dictated by the abovementioned outward circumstances, it was believed that whatever action is taken, there will definitely be no escape from fate: that it is in fact fate which dictates. This belief in a 'paralysis vis-a-vis one's own fate' inevitably finds its expression in Jean's strong conviction that:

'He was like a man paralysed' ... 'That was the way his destiny was to be fulfilled' ... 'He' (Ratenkamp) 'acted under the pressure of inexorable necessity.'

(Mann, 1982: 18,19; bracketed word MW)

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the direct information provided by the omniscient authorial voice penetrated the character's inner thoughts and feelings thereby identifying the difference in character between the steadfastness evident in the old patriarch Johann Buddenbrook and the signs of decadence already manifesting itself in his son Jean Buddenbrook junior.

However, as will be shown in the analysis of deaths in the family, the emphasis shifts from the material, real everyday life relations considerably towards a representation of the inner psychological landscape, reflecting the condition of each character's consciousness.

5.2 MANIFESTATIONS OF DISINTEGRATION: DEATHS IN THE FAMILY

Although the major theme of the Buddenbrooks (1982) is not regarded as one of death and disease, the meaning of Verfall being decline, deterioration, decay, it may be argued that its thematic elements constitute major themes of gradual physical and mental decay manifesting in various diseases leading to multiple deaths. As the story unfolds the nature of illness is followed up step by step, the chronological accuracy being one of precise description.

Madame Antoinette Buddenbrook, the steadfast, old Monsieur Johann Buddenbrook's wife and mother of Jean, is the first death attended to by direct authorial statement in the mainstream of the narration:

It was not simply the weakness of age that made Madame Antoinette Buddenbrook take to her lofty bed in the bedchamber of the entresol, one cold January day. . . . The old lady had remained hale and active, and carried her head, with its clustering white side-curls, proudly erect to the very last.

(Mann, 1982: 54)

It was 'only a slight form of intestinal disturbance accompanied by colic and vomiting'. But this slight form of intestinal catarrh reduces her strength so 'rapidly as to bring about an alarming decline' (Mann, 1982: 54). After the preceding brief illness of two weeks, Madame Antoinette passes away peacefully:

Madame Buddenbrook breathed her last brief, ef-

fortless sigh; and they prayed by her side in the dining-room, where the service was held; ...

(Mann, 1982: 55)

What started as an 'unremarkable event', a simple weakness caused by 'old age' and ended in Madam Buddenbrook's demise changed the entire atmosphere of the house in Mengstreet:

And now the whole atmosphere of the house changed. They went about on their tip-toes and spoke in whispers. The wagons were no longer allowed to roll through the great entry-way below. The family looked in each other's eyes and saw there something strange. It was the idea of death that had entered, and was holding silent sway in the spacious rooms.

(Mann, 1982: 54; emphasis MW)

Henceforth this changed atmosphere manifests itself and the reality of disease and death penetrates the narrative, never again to disappear.

Subsequent to his wife's death, Monsieur Johann Buddenbrook senior would still be the same gentle but bewildered man who could not fathom where all the years had gone to. He kept on exclaiming 'strange, strange!' (Mann, 1982: 55) as he sat silently and absent-mindedly in the family circle. And it was not long after he had lost his wife that he announced his retirement and consequently the firm would, as from that day be transferred with all its assets and liabilities to his son, the Consul Johann Buddenbrook. Shortly after this

announcement, it took:

... only the most trifling cold to send him to bed, one March day two months after the death of his wife. One night more - then came the hour when the family gathered round his bed and he spoke to them: first to the Consul: 'Good luck, Jean, and keep your courage up!' And then to Thomas: 'Be a help to your Father, Tom!' And to Christian: 'Be something worth while!' Then he was silent, gazing at them all; and finally, with a last murmured 'Strange!' he turned his face to the wall ...

(Mann, 1982: 56)

It was the natural death of old age and not so much the cold which caused the demise of Madame Antoinette Buddenbrook and of her husband, the down to earth, realistic Monsieur Johann Buddenbrook.

It should be clear from the above quoted descriptions of the occurrences of death that Thomas Mann is here very much the 'audible narrator' speaking with an omniscient voice in depicting the effect of the illness and death of the patriarch and his wife on the remaining members of the family. Compared to the portrayal of the illness and death of subsequent members of the family, Mann would increasingly resort to a representation of the 'inner life' of the characters experiencing illness and also of the feelings and effects evoked in the remaining members of the family. He would do so by resorting to the technique of psycho-narration, still retaining his position as the authoritative narrator mediating the reader's insight into the consciousness of the re-

spective characters. 5)

The successive fatalities of Madame and Monsieur Buddenbrook mark the end of untroubled family life and business and introduce the increasing competition of merchants who are geared to profit making and who are consequently considered to be the 'nouveaux riches'. The Buddenbrook's bourgeois, gracious, comfortable way of life would consequently be threatened, as they viewed their profession as a 'calling', and a profit making was really only considered to be vulgar. They would also not be able to compete with large corporate firms who took the capital risks of buying and selling in greater quantities.

Consul Buddenbrook and his son Thomas represent the second and third generations. During their lifetime political and economic events, such as imprisonments for swindling, the loss of an inheritance and foreign wars would increasingly affect the Buddenbrook's destiny.

Signalling the start of 'weakness' in the characters, if compared to Monsieur Johann Buddenbrook senior, his son, Jean, has to turn to religion more and more for help and guidance. Whereas his son Thomas initially appears to be quite successful in managing the family business, both internal family problems (Tony's unhappy marriages, Christian's irresponsible behaviour due to his psychosomatic condition and Thomas's son Hanno's obvious unsuitability as his future

5) See the discussion of Cohn's (1978) categories of psychonarration, autonomous interior monologue and narrated monologue in Section 4.4.

successor) as well as the changing economic and political scene eventually result in the disintegration of the family's once influential economic position and social stature. Realistic contextual detail, such as reference to locations in the (to that time) small town of Luebeck, as well as the role of the Buddenbrooks in this context, helps the reader to come to grips with economic, social and political factors which affected the family. So, for example, the Buddenbrooks' participation in the city governance, their meeting with the city elders to discuss the affairs of the 1848 riots, and the determining factors of Thomas's election to the Senate enhance the image of Hanseatic trade-life to perfection.

After Monsieur Johann Buddenbrook senior and his wife's death, the next relative to pass on is Lebrecht Kroeger. He is the Consul Johann Buddenbrook's father in law, who is known as the 'à la mode Kavalier', because of his aristocratic way of life. He is also one of the wealthiest merchants of the city and a member of the 'Buergerschaft', the citizen's assembly which is a legislative branch of the city of Luebeck. By marrying into the wealthy Kroeger family the Buddenbrooks became related to the Mayor Dr Kaspar Oeverdieck. Besides being proud of this fact, it also positively enhances the family's social and financial stature.

Despite Lebrecht Kroeger's 80 years he still carries out his civic duties. On the occasion of a memorable session of the citizen's assembly which he and the Consul attend, they are threatened by the rebellious mob during the revolutionary disturbance of 1848. 'A revolution had arrived under

the window of the Sitting':

The excited exchange of opinions inside ceased simultaneously. Every man dumb with shock, folded his hands upon his stomach and looked at his fellows or at the windows, where fists were being shaken in the air and the crowd was giving vent to deafening and frantic yelling.

(Mann, 1982: 144)

As can be seen from the above quotation, external events signalling change are reflected in the response of those characters whose life-style is threatened by the protesters. Mann is here still using realistic description of action to suggest inner turmoil. This is an indirect, yet very effective way of making visible, for the reader, the tensions between rivalling parties - one could say the two groups of people inside and outside the building represent two different actantial roles, namely that of the ruling class preferring stability and a smooth continuation of a prosperous life-style and that of the 'common labourers' clamouring for revolutionary change respectively. Although the Consul plays a leading role in calming the unruly mob and restoring order, suggesting a temporary warding off of the crisis, the inevitability of impending change is subsequently signalled by the effect the events had on Jean's father-in-law.

On their way home a very small stone flew through the open window and struck Lebrecht Kroeger lightly on his chest. The seemingly insignificant incident had a devastating ef-

fect on Lebrecht Kroeger who felt this to be a profound indignity: when they arrived at the Kroeger's garden gate which was brightly lit by a gilt-topped lantern, the Consul beholds his father-in-law's face and is shocked by what he sees:

- it was yellow and wrinkled; the firm, contemptuous set of the mouth had given way: it had changed to the lax, silly, distorted expression of a very old man.

(Mann, 1982: 151)

Description, now focussing on external features of a character, is again used brilliantly to indirectly point to a profound effect signalling the sudden and unexpected demise of the old gentleman.

After the Consul had thrown back the rug with which his father-in-law was covered, he offers his arm and shoulder as a support. At the white stone steps leading to the dining room 'the old man bent at the knee-joints':

His head fell so heavily on his breast that the lower jaw clashed against the upper. His eyes rolled - grew dim; Lebrecht Kroeger, the gallant, the cavalier a la mode, had joined his fathers.

(Mann, 1982: 152)

Description yet again functions in the narrator's omniscient portrayal of the old gentleman's death with unyielding, clinical accuracy. The depiction of the grinning grimace of the face and the clicking noise of the two jaws when they hit

against each other, depict the greatest degree of aversive particulars of the manifestations accompanying disease and death.

After these affairs, the Consul ages rather rapidly. He is never really ill, but when he reaches his early fifties he has to frequently visit health resorts to take a cure. He complains of occasional dizziness and Tony reiterates that her father experiences accelerated heartbeats when taking two steps at a time. Other than that the narrator provides no further clues. Just before he dies, at the age of fifty-five years, the narrator adds a dramatic dimension to the story through the code of metaphor and metonymy which ensures that significance is attached to environmental indicators such as a stormy night:

The second week in September had brought belated hot weather with it. There was a south-west wind, and the city suffered more than in July. A strange-looking dark blue sky hung above the rooftops, pale on the skyline as it is in the desert. After sunset a sultry breath, like a hot blast from an oven, streamed out of the small houses and up from the pavement of the narrow street. . . . A large part of the sky was still blue, but it was slowly being overcast by heavy grey-blue clouds that looked like feather pillows.

(Mann, 1982: 188,189)

The electric storm which is building up, simultaneously strangely affects Thomas and his mother. Before the storm

finally culminates into a climax as it breaks with a heavy downpour of rain, the ensuing sultriness and heavy 'atmosphere seemed to increase' and:

... oppressed the brain, it rested on the heart, it prevented the breathing. A swallow flew so low over the pavement that its wings touched. And this pressure that one could not lift, this tension, this growing weight on the whole organism, would have become unbearable had it lasted even the smallest part of a second longer, if at its height there had not come a relief, a release - a little break somewhere, soundless, yet perceptible; and at the same moment, without any premonitory drops, the rain fell down in sheets, filling the gutters and overflowing the pavements.

(Mann, 1982: 190; emphasis MW)

Signalling the intertwinement of natural forces and human experience Thomas and Madame Bethsy also have the feeling that a sudden release has taken place somewhere, a small break, culminating into a blessed relief from this hitherto unendurable tension; but it really seems like a link between two powerful, horrific events during which a telepathic message reached the two most sensitive persons in the room, namely Thomas and Madame Bethsy: 'ein kleiner erloesender Bruch, der sich unhoerbar irgendwo ereignete, und den man gleichwohl zu hoeren glaubte' (Mann, 1957: 224), quoted above in English.

And just as the noise of the rain grew louder to the extent that it almost roared, Lina, the maid-servant suddenly burst into the room stammering in her low-German dialect in what condition she found the Consul:

- It's the Master - I were bringing him his boots, and there he sits and can't speak, on his chair, and I says to myself, there's something wrong there; the Herr Consul' -

(Mann, 1982: 191)

Thomas tries to get Dr. Grabow, the family physician, but it was too late: Johann (Jean) Buddenbrook was already dead.

The significance of these fateful moments are masterfully foregrounded by the signals in the text, by the use of the function of natural elements, the storm, which brings with itself destruction and simultaneously release. The end of the Consul stands in closest relation to the human tragedy in which life and death are inextricably fused.

The reader senses that the focus on death is taking on new dimensions, pointing to its increasing importance in the depiction of growing despair and uncertainty amongst the leading characters of the Buddenbrook family.

The next in line is Gotthold Buddenbrook, the oldest son of Monsieur Johann Buddenbrook's first marriage. He dies of a heart attack at the age of sixty:

In May it happened that Uncle Gotthold - Consul Gotthold Buddenbrook, now sixty years old - was

seized with a heart attack one night and died in the arms of his wife, nee Stuewing.

(Mann, 1982: 211)

There are no warning signs given nor any triggering device is forthcoming as far as he is concerned. Here Mann is resorting to a strategy of treating death as if it is just part of life - something that may occur as a matter of course as an event seemingly devoid of any particular significance. What is of more significance, though, is the effect of his uncle's death on Thomas Buddenbrook, who arrives in the middle of the night just in time to see the last convulsive motions of Mr Gotthold. Then Tom, standing a long time in the death-chamber, is given over to meditations about the futility of Gotthold's quarrel with his father. This is yet another example of the omniscient author who lets his voice be heard through Tom: 'Did you know one can be a great man, even in a small place; a Caesar even in a little commercial town on the Baltic? But that takes imagination and idealism - and you didn't have it, whatever you may have thought yourself.' (Mann, 1982: 212,213). 6)

Clara, the youngest daughter of Johann and Bethsy Buddenbrook, married to Pastor Sievert Tiburtius, is described as

6) This comment reveals the author's own opinion on, what he thought was a possibility, namely to become 'a great man, even in a small place'. He was born in the house which has been named after his novel, the Buddenbrook House. Thomas Mann lived and worked in Luebeck for many years. Tom Buddenbrook, Mann's character, has received from him at least a certain degree of his own character traits. Thomas Buddenbrook 'lives' in a fictitious world which he, the author, himself has fashioned by taking his own natural world as an example.

a young lady of 'an austere and peculiar beauty, with a tall, slender figure, dark, smooth hair, and stern yet dreamy eyes. Her nose was slightly hooked, her mouth a little too firmly closed' (Mann, 1982: 219).

On reading this description, the reader is reminded of the scene in which Clara, as a new born baby, had been the focus of attention of the whole family, with her grateful father proudly entering her name in the chronicle in which important events in the 'history' of the family had for generations been meticulously entered by each successive head of the family. However, at the very young age of nineteen the first symptoms of the illness that would cause her death are recorded, drawing attention to the defencelessness of even the young to impending disaster. What started as a relatively harmless chronic condition, in the form of frequent, recurring headaches, is soon diagnosed as a life-threatening disease. The family learns about the seriousness of her condition when her husband, Pastor Tiburtius, informs them by letter that the doctor is afraid of '...tuberculosis - of the brain...' (Mann, 1982: 330). What is important from our perspective is the interpretation that her husband puts on her illness, suggesting that she did not really want to live, as 'She was always longing for Heaven' (Mann, 1982: 330). The reader senses here signs of both the power of despair and the death wish or Thanatos (Freud) encountered in the prevalent ideas of the time, in that this character not only passively endures her illness, but also actively longs

for death. 7)

The occurrence of death itself is only described in terms of the effect it had on the family. On a 'sultry afternoon' in August and only ten days after the letters informing the family about her condition, Tom gently prepares his mother handing over the letters to her, for the task 'of breaking to the old lady the news of death itself' (Mann, 1982: 334).

The manner with which the narrator chose to portray Clara, distinctly shows how insignificant a role she really played. Only sparse information is offered by the narrator on her life as well as her death. It is indeed the last sentence which draws attention to this fact: 'Tom then travels to Riga to attend to the funeral of his sister'. Death has come and gone and one attended to the formalities which were one's duty to accomplish. After that life went its natural course. Despite this relative lack of emphasis on Clara and her sudden demise, the significance of her attitude to illness and death cannot escape the discerning reader. She is not only the first and the youngest of the four children of Jean and Betsy Buddenbrook to die, thereby suggesting that her death was untimely, but also the first willingly (even longingly) to succumb to death, thereby anticipating one of the main causes of future deaths in the family (such as that of her brother Thomas and her nephew Hanno recounted at a later stage in the novel).

7) See the discussion of the influence of external philosophies and psychological theories on literature at the turn of the century in Chapter 3.

By contrast, the next death in the family, after Clara, that of Madame Bethsy Buddenbrook, is both more expected and far more extensively described by the omniscient narrator. The cause of her illness initially being attributed to a slight catarrh, eventually evolved, after several weeks in bed, into double pneumonia, leading to her death. The reader is reminded of the deaths of Johann Buddenbrook and his wife, as well as Justus Kroeger, who all succumbed to apparently insignificant symptoms, suggesting that even a sickness which seems to be insignificant can lead to sudden death. However, although Tom believes that 'our dear good mother will be up again in a few days' (Mann, 1982: 432), the illness is neither shortlived nor the death peaceful. This is reflected in the space allotted to her demise in the novel. The illness she endures, and which results in the ensuing long drawn-out battle with death, is elaborated in every clinical detail and occupies no less than thirteen pages of the first Chapter of Part Nine. From the accuracy which marks the minute description of the successive stages of the illness one may assume that the omniscient narratorial voice is quoting from some medical source, using, for example, medical terms such as 'Hepatisation' which, according to The Faber Medical Dictionary, (1953: 194) amounts to: 'The change of lung tissue into a condition in which it resembles the liver in consistency, as in 'lobar pneumonia' meaning the lungs turn into a fatty substance resembling liver tissue.

The old lady who is mistrusting this illness asks in 'a brisk, decided voice which made her cough directly what the

doctors said?' Tom tells her that because of the 'wretched cough the lung is slightly affected':

... - it is not exactly inflammation,' he hastened to say, as he saw her narrowing gaze, 'but even if it were, that needn't necessarily be so bad. It might be much worse,' he finished. 'In short, the lung is somewhat irritated, ...

(Mann, 1982: 432)

But the insignificant catarrh which first took Frau Consul to bed turned into a long confinement. Bedsores and other horrible symptoms developed:

... the temperature mounted after falling a little, and she passed from chills to fever and delirium; her cough increased, bringing up a blood-impregnated mucus, and she was alarmed by the difficulty she had in breathing. ... The fever wasted the patient relentlessly. The digestion failed. Slowly, inexorably, the decline of strength went on.

(Mann, 1982: 434)

Another brilliant description of the appearance of the afflicted woman, her movements and facial expression bear witness to the author's keen powers of observation, resulting in the reader's experience of the scene as convincing and life-like - almost as if the reader is not only one of the spectators at the sick woman's bed, but indeed a spectator looking on with a kind of foreknowledge imparted to him

by the omniscient narrator.

The Frau Consul lay on her back, supported by a quantity of pillows. With both her blue-veined hands, once so beautiful, now so emaciated, she ceaselessly stroked the coverlet in trembling haste. Her head in the white nightcap moved from side to side with dreadful regularity. Her lips were drawn inward, and opened and closed with a snap at every tortured effort to breathe, while the sunken eyes roved back and forth or rested with an envious look on those who stood about her bed, up and dressed and able to breathe.

(Mann, 1982: 436,437)

A more clearly omniscient perspective, where the author resorts to psycho-narration to suggest what the dying woman could be feeling or thinking, is found in the following description of an episode in the prolonged struggle for the release of death:

The movements of the patient increased. This body, delivered over to death, was possessed by a terrible unrest, an unspeakable craving, an abandonment of helplessness from head to foot. The pathetic, imploring eyes now closed with the rustling movement of the head from side to side, now opened with a heart-breaking expression, so wide that the little veins of the eyeballs stood out blood-red. And she was still conscious!

(Mann, 1982: 437,438)

The reference to the fact that she is still conscious reveals the agony she experiences which is witnessed by the family members. This loving care for their dying mother, is in stark contradistinction to the death of Clara, where none of the immediate family members were present and Thomas only attended the funeral. The narrator thus stresses what is meant to pertain to the established customs and traditions and the comfort felt by those who 'die in the bosom of the family'. Tony Buddenbrook cares for her mother during the complete time of illness. Madame Bethsy's son, Thomas (Tom), attends to her every need and engages the services of the two doctors and of the Catholic nurse, Sister Leandra. At night he returns to his own home in the Fischergrube. He and his wife Gerda are summoned when the final hour has arrived. The Consul Justus Kroeger, Madame Bethsy's brother is also sent for. Only Christian, who has returned from Hamburg is unable to cope with his emotions when he sees the suffering his mother has to endure:

'I can't stand it anymore,' he said, and went out limping and supporting himself on the furniture on his way to the door.

(Mann, 1982: 438)

Such behaviour is, of course, indicative of Christian's general weak nervous system, which manifests itself in psychosomatic conditions which make it impossible for him to take on any kind of responsibility.

A change occurs when during the last moments before her departure, Bethsy Buddenbrook began to reply to voices which

the others could not hear:

'Yes, Jean, not much longer now.' ... 'Yes, dear Clara, I am coming.' ... and she called them all by name - though the names were some of them not familiar to her children. 'Yes,' she cried, 'yes, I am coming now - at once - a moment - I cannot - oh, let me sleep!'

(Mann, 1982: 438,439)

And a while later we are told that 'over her aged and distorted features there passed a look of ineffable joy, a profound and quivering tenderness':

... like lightning she stretched up her arms and cried out, with an immediate suddenness swift as a blow, so that one felt there was not a second's space between what she heard and what she answered, with an expression of absolute submission and a boundless and fervid devotion: 'Here I am!' and parted.

(Mann, 1982: 439)

With an unlimited perspective, the authorial narrator draws attention to the focal point of suffering by illustrating not only the events but his unlimited perspective renders him omniscient regarding both characters and events. Consequently, he knows not only the past, present and future, and how events happened, but he knows the innermost thoughts and feelings of his characters. In this case the dying Madame Bethsy's thoughts and feelings are masterfully portrayed by attaching significance to her movements, words and responses.

Her faith and hope to meet those once again who had 'gone into eternity before her' seemed not to have been in vain. The narrator also constantly explains the severe suffering she had had to endure. Focusing intently also on the inner life of his character during her dying moments, the narrator readily fuses the consciousness he narrates, penetrating into the depth of Betsy's feelings by illustrating the release she feels as she departs. With the words 'with absolute submission a boundless fervid (glowing) devotion', she 'sees' her loved-ones, those who have gone before her, and then she willingly departs; the finality of her departure is masterfully brought home.

It should be clear from the above detailed description of Madame Betsy's illness and death that Thomas Mann uses different techniques of characterization, including a portrayal of the inner life of the character during moments of great stress and ultimate suffering, to depict a character with which the reader would be able to identify. The reader's construction of the 'image' of the character that eventually arises in his mind is made relatively easy as a result of the skilful handling of the authorial voice, for example in the brilliant descriptions and the effective use of psychonarration, in extensive death scenes of a number of characters.

It should be obvious from the previous discussion that the narrator's almost cynical view and preoccupation with death and decay are adequately illustrated by the repeated detailed, at times almost clinical, descriptions of poor

health and the different kinds of illness which lead to death within the family.

In the next section a closer look will be taken at indications of poor health and signs of decay in the protagonist and how these point beyond the character to disillusionment with the disintegration of the formerly stable bourgeois prosperity.

5.3 TOWARDS INNER DETERIORATION - THOMAS BUDDENBROOK AND THE DESIRE FOR DEATH

Amidst the frequent occurrences of illness and death in the family, Thomas Buddenbrook, the third generation heir to the family name and business, is originally presented to the reader as a worthwhile successor to his father, the Consul, and his famous grandfather, the grand old patriarch who not only founded the family business, but who also epitomized the values of an era soon to be undermined by external factors resulting in the decline of the once influential and prosperous Buddenbrook family. Whereas the inner life of most of the family members discussed in the previous section were only occasionally revealed to the reader in moments of great distress, illness or death, Thomas Buddenbrook, as the main protagonist of the novel, is allotted a far more detailed presentation, tracing his deterioration from vigorous and resourceful heir to a disillusioned middle-aged man greatly influenced by diverse circumstances of life and philosophies which eventually result in a desire for death. This desire for death or 'Todessehnsucht' as a refuge from frustration and disappointment, develops, amongst others, due to the fact that Thomas, like his father was greatly interested in Schopenhauer's philosophy of pessimism and was thus also influenced by his father (Jean's) idea that there was no escape from fate. 8)

In many ways this is not unlike Quentin Compson who also re-

8) At the housewarming party Jean first introduces the idea of being 'paralysed vis-a-vis one's own fate': ...'Dietrich Ratenkamp was driven by fate when he took Geelmaack into partnership' (Buddenbrooks, 1982: 19).

presents the family's hope in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, but who later commits suicide. Contrary to Thomas, who is influenced by Schopenhauer's philosophy, Quentin is dominated by his father's nihilistic ideas and views of life through, inter alia, the influential power of Nietzsche's philosophy. Despite an initial enthusiasm on first coming across Schopenhauer's writing, Thomas is unfortunately unable to find any form of idealism, such as advocated by Schopenhauer in his life which could help him overcome his mental fatigue. Consequently the wish for extinction becomes an ever-more conscious desire.

After the sudden demise of his father, the Consul, the young Thomas is inspired by his responsibility as head of the family and firm and very conscious of his duty as a Buddenbrook. In fact, because of his dedication to the family business he gives up the love he feels for a shop-girl as he believes to be drawn by a dream 'far sweeter' than love, something which was called 'Ehre', the honour of being able to devote himself to the family business and, of course, to make a success of it. In order to contribute to the family business, he feels dutybound to marry into an old established family, thereby adding to his own business more and more honour. However, the sacrifices Tom is prepared to incur for the sake of the family business do not bring the hoped for rewards. External events also add to the downward trend of the business:

... with the failure in July of a large firm of Frankfurt wholesale dealers, immediately before the armistice, the firm of Johann Buddenbrook lost

at one fell swoop the round sum of twenty thousand thaler.

(Mann, 1982: 338)

Even his marriage to Gerda born Arnoldsen, which is at first viewed as a successful 'damn good match', her father being a millionaire and her dowry of 300,000 marks substantially increasing the working capital of the family business, does not help in the long run.

Adding to Thomas's misery is the fact that his marriage eventually proves to be more than unfulfilling. His wife Gerda's interests differ from his interests drastically. She also makes it known not to be eager to produce offspring to continue the family name. Under great difficulties she finally bears a child, Hanno, the longed for male heir. Now all seems to be well, until she introduces a hitherto new element into the family, her love for music. Eventually the extent of her involvement with music and the meetings with a young officer, 'naturally in the world of music' (Mann, 1982: 498) alienates her husband from her:

He had been first to see, with dismay, the growing disparity between himself and his lovely wife, on whom the years had not laid a finger. And now, since the advent of Herr von Throta, he had to fight with the last remnant of his strength to dissimulate his own misgivings, in order that they might not make him a laughing-stock in the eyes of the community.

(Mann, 1982: 498)

Reminiscent of an increased attention to the 'inner life' of the leading characters, the author reveals the inner turmoil of Thomas Buddenbrook when he self-reflectively tries to imagine how he would be perceived by the townspeople. Resorting both to psycho-narration and metaphor, the leading character's increasing inability to cope with external circumstances is brought home forcibly to the reader. One may want to ask: But what is it that Tom really fears? The answer comes from the same narrator who readily fuses the consciousness he is so familiar with. His third person authorial comments heard through the medium of Tom's inner voice allow the reader a glimpse into his deepest being, revealing the intensity of this torture, the complex feelings of immanent despair:

Once more people had seen Herr von Throta enter his house. And with their eyes he beheld the picture just as they saw it: Below, an ageing man, worn out and crotchety, sat at his window in the office; above, his beautiful wife made music with her lover. And not that alone. Yes, that was the way the thing looked to them. He knew it. He was aware, too, that the word 'lover' was not really descriptive of Herr von Throta. It would have been almost a relief if it were. If he could have understood and despised him as an empty-headed, ordinary youth who worked off his average endowment of high spirits in a little music, and thus beguiled the feminine heart! He tried to

think of him like that. ... but in his heart he was conscious that the name was inappropriate.

(Mann, 1982: 499; emphasis MW)

Once again the narrator uses the code of metaphor and metonymy to foreground the significance of Tom's feelings: this relationship with Herr von Throta was indeed much deeper than he could ever allow himself to admit:

Then overhead in the salon, the harmonies would rise and surge like waves, with singing, lamenting, unearthly jubilation; would lift like clasped hands outstretched towards Heaven; would float in vague ecstasies; would sink and die away into sobbing, into night and silence.

(Mann, 1982: 498)

Considering this 'actually torturing thing', that which frustrates and frightens Thomas, one wonders whether he would not have been better off marrying the sturdy, healthy flower-girl Anna who, after being happily married to somebody else, now has several healthy off-springs. 9) But at the time when Thomas bids her farewell, he professes to be 'carried along', and to 'take over the business and make a good match' (Mann, 1982: 131). But allowing himself to be 'carried away' contributed to Tom's frustration, his final disillusion with life.

9) In this connection see also Section 3.3 in which Thomas's suppressed instincts are discussed with reference to 'the sales-girl', referred to above as 'the flower-girl'.

In addition to Thomas's frustrated state of mind, there are also exterior signs of deterioration. So, for example, attention is drawn to the fact that Tom's teeth had always been small, of a yellowish colour, and defective, thereby foreshadowing his poor state of health as well as the immediate cause of the stroke that finally killed him. In addition to his physical and mental health, exterior indications of decay are also used to symbolize the utter helplessness of the third generation Buddenbrook to stem the tide of general disintegration. Indeed, symbolic, abstract forms of destruction are most effectively portrayed through external description. They present themselves already in the once so majestic, aristocratic and once so meticulously well kept house in the Mengstreet which stood for status and security.

The realistic description of the rear of the house falling into disrepair with cats running wild in the former billiard-room, is typical of a realist text. The author's illustrations should be perceived as an invasion of what was once a civilised region where important affairs were discussed by responsible people. The dilapidation of the house surrounded by its still impressive facade parallels Thomas's nervous exhaustion:

THE Senator, when he was alone again, sat down at the table, took out his glasses, and tried to resume his reading. But in a few minutes his eyes had roved from the printed page, and he sat for a long time without changing his position, gazing straight ahead of him between the portières into

the darkness of the salon.

His face, when he was alone, changed so that it was hardly recognizable. The muscles of his mouth and cheeks, otherwise obedient to his will, relaxed and became flabby. Like a mask the look of vigour, alertness, and amiability, which now for a long time had been preserved only by constant effort, fell from his face, and betrayed an anguished weariness instead. The tired, worried eyes gazed at objects without seeing them; they became red and watery. He made no effort to deceive even himself; and of all the dull, confused, rambling thoughts that filled his mind he clung to only one: the single, despairing thought that Thomas Buddenbrook, at forty-three years, was an old, worn-out man.

(Mann, 1982: 361)

Here the reader gains insight into Thomas's state of mind by means of the suggestive description of facial features. Together with the realistic description of the dilapidated part of the house, description is used effectively by the author to convey the general mood of despondency flowing from outwardly visible indications of decay.

Thomas tries to come to terms with his fate by psychokinesis or transference, covering up his inability with exaggerated personal grooming. External description is once again effectively used to characterize his state of mind:

What a contrast between that relaxed and suffering face and the elegant, almost military style of his hair and beard! The stiffened and perfumed moustaches, the meticulously shaven cheeks and chin, and the careful hair-dressing which sedulously hid a beginning thinness. The hair ran back in two longish bays from the delicate temples, with a narrow parting on top; over the ears it was not long and waving, but kept short-cut now, in order not to betray how grey it had grown. He himself felt the change and knew it could not have escaped the eyes of others: the contrast between his active, elastic movements and the dull pallor of his face.

(Mann, 1982: 361; emphasis MW)

Here we have the audible voice of the narrator authoritatively availing himself of the privilege to describe Thomas's own fight for the survival, that of the business, as well as his desperate attempt to preserve the ancient name of his family.

It gradually becomes clear from the manner in which Mann uses external description that even at the time of his success, the Senator feels weary. The business demands of him more and more sacrifices. The small family business can no longer compete with large corporate firms that do not mind risking capital outlay and can thus buy and sell in greater quantities. And whereas Tom is dedicated to his work and views this as a 'calling', 'die Neureichen', such as the

Hagenstroem's aim particularly at profit-making. Consequently, the 'personal art of doing business' must be sacrificed to impersonal big business if one wants to survive. But the Buddenbrooks are of the 'old school', their civic role is that of the patrician burgher, of conservative nature. Indicative of this is the carefully kept family chronicle, tracing the Buddenbrooks' family history back to the sixteenth century, illustrating a wholeness and consistent continuity, which has the appearance of being indestructible.

When Thomas extends the family custom of taking on honorary consulship, despite his sceptical apprehension that this post could possibly confirm not success but decline, he removes his doubts by resolving to build a new house. It was then that the old patrician Mengstreet house had to be sold. The fact that Herr Hagenstroem is able to buy the old comfortable patrician Buddenbrook house which was bought from a firm ruined through speculation and mismanagement, the detail of which ironically prefigures the Buddenbrooks' own decline, also contributes towards sentiments which reveal the author's own epoch-making view-point which is expressed in the recurrent beast-metaphor of the beast image, descriptive of bestial, brutal persons such as the 'new rich', which is simultaneously a reaction against a new 'unrefined' epoch (Mann, 1982: 218 and 463). Influenced thus the reader is 'guided' in his understanding of the disparity of ideologies between these two major families, simultaneously indicating different sets of civilized values. Although viewed with apprehension, the historical changes which took place

in the nineteenth-century bourgeois society are appropriately described to reveal that these (changes) enabled the establishment of a new epoch, set off by the 'newcomers' tendency to create towards building up a stronger middle-class presence in everyday life and politics.

The Buddenbrooks thus find themselves under threat by the unfavourable timely developments. They feel more and more outdated and outrivaled. As time goes by, they become increasingly self-conscious about the role of civility handed down by their forefathers. Especially Tom becomes ever more melancholy, brooding and wondering about the relevance and at what prize he must preserve the family business and the honour of his ancient family name.

Resorting to external description yet again, the omniscient author's own epoch-making view-point is presented: the narrator describes the representative of the 'nouveaux riche' Herr Hagenstroem, as an imposing Stock Exchange figure simultaneously illustrating him as a typical 'parvenu', the accumulation of adjectives are carefully chosen to influence the reader:

Hermann Hagenstroem looked the City man to the life: an imposing Stock Exchange figure, in a coat the fur of which seemed a foot long, standing open over an English winter suit of good fuzzy yellow-green tweed. He was so uncommonly fat that not only his chin, but the whole lower part of his face, was double - a fact which his full short-

trimmed blond beard could not disguise. When he moved his forehead or eyebrows, deep folds came even in the smoothly shorn skin of his skull. His nose lay flatter upon his upper lip than ever, and breathed down into his moustaches. Now and then his mouth had to come to the rescue and fly open for a deep breath. When it did this it always made a little smacking noise, as the tongue came away from the roof of his mouth.

(Mann, 1982: 463)

Compared to Thomas's careful attention to his appearance in an attempt to present a dignified and respectable image to the world, the description of his rival is clearly intended to exaggerate the vulgarity with which he seems to be endowed. Clearly, then the description once more signifies the author's views as being the sentiment of the Buddenbrook family and, of course, of the old established, well to do, refined burghers of the city. The revolting appearance of the 'new-rich' Mr Hagenstroem was to be the image representing all those who wanted to impose different sets of civilized values.

Thus, to the Buddenbrooks, the new contenders are 'only profitmakers', unrefined assailants of the cultured patrician bourgeois family's ways of life; they are uncouth, immoral exploiters. The narrator also cleverly contrasts the two men Thomas Buddenbrook and Hagenstroem as Thomas having a good education, embodying devotion to the family firm, and respect for tradition. He also shows consideration and cour-

tesey whereas Hagenstroem has an average education, is easy-going and big-spending. In his crudeness, Hagenstroem is however much more unproblematic. He is courteous but insensitive to the needs of others hence the expression the 'elbowing Hagenstroems'.

It is Thomas Buddenbrook's aim to bring up his son Hanno according to the business ideal of civility. Ironically, this civilized life threatens the merchant's code of civility crushing Thomas's vitality. Hanno, who is the end-result of three generations of Buddenbrook men instinctively feels his father's weariness as he takes him on his rounds to instil into him an interest in the family business which he is to take over one day. But Hanno flinches inwardly from his father's demands to harden him for this task. This causes Hanno unhappiness, the sensitive child feels that he can never fit into this role. He finds refuge in music when:

the waves of tribulation went over him once more he would think of the sea and of the Kurgarten, and of the sound made by the little waves, coming hither out of the mysterious slumbering distance. One single memory of the sound they made as they splashed against the breakwater could make him oppose an invincible front to all the pains and penalties of his life.

(Mann, 1982: 491)

It should be clear that Thomas Mann excels in providing the reader, whether by means of external description or psychonarration, with information without which he could not per-

ceive the innermost thoughts and feelings of the characters. The chronological development furthermore provides the author with the possibility of exploring the development and the evolution of his characters and their personalities.

When at last Tom finds the Buddenbrook faith powerless against his thoughts of liberation, his desire for annihilation of this, to him painful existence, becomes overwhelming. Stumbling on Schopenhauer's philosophy maintaining that, inter alia, all existence is eventually evil and that release can only be attained by overcoming the will to live, he develops an ecstatic longing for death, 'eine 'Todessehnsucht':

What was Death? The answer came, not in poor, large-sounding words: he felt it within him, he possessed it. Death was a joy, so great, so deep that it could be dreamed of only in moments of revelation like the present. It was the return from an unspeakably painful wandering, the correction of a grave mistake, the loosening of chains, the opening of doors - it put right again a lamentable mischance. End, dissolution! These were pitiable words, and thrice-pitiable he who used them! What would end, what would dissolve? Why, this his body, this heavy, faulty, hateful incumbrance, which prevented him from being something other and better.

(Mann, 1982: 506; emphasis MW)

To Thomas it is clear that this fascination with Schopen-

hauer's ideas is more than just a passing feeling; it yields a precious treasure, a visionary realization:

'I shall live,' he whispered into his pillow. He wept, and in the next moment knew not why. His brain stood still, the vision was quenched. Suddenly there was nothing more - he lay in dumb darkness. 'It will come back,' he assured himself. And before sleep inexorably wrapped him round, he swore to himself never to let go this precious treasure, but to read and study, to learn its powers, and to make inalienably his own the whole conception of the universe out of which his vision sprang.

(Mann, 1982: 508; emphasis MW)

In measuring himself against his idealized grandfather, Johann Buddenbrook, who was a practical man of the eighteenth century, he realizes the limitations of his ability. Trying to face up to the increasing demands of the time, he becomes increasingly restless and nervous. His health deteriorates due to the innumerable mental and physical demands. His incessant smoking of the small but strong Russian cigarettes does not help either.

The realization that all his powers were on the decline strengthened his conviction that the end was close at hand. Suffering from strange apprehensive fancies, he sometimes seemed to sit at the table no longer, but had the sensation of hovering above his family 'looking down upon them from a

great distance' (Mann, 1982: 502). When he reaches his forties he complains of loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dizzy spells and sudden chills. The narrator's voice once again 'sneaks' in to reiterate with psychological insight and great compassion Tom's excruciating despair:

This poor, well-nigh exhausted man, consumed with gnawing fears for the honour of his house, his wife, his child, his name, his family, this man who spent painful effort even to keep his body artificially erect and well preserved - this poor man tortured himself for days with thoughts upon the moment and manner of death. How would it really be? Did the soul go to Heaven immediately after death, or did bliss first begin with the resurrection of the flesh? And, if so, where did the soul stay until that time? He did not remember ever having been taught this. Why had he not been told this important fact in school or in church? How was it justifiable for them to leave people in such uncertainty? He considered visiting Pastor Pringsheim and seeking advice and counsel; but he gave it up in the end for fear of being ridiculous.

(Mann, 1982: 509; emphasis MW)

As it becomes clear from the quotation above, Tom's preoccupation with his deteriorating health and increasing inability to cope with his responsibilities result in the conviction, at age forty-eight that his days are numbered, so that he consequently prepares himself for death. His premonitions

prove to be correct and two years later he dies. His death is as sudden as his father's. When it happens, he is fifty years old. The apoplexy is initiated by an unsuccessful attempt of an unskilful dentist to extract a tooth (crown). This was increasingly painful, to the extent of being really agonizing:

The pain grew and grew, to limitless, incredible heights; it grew to an insane, shrieking, inhuman torture, tearing his entire brain. It approached the catastrophe. ...

(Mann, 1982: 523)

Instead of pulling the tooth, Herr Brecht, the dentist tells Tom that it was actually the crown which broke off and that Tom had to come back the following day to have the roots taken out 'with a lever' (Mann, 1982: 524).

By skilful exploitation of the possibilities of psycho-narration to merge the authorial voice with the inner experience of the character, the impression is created that the reader can participate intimately in Thomas's experience of the circumstances signalling the final prelude to his death:

He got as far as Fishers' Lane and began to descend the left-hand sidewalk. After twenty paces he felt nauseated. 'I'll go over to the public house and take a drink of brandy,' he thought, and began to cross the road. But just as he reached the middle, something happened to him. It was precisely as if his brain was seized and swung around,

faster and faster, in circles that grew smaller and smaller, until it crashed with enormous, brutal, pitiless force against a stony centre. He performed a half-turn, fell, and struck the wet pavement, his arms outstretched.

As the street ran steeply down hill, his body lay much lower than his feet. He fell upon his face, beneath which, presently, a little pool of blood began to form. His hat rolled a little way off down the road; his fur coat was wet with mud and slush; his hands, in their white kid gloves, lay outstretched in a puddle. Thus he lay, and thus he remained, until some people came down the street and turned him over.

(Mann, 1982: 524,525)

The reader cannot but be struck by the bitter irony of the man whose toilette was (always) a ritual consisting of a succession of countless details which:

drove him half mad: from the cold douche in the bathroom to the last brushing of the last speck of dust off his coat, and the last pressure of the tongs on his moustache ...

(Mann, 1982: 473)

Being brought home in such a state that his wife Gerda's 'whole form is shaken', ... 'her lovely white face was quite distorted with horror and disgust':

'How he looked,' (Tony heard), 'when they brought

him. His whole life long, he never let anyone see even a speck of dust on him. - Oh, it is insulting, it is vile, for the end to have come like that!

(Mann, 1982: 525)

It is clear that the whole description of Thomas's psychological and physiological decline is closely attended to by the narrator who expresses his fascination with the phenomena of deterioration such as the processes of ageing and terminal afflictions through focusing on his characters.

Having shown how the supposedly strong member of the family eventually succumbs to tiredness and death, the decline of the Buddenbrooks can next be regarded with reference to two members of the family who are presented as much more vulnerable, with regard to both physical health and mental stability, than Thomas, at first regarded as the hope of the family.

5.4 FINAL DEMISE OF THE BUDDENBROOKS - CHRISTIAN'S PSYCHOSOMATIC CONDITION AND HANNO'S UNTIMELY DEATH

In the discussion of the mood of total exhaustion characteristic of the so-called fin de siècle it was shown that it is particularly through his portrayal of Thomas, Christian and Hanno that Mann interprets the signs of decadence as a process of exhaustion and a mood of uncertainty and fatigue. 10) One is able to detect the signs of exhaustion and fatigue through the detailed description of these characters' real or imagined physical illnesses; but it is especially through the revelation of their feelings and thoughts that the extent of their distress and inner turmoil is forcibly brought home to the reader. Seen from Thomas's perspective, it is particularly in Christian, his mentally unstable brother, and his son Hanno, who due to his weak physical condition was incompetent in practical matters of life, that psychological disorders not only place an extra burden on him as head of the family, but also present a threat to the continuance of the Buddenbrook family name and business. The advantage of omniscient narration simultaneously gives the reader access to the thoughts and feelings of Christian and Hanno, with the result that it soon becomes clear that there is a different side to the picture. The reader realizes, first of all, that both Christian and Hanno suffer as a result of not having been allowed to pursue their interests, namely theatre and music respectively, with

10) See the discussion of Nietzsche's and Schopenhauer's influence in Section 3.1.2.

the approval of the Buddenbrook family and of Thomas Buddenbrook in particular. It may be argued that the negative effect that the suppression of their real desires has on them is exacerbated by what one may call their genetic make-up, namely the units which occur at specific points on the chromosomes by which hereditary characters are transmitted and determined. In Christian's case this is realized as his largely imagined illnesses, due to a psychosomatic condition, in Hanno's case it is his severe sickly mental and physical condition, a chronic complex emotional state with apprehension and dread as its most prominent component causing anxiety attacks. These attacks are characteristic of nervous and mental disorders (at one occasion the reference to these attacks of anxiety is described in Buddenbrooks 1982: 543: '... he woke once more, with a start of fear'). The 'start of fear' causes anxiety in this overly refined child whose unbearable existence wears him out and eventually causes his health to falter effecting his untimely death.

The skilful depiction of the consciousness of a number of the main characters in the novel is characteristic of Thomas Mann's narrative style. However, if his occasional use of psycho-narration, adjacent to and integrated with his masterful exploitation of realist conventions such as life-like descriptions of objects and people, signalled the novel's so-called 'inward turn' towards an ostensibly unmediated revelation of the inner life of characters, then his portrayal of Christian's self-conscious flaunting of not only his most private and intimate feelings and thoughts, but also his

consciousness of his role as an actor, marks a further development towards a laying bare of the artificiality of writing itself.

Thomas Mann in describing the manner in which the novel is narrated, clearly advocates the 'principle of internalization' which according to him 'initially sublimated the outer adventures of the epic hero into the inner adventures of the *Bildungsheld*, then to continue moving inward to greater passivity and complexity' (Mann, 1960: 356-357). Mann's determination to maintain this principle of internalization illustrates that the significance of the inner voice is an important psychological reality.

At the beginning of the novel, at the occasion of the house-warming party (Mann, 1982: 17), Mann interrupts the description of the occasion and moves on to illustrate Christian's first symptoms of neurotic fear. He describes how Christian disappears from the dinner party and is found crouching on a round settee. He had accidentally swallowed a pip of a peach and partly choked on it. This incident is, like all the other descriptions in the novel, illustrated in a direct and typically realistic manner:

There in the dim light, little Christian was half lying, half crouching on the round settee that encircled the central pillar. He was uttering heart-breaking groans. ... Doctor Grabow felt the lad's pulse. ... 'It's nothing much, Frau Consul' he reassured her. 'A touch of indigestion.'

(Mann, 1982: 28)

If one traces the progression of Christian's symptoms in the course of the novel, from childhood to his eventual institutionalization after his unfortunate marriage, it reads almost like one of Freud's case histories, showing Thomas Mann's intimate knowledge of the psychoanalytic discourse of the time.

Christian's neurotic condition becomes more severe in adulthood. It exhibits a mentally abnormal, pathological state, a deteriorative psychosis which results in the progressive loss of certain mental functionings. It is this condition which causes Christian to be constantly preoccupied with his state of health. His mental and emotional processes become seriously disordered, his behaviour is so abnormal that he keeps on speaking about symptoms which he imagines. As it was argued above, 11) Christian starts to hallucinate, having apparent perceptions of sights and sounds that are not actually present: thus he 'sees' a stranger sitting on the sofa in his room, nodding his head at him! When he passes a window he has the sudden urge to jump out of it and has to crawl on all fours to close the window.

In later years he develops difficulties in swallowing which increase as time goes on. He also fears that his neck muscles will be paralyzed and that this is due to strangulation by a morsel of food which lodges in his throat, a condition which, as indicated above actually started when he was a child during the occasion of the house-warming party.

11) See the discussion in Section 3.3.

Difficulty in breathing is also experienced which evokes fears in him that he may have a condition of asthmatic lung ailment or pulmonary tuberculosis. On top of all that, he complains of a peculiar pain in his left leg. It is this pain which penetrates into the entire left side of his body. After his return from England where he is diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis he is hospitalized in Hamburg. A controversial physician who treats him explains all the different symptoms as being caused by nerves, and that all nerves on Christian's left side are too short.

Thus Christian also epitomizes the thematic theme, namely the physical and mental deterioration of the Buddenbrook family, which symbolizes the end of the nineteenth century, the era called 'fin de siècle'.

Thomas Mann penetrates deeply into Christian's consciousness when he illustrates his fears and desires. However, contrary to the revelation of Thomas's innermost thoughts and feelings discussed in the previous section, where it is the author himself that remains 'audible' whilst allowing the reader to gain knowledge about Thomas's inner life kept secret from the other characters, in the case of Christian it is the character himself who is the 'audible agent', in that he constantly tries to verbalize his feelings and thoughts in the family circle, thereby causing responses ranging from indifference and embarrassment to irritation and angry dismissal. These verbalized revelations are normally linked both to Christian's obsessive urge to talk about his real and imagined ailments, thus forcing his family to take note

of his psychosomatic illness and later his psychotic disorder, and his desire to flaunt his love of the theatre and display his talents as an actor - the latter normally materializing in clever imitations of various characters to the amusement of both his circle of friends and his family.

In the following example, in a scene at dinner one day shortly after his father's death, Christian in a lengthy speech first proclaims his love of the theatre, immediately following it up with an expression of his anxiety:

But Christian ... went on to talk about the theatre. 'I am too happy for words in the theatre. Even the word "theatre" makes me feel happy. I don't know whether any of you have that feeling. I could sit for hours and just look at the curtain. I feel as I used to do when I was a child and we went in to the Christmas party here.

(Mann, 1982: 201; author's emphasis)

After continuing in this vein for some time, Madame Buddenbrook tries to intervene, but Christian suddenly stops of his own accord, gazes absent-mindedly past her and suddenly switches to describing what would eventually develop into a psychotic disorder, a progressive loss of mental function:

Suddenly he said: 'Strange - sometimes I can't swallow. Oh, it's no joke. I find it very serious. It enters my head that perhaps I can't swallow, and then all of a sudden I can't. The food is already swallowed, but the muscles - right here -

they simply refuse. It isn't a question of will-power. Or rather, the thing is, I don't dare really will it.'

(Mann, 1982: 202)

Thomas's attitude towards this type of behaviour is revealing in that Christian's desire to make known his feelings and thoughts, thereby disclosing his inner life, is viewed as a lack of self-control resulting in his being observed as:

very incautious - undignified - ... Something is lacking in him - what people call equilibrium, mental poise. ... It gives one such an uncanny feeling - it is just the way people speak in a fever,

.....

(Mann, 1982: 203)

It is significant that Thomas also sees his behaviour as a kind of illness, comparing it to someone delirious with fever, but what he simultaneously considers to be a lack of mental stability.

It should be clear from the above that Thomas Mann uses a different technique of portraying the inner life of a character in the case of Christian, in that the character's own dialogue is accompanied by commentary from a character or characters presumably capable of correctly interpreting the symptoms for the reader.

This is shown in yet another example of Mann's use of internalization and his method of meticulously detailed direct description: After having attended little Johann's (Hanno's)

christening, Christian Buddenbrook, who was then still the proprietor of the firm Burmeister and Company of Hamburg, comes into his brother's living room where he (Tom) and his wife Gerda were sitting together. Christian speaks to Tom after they went into the 'dark dining-room' where Tom lights a gas jet on the wall and Christian presents his innermost thoughts to him in a manner distasteful to Tom and perceived by him as nothing serious, but merely a frivolous attempt by Christian to engage in some play-acting. In the interaction between the brothers, Mann allows the reader insight into Christian's thoughts and feelings, whilst simultaneously adding Thomas's judgement of his brother's attempt at disclosing his inner life in an attempt to justify his actions. It is interesting that the reader, through Thomas's contemplation of his brother, as well as the bits of dialogue in-between, is also made aware of the fundamental differences between the two brothers and the extent of the misunderstanding of each other's fears and feelings:

(Tom) looked at his brother. He expected nothing good. . . . he had looked at him, during the service, and noted that he seemed unusually serious, and even more restless than common: in the course of Pastor Pringsheim's discourse he had left the room for several minutes. Thomas had not written him since the day in Hamburg when he had paid over into his brother's hands an advance of 10,000 marks current on his inheritance, to settle his indebtedness. 'Just go on as you are going,' he had said,

'and you'll soon run through all your money. As far as I am concerned, I hope you will cross my path very little in future. You have put my friendship to too hard a test in these three years.'

Thomas furthermore asks himself:

Why was he here now? Something must be driving him. 'Well?' asked the Consul. 'I'm done,' Christian said. ... 'I'm done,' repeated Christian, shaking his head from side to side with frightful earnestness and letting his little round eyes stray restlessly back and forth. He was now thirty-three years old, but he looked much older. His reddish-blond hair was grown so thin that nearly all the cranium was bare. His cheeks were sunken, the cheek-bones protruded sharply, and between them, naked, fleshless, and gaunt, stood the huge hooked nose. 'If it were only this -!' he went on, and ran his hand down the whole of his left side, very close, but not touching it. 'It isn't a pain, you know - it is a misery, a continuous, indefinite ache. Dr Droegemuller in Hamburg tells me that my nerves on this side are all too short. Imagine, on my whole left side, my nerves aren't long enough! Sometimes I think I shall surely have a stroke here, on this side, a permanent paralysis. You have no idea. I never go to sleep properly. My heart doesn't beat, and I start up suddenly, in a perfectly terrible fright. ... I'll tell you about

it more precisely. ...'

(Mann, 1982: 310,311)

Tom's response is rather unsympathetic even cold, as the manner with which Christian presents his private thoughts is once again considered as nothing less than play-acting. Tom, being a responsible provider for the family and manager of the business, cannot fathom how his brother can burden him with such selfconscious revelations! Thomas finds this hateful and not at all in good taste.

As is the case with Christian, Hanno, the only son of Thomas, is also unable to live up to his father's expectations. Being the last link in the Buddenbrook line, Thomas Mann goes to some lengths in creating, for the reader, a sense of inevitable and impending doom, ending, predictably, in a novel interspersed with various kinds of illnesses and detailed descriptions of deaths in the family, with the untimely death of young Hanno. Unlike the self-conscious portrayal of Christian's feelings through dialogue, the author reverts to the technique of psycho-narration in his penetration of Hanno's mind, thereby exploiting an authoritative narrative style in order to introduce something new, namely a kind of impersonal, factual medical account in his clinical analysis of the nature and progression of Hanno's illness. Like Christian's self-conscious flaunting of his inner experience, stressing the artificiality of his experience of reality in his conscious exploitation of theatrical roles, the insertion of medical discourse in the novel would appear to anticipate typical postmodernist narrative techniques, in

that the distinction between fiction and reality, or fictional and factual discourse is blurred.

Being the male heir descendant left after his father's death, Hanno is expected to continue with the family business. However, due to his weak physical condition, his over-refined, impractical dreamy disposition and, evidently his extreme interest in music which is fanned by his violinist-mother this expectation does not materialize.

The following example of the author's use of psycho-narration in giving the reader an insight into Hanno's general experience of disillusion and fatigue may serve as an indication of the dreariness of Hanno's life in that it provides a detailed description of a typical beginning to yet another tortuous day at school.

Signs of severe decadence in Hanno are described in the text by an audible narrator who concentrates on Hanno's tormented state of mind. By penetrating into his consciousness, the narrator describes his feelings in the form of an authorial analysis typical of the technique of psycho-narration used by Thomas Mann also in his portrayal of Thomas's consciousness in the previous section. The following example illustrates Hanno's experience of a typical morning, reminiscent of the boy's tormented soul:

The alarm-clock went off with cruel alacrity. It was a hoarse rattling and clattering that it made, rather than a ringing, for it was old and worn out; but it kept on for a painfully long time, for it

had been thoroughly wound up.

Hanno Buddenbrook was startled to his inmost depth. ... His very entrails rebelled, in rage, protest, and despair, at the onslaught of this at once cruel and faithful monitor standing on the bedside table close to his ear. However, he did not get up, ... he only wrenched himself away from some blurred dream... And as he lay on his back, with his nerves rasped by the shock of waking, struggling for sufficient resolution to make a light and jump out of bed, everything that had filled his mind yesterday came gradually back into his consciousness.

(Mann, 1982: 541; emphasis MW)

The horror Hanno feels in a society which advocates the male image as being a military hero can only be cushioned by playing out his emotions on the piano. The therapeutic affect music has on him is incisively described:

And then the dream became reality. It came over him with all its enchantment and consecration, all its secret revelations and tremors, its sudden inner emotion, its extravagant, unquenchable intoxication. ... But the sweet, exalted splendour of the music had borne him away on its wings.

(Mann, 1982: 542; emphasis MW)

From the descriptive text of the above quotation it becomes clear that Hanno's thoughts are described in moments of narrated inner time, which are marked by such (time) phrases

as 'The alarm clock went off', 'Hanno Buddenbrook was startled to his inmost depth', 'he wrenched himself away from some blurred dream' and eventually 'everything that had filled his mind yesterday came gradually back into his consciousness'. The narrator's descriptive analogy simultaneously shows off Hanno's extreme love for music, his significant musical talent which he had obviously inherited from his very refined, musical mother:

Hanno remained in the salon. ... Then he went to the piano. He stood for a while, and his gaze, directed fixed and unseeing upon a distant point, altered slowly, grew blurred and vague and shadowy. He sat down at the instrument and began to improvise. ... It was a simple *motiv* which he employed - a mere trifle, an unfinished fragment of melody in one bar and a half. ... What was coming? Then came horns again, sounding the march; ... There was no joy in this hunting song; its note was one of defiant despair. Signals sounded through it; yet they were not only signals but cries of fear; ... bizarre harmonies, came again that mysterious first motive, wandering in despair, torturingly sweet. And now began a ceaseless hurry of events whose sense and meaning could not be guessed, a restless flood of sound adventures, rhythms, harmonies, welling up uncontrolled from the keyboard, as they shaped themselves under Hanno's labouring fingers. He experienced them, as it were; ... What

was the meaning of what he played? Were these images of fearful difficulties surmounted, flames passed through and torrents swum, castles stormed and dragons slain?

(Mann, 1982: 578,579; emphasis MW)

By describing Hanno's playing of the piano the audible narrator simultaneously mediates the reader towards the whole turmoil of Hanno's innermost being, the struggle and torment he feels in a life which is too harsh for his refined soul:

... an irresistible mounting, a chromatic upward struggle, a wild relentless longing, abruptly broken by startling, arresting pianissimi which gave a sensation as if the ground were disappearing. ... Once far off and softly warning, sounded the first chords of the imploring prayer; ... And it came; it could no longer be kept back - those spasms of yearning could not be prolonged.

(Mann, 1982: 579; emphasis MW)

Hanno expresses through music what he experiences as reappearing torments in floods of rising cacophonies. And as he plays out all his frustrations he reaches a point upon which all the struggle had to come to an end :

And it came as though curtains were rent apart, doors sprang open, thorn-hedges parted of themselves, walls of flame sank down. The resolution, the redemption, the complete fulfilment - a chorus of jubilation burst forth, and everything resolved

itself in a harmony - ...

(Mann, 1982: 579)

What he experiences thereupon is a bursting forth of jubilation resolving everything in harmony. This is not unlike the experience, or better said, the vision his father had when he contemplated on the question of what death really is.

However, Hanno subconsciously feels that this longed for harmony only materializes in music.¹²⁾ When he stops playing and reality once more takes hold of him, his despondency is reflected in the description of his physiognomy and significantly in the state of motionlessness after he had closed the instrument:

Hanno sat still a moment, his chin on his breast, his hands in his lap. Then he got up and closed the instrument. He was very pale, there was no strength in his knees, and his eyes were burning. He went into the next room, stretched himself on the chaise-longue, and remained for a long time motionless.

(Mann, 1982: 580; emphasis MW)

Turning now to Hanno's last illness and ultimate death, Thomas Mann illustrates with clinical accuracy the progression of Hanno's illness, which comes to symbolize the Budden-

12) Schopenhauer's philosophy that the subconscious will strives to realize in an independent existence, and is thus forever frustrated and that an escape from these frustrations is only possible through forms of idealism such as the arts, ethics, aesthetic, and religion. In Hanno's case an escape from frustration is only possible through the medium of music.

brook's final disintegration. As already mentioned above the descriptive realistic text on the symptoms of typhoid fever, because it is reflected with clinical accuracy, differs in technique and style from the preceding chapters of the novel. In a letter to Theodor W. Adorno, Mann explains that the contextual discussion in the quoted chapter is a technique of literary 'montage' (Thomas Mann, Briefe: 1937-1947). In presenting the topic in this 'montage' style, Mann causes a rather severe shift from literary style to clinical report:

Cases of typhoid fever take the following course.

The patient feels depressed and moody - a condition which grows rapidly worse until it amounts to acute despondency. ...

(Mann, 1982: 580)

Mann uses non-literary material, such as an encyclopaedia (Konversationslexikon), and/or a source-book of clinical report which imparts with accurate precision the symptoms of typhoid fever. Which encyclopaedia or clinical source-book Mann used should be irrelevant. It only accounts for the introduction of a type of factual discourse in the novel, thereby anticipating what would eventually become a favourite postmodernist technique.

The integration of this completely different style is however somewhat cushioned by the mention of the physician, Dr. Langhals. Thus the mention of the house physician indeed achieves a connecting link with the other text in the novel:

In individual cases the diagnosis is sometimes

rendered more difficult; as, for example, when the early symptoms - depression, weariness, lack of appetite, headache, and unquiet sleep - are nearly all present while the patient is still going about in his usual health; when they are scarcely noticeable as anything out of the common, even if they are suddenly and definitely increased. But a clever doctor, of real scientific acumen - like, for example, Dr Langhals, the good-looking Dr Langhals with the small, hairy hands - will still be in a position to call the case by its right name; and the appearance of the red spots on the chest and abdomen will be conclusive evidence that his diagnosis was correct.

(Mann, 1982: 581,582; emphasis MW)

The 'medical report', of course, speaks for itself. Resorting to psycho-narration again in describing for the reader the dying patient's torment, the following paragraph towards the end of the novel commences with the same literal bare, clinical statement with which the chapter started. It shows off a mysterious voice which is obviously that of the sovereign, omniscient narrator, the master psychologist, who shifts to focus on an at once awe-inspiring theme, namely the confrontation between the choice of life and death. Foregrounded by the code of metaphor and metonymy, the significance of the mysterious message becomes forcefully intensified:

When the fever is at its height, life calls to the

patient: calls out to him as he wanders in his distant dream, and summons him in no uncertain voice. The harsh, imperious call reaches the spirit on that remote path that leads into the shadows, the coolness and peace. He hears the call of life, the clear, fresh, mocking summons to return to that distant scene which he had already left so far behind him, and already forgotten. And there may well up in him something like a feeling of shame for a neglected duty; a sense of renewed energy, courage, and hope; he may recognize a bond existing still between him and that stirring, colourful, callous existence which he thought he had left so far behind him. Then, however far he may have wandered on his distant path, he will turn back - and live. But if he shudders when he hears life's voice, if the memory of that vanished scene and the sound of that lusty summons make him shake his head, make him put out his hand to ward off as he flies forward in the way of escape that has opened to him - then it is clear that the patient will die.

(Mann, 1982: 582,583; emphasis MW)

Hanno has no will to return to that 'stirring, colourful' yet 'callous existence' and so he flies forward in the way of escape that has opened to him. With supreme compassion and by exploiting the advantages of omniscient narration, the narrator suggests to the reader the nature and

extent of the dying Hanno's suffering. But not only that, the narrator actually presents a very moving account of what it is like to make the transition from earthly form to beyond the physical plane. Mann's inspiration is indicative of the convention of psychological depth where everything has shifted to internal processes, indeed to psychic-supernatural insights, that have, during Mann's activity as author, resulted in an original exploitation of the technique of psycho-narration in portraying consciousness. 13)

Thus, with significant psychoanalytical insight, the narrator finally explains Hanno Buddenbrook's dynamic inner life with complete spontaneity and immediacy: Hanno dies because he is unable to live up to the inherited ideals brought down and held up vigorously and rigidly by his forefathers. The narrow definition his culture sets as a norm for what constitutes a man cripples him. He is an over-sensitive child, not made for a world in which one had to fight for the survival of ideals set by the ruling society. This becomes visible in the conduct of his father's business friends and in Hanno's school which advocates the ideal male image as being the military hero, the most admired virtues being that of physical strength and athletic skill. With Hanno, the Buddenbrook line dies out and the disintegration of the

13) Because of its significant relevance to psychological study, a part of the quotation 'When the fever is at its height ...' also appears in Section 3.3 Sigmund Freud and Thomas Mann - psychological implications in Buddenbrooks. The portrayal of Madame Bethsy Buddenbrook's death scene, where she already 'sees and speaks' to those loved ones who 'have gone into eternity before her' is also indicative of the narrator's interest of psychic-supernatural matters, see Section 5.2.

family line is complete. With his end not only the Buddenbrook line, but the whole Buddenbrook tradition has vanished.

As will be shown in the next chapter, the similarity between the Buddenbrooks and the Compsons in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1982), is of significant thematic consistency. The subtitle of Buddenbrooks, 'Decline of a Family', could actually also be added to the story of the Compsons, as with one son dead, the other son an idiot, the third son without child and the daughter away from home, there is little hope for their family line to continue. The similarity between Mann's novel and Faulkner's novel lies in the masterful psychological portrayal of the hopelessness and the gradual disintegration of each family.

Both authors' concentration on detail is excellent. They create a perfectly realistic external and internal atmosphere which ensures that significance is attached to environmental and external indicators, although Faulkner's narrative style is characterized by distortions, ambiguities, absences, elisions and gaps, thus standing in striking contrast to Mann's coherent narrative style.

With psychological credibility they gently lead the reader to participate in the pain and distress that attend the families. Unique to the world of literature at the time, they offer a new perception of reality, namely psychological depth. In employing this strategy, they focus on a basic situation which contains unresolvable, fundamental tensions inherent in the human condition, in man's unresolved tension of his limited existence.

CHAPTER 6

DISINTEGRATION OF A FAMILY
 COMMUNICATED AS INDIVIDUAL
 ANGUISH IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S
THE SOUND AND THE FURY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

If in Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks the portrayal of the inner life of characters is used circumspectly and in conjunction with various other techniques of characterization, then William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury represents somewhat of a tour de force in its apparent unmediated portrayal of the consciousness of three of the Compson children, including that of the retarded Benjy. Whilst the focus on the inner life of the characters certainly helps the reader to come to a 'complete' understanding of their behaviour, in Forster's (1970) sense of the word, the fragmented presentation of time, in that there is a constant movement from selective remembered childhood experiences to the present behaviour of Benjy, Quentin and Jason, precludes any sense of a logical progression of events. Rather, certain events are singled out for detailed representation in that the reader is invited, so to speak, to 'see' the same event through the eyes of more than one character, thereby enabling the discerning reader to piece together the psychological importance of a particular event, such as the death of Damuddy, for example, in understanding the adult behaviour of the protagonists.

Although the decline of the Buddenbrook dynasty and the total disintegration of the Compson family provides for a comparative theme in the two novels, the contrast between the two novels simultaneously captures fundamental differences between realist and modernist conventions in the novel. Whereas Thomas Mann presents to the reader as complete a picture as possible of the gradual decline spread over four generations of the same family, thereby enabling the reader to gain insight into the forces that shaped a different way of life at the end of an era, William Faulkner focuses on the individual experience of seemingly unrelated events linked together by association rather than chronological progression or logical necessity. The focus is undeniably on the 'inner life' of individual characters, thereby signalling unambiguously the novel's so-called 'inward turn' towards an attempted representation of consciousness.

Contrasting with the audible voice of the narrator in Thomas Mann's preferences for the technique of psycho-narration, William Faulkner fully explores what Dorrit Cohn (1978) defined as various techniques whereby the unmediated disclosure of a character's thoughts and feelings could be attempted by means of different forms of interior monologue, defined by her, *inter alia*, as quoted, autonomous and memory monologue. 1) It is especially the last of these categories, a variant of autonomous monologue, and constituting, in Cohn's (1978: 247) opinion, a 'special, and especially fascinating sub-genre', which will be useful in analysing

1) See the discussion of Cohn's categories in Section 4.4.2.

Faulkner's intricate representation of the inner life of the three Compson children in the sections indicated as April seventh 1928, June second 1910 and April sixth 1928, dealing, respectively, with the memories and associations of the retarded Benjy, the suicidal Quentin and the miserly Jason in The Sound and the Fury.

A characteristic feature of autonomous monologue, of which memory monologue is a variant, is that it is regarded from the perspective of the experiencing rather than the narrating self. Cohn (1978: 198) outlines the effect this has on the presentation of time, past and present, in that the illusion is created that past and present merge, thereby 'evoking' the narrated moment at the moment of narration'. In this regard Molly Bloom's sustained interior monologue in the Penelope section of James Joyce's Ulysses may serve as an example of a unit which, although dependent on information provided in the novel as such for its understanding, nevertheless 'stands apart from its context, as a self-generated, self-supported, and self-enclosed fictional text' (Cohn, 1978: 218). It is considered to be autonomous interior monologue, because it is the only moment in the novel where the voice of the character totally obliterates that of the authorial narrative voice throughout an entire chapter. Thus the Penelope section is 'a model for that singular narrative genre entirely constituted by a fictional character's thoughts' (Cohn, 1978: 218). Moreover, as a continuous interior monologue, it is 'based on an absolute correspondence between time and text, narrated time and time of narration Cohn, 1978: 219).

Another aspect of autonomous interior monologue concerns the fact that the progression in time depends wholly on the progression of the words on the page, but not on the assumed chronology of events following one another in a set time sequence normally required in narration. This means that progress in time is 'associated only with the successive moments of verbalization itself, and not with their content', which entails, in the case of Molly Bloom's 'helter-skelter references to different moments of the past and the future', that a monologist's presentation of impressions may be likened to an 'a-chronological montage of events' (Cohn, 1978: 219,220). It will be shown that such 'a-chronological montage of events' characterizes, to a greater or a lesser extent, not only the individual memory monologues of the three Compson children, but also the global organisation of the novel which foregrounds, by means of the dates presented for each section, the a-chronological sequence of the narration as such in the Faulkner text under discussion.

6.2 SELECTIVE AND ASSOCIATIVE REMEMBRANCE IN THE MEMORY

MONOLOGUES OF CHARACTERS IN THE SOUND AND THE FURY

The narrative technique employed for first person novels such as Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, is termed 'memory monologue'. This technique is indicative of a steadfast, most accurate vehicle for interior monologue as a separate fictional form as in autonomous interior monologue outlined above. It is a kind of 'genuine interior monologue', which denotes a temporal sequence of related past events yielding to the temporal sequence of present remembrance. As a result

thereof, the past is fundamentally dechronologized.

The contrast between conventional narration and memory monologue is adequately explained by Cohn (1978: 29) thus:

In contrast to a chronicle where the facts are related in sequence of their development, this author undertakes less ... to tell a story than to describe the imprint left by it in a memory and a sensibility.

(Emphasis MW)

The intention for representing such a text is thus essentially for the purpose of the self-involvement of memory, which consequently imposes a fractured chronology. The temporal continuity that the memory monologue presents is the continuity of the process of an impulsively remembering mind. Since the mind in this variant of the autonomous monologue is exclusively focused on the past, the remembered events are not presented in a chronologically evolving time-span of inner speech or locution, but they are merely linked to each other, in other words, they are linked only by association. In their temporal structure, therefore, 'memory monologues are not only freer than other retrospective fictions, but they are also freer than autonomous monologues, which focus on simultaneous experience' (Cohn, 1978: 184,5).

Citing Faulkner's text under discussion as a prime example of the exploitation of memory monologue, where the character's mind is 'trained full-time on the past', Cohn (1978: 247) distinguishes memory monologue from other forms of

autonomous monologues by pointing out that:

in memory monologues the present moment of locution is a moment emptied of all contemporary, simultaneous experience: the monologist exists merely as a disembodied medium, a pure memory without clear location in time and space.

One must agree with Cohn when she states that critics who simply call these texts 'interior monologues' or 'first-person narratives, miss a very important aspect, namely the peculiarity of their structure.

It is, in fact, this very peculiarity of the Faulkner monologues which requires a generic position in-between the traditional categories of 'interior monologue' and 'first-person narrative'. Following Cohn (1978: 245,255) the presentation of past and present in the monologues of the three brothers may be distinguished from one another with regard to degrees of conformity to 'pure' memory monologue. Whereas Benjy's section as a whole, because of the predominance of jumbled memories, could be termed a memory monologue, Quentin's section sometimes approximates the structure of a chronological rather than that of a memory monologue. In contrast with the sections presenting the thoughts of his two brothers, Jason's section has a simpler structure and because of the chronological representation of the day of reporting it comes closer to an autobiographical monologue.

In the ensuing discussion the newly coined terms 'autonomous interior monologue' and 'memory monologue' will be used, in-

termittently, in order to help clarify the structure of Faulkner's supremely difficult text. This supremely difficult narrative text with which the reader is confronted, simultaneously challenges him (the reader), with a subject demanding an excessive degree of effort in order to penetrate the text's embedded message. A message which has to be assembled from an exemplary modernist text, its most important feature of locution demanding an unusual effort and great challenge on the part of the reader who, on having had expectations of coherence, and therefore of an intelligible plot, now finds instead thereof a formidable amount of literary complexities such as deviations of syntactical conventions, chronological twists, shifts in narrative style and perspective, textual indefiniteness or gaps caused by indeterminacies.

During this assembling process from the characters' different mind levels, it becomes clear to the reader that the focus is that of futility, of idiocy and sterility which render the Compson family without hope for a continuation of their family line. Thematically it is very much like Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, reflecting the same deep involvement with the theme of disintegration of a family and the still greater theme of the decline of the South of America.

6.2.1 April 7, 1928: Benjamin Compson

Before discussing Benjy's peculiar presentation of his remembered experience of past events, the following suggestive description of Benjy deserves closer scrutiny:

... a big man who:

appeared to have been shaped of some substance whose particles would not or did not cohere to one another or to the frame which supported it. His skin was dead-looking and hairless; dropsical too, he moved with a shambling gait like a trained bear. His hair was pale and fine. It had been brushed smoothly down upon his brow like that of children in daguerro-types. His eyes were clear, of the pale sweet blue of cornflowers, his thick mouth hung open, drooling a little.

(Faulkner, 1982: 244)

It should be clear that the description distinctly pinpoints the extent of Benjy's retardation in various ways. Besides the direct reference to his drooling mouth at the end of the passage, the image at the beginning, comparing his body to 'some substance whose particles would not or did not cohere to one another or to the frame which supported it' suggests his inability to make sense of his world. Similarly, the comparison of his 'shambling gate' to that of a 'trained bear' is suggestive of a being that would appear to be a-normal and dehumanized. All of this is illustrated also in the portrayal of Benjy's memory monologue, where his retardation is marked by elliptic sentences, gaps in the presentation and associative links between actual scenes on the day of his monologizing and remembered scenes from a distant past. Naturally, all of this contributes to a kind of jumbled presentation of his past.

In this regard Cohn (1978: 252) observes that Benjy's entire monologue is characterized by the ambiguity of:

whether the stream of memories springs up in the monologist's mind at the (indeterminate) moment of locution, or in the course of the generating episode itself.

This is exacerbated by the fact that there are no indications in his use of language that he has any sense of time or causality. So, for example, Cohn (1978: 250) reminds the reader that the same tense, the present, is used for both 'the distant past of his childhood and the immediate past of his thirty-third birthday'; similarly, simple reportorial language is used for both remembered and actual scenes. Thus, we can concur with Cohn's (1978: 250) observation that Benjy's language 'corresponds to the synchronism of his arrested mental world'.

The reason for viewing Benjy's section as a whole as memory monologue is explained with reference to one of the first scenes at the beginning of the section devoted to the perspective of Benjy:

We went along the fence and came to the garden fence, where our shadows were. My shadow was higher than Luster's on the fence. We came to the broken place and went through it.

'Wait a minute.' Luster said. 'You snagged on that nail again. Can't you never crawl through here

without snagging on that nail.'

Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over, Benjy. Like this, see. We stooped over and crossed the garden, where the flowers rasped and rattled against us.

(Faulkner, 1982: 12) 2)

Cohn (1978: 251) reasons that there is nothing in the above quotation to indicate to the reader when the childhood memory of crawling through the fence occurs in Benjy's mind: 'at the moment he crawls through with Luster, or at the moment he remembers crawling through with Luster (that is, at the moment he 'speaks' his monologue)?' (Author's emphasis). Since both interpretations seem valid, and in view of the fact Faulkner himself referred to such scene shifts as 'thought transferences', suggest to Cohn (1978: 252) 'that he attributed these associations to the moment when Benjy remembers his last day after it draws to a close'. She reasons that it would be justified, on this basis, to call the Benjy's section as a whole a memory monologue:

For the chronologic unrolling of his last day would then serve merely as a mental context (or pretext) for the jumbled memories.

(Cohn, 1978: 252)

2) The underlined part in the quote exemplifies Faulkner's technique of using a different type face in signalling to the reader which parts refer to remembered scenes. Italics are used consistently to indicate such switches to the past.

In the first chapter then the focus is on the severely retarded son of Mr and Mrs Compson, Benjamin called Benjy. The reader experiences the elements of the related story through the autonomous memory monologue of the thirty-three year old feeble-minded Benjy's uninterrupted stream of consciousness. This may indeed be the greatest challenge to the reader, as it is due to Benjy's mental and physical retardation and consequential inhibited language ability that a fragmented perception is reflected in the literary text. Thus, as pointed out above, the text is characterized by symptomatic places such as distortions, ambiguities, absences, elisions and gaps: these foregrounded textual sign-posts highlighting the profound levels of mental retardation which render Benjy severely deficient in adaptive behaviour.

While attention is drawn to Benjy's severe retardation, also called feeble-mindedness, time dominates the fictional world. The reader has to assemble dates and events mentioned from the verbal or sensory association of Benjy's fragmented perception, the imbecile's empty mind, as he forms particles of memory into his experience of April, seventh 1928. The random order destroys any possibility of a related sequence of development, consequently time becomes entirely subjective, depending on the focalizing character's perspective and on whether his thoughts are reflective of the past or the present.

The difficulty with which the reader is confronted is explained clearly by Cohn (1978: 247) when she observes that:

The three speakers of Faulkner's monologues never allude to the time or place in which they verbalize their memories. Only the moment post quem of their locution can be determined with any degree of certainty: since they refer to the events of the days that entitle their respective sections in the past tense, their monologues must postdate these titular days. The moment ante quem, on the other hand, can only be inferred from circumstantial evidence.

(Author's emphasis)

The fact that certain dates are given as the headings for their respective sections is meant as a broad hint to the reader as the days on which they actually presented their monologues. The events of these days are related in chronological order: Benjy from the moment he watches the golfers to the moment when Luster undresses him for sleep; Quentin from the moment he wakes to the moment when he dresses for death; and Jason from the breakfast conversation with his mother to the nocturnal inspection of his money-box. However, as Cohn (1978: 249) correctly observes, especially in the case of Benjy and Quentin this chronological sequence is 'persistently interrupted by 'remembered scenes', that belong to earlier time frames'. And it is due both to the content of these remembered scenes and their purely associative links to the actual scenes from the present that the presentation of time in this novel is experienced by the reader as fragmented and a-chronological.

As mentioned above, the reader is helped by the type-face in distinguishing between past and present in that the switches

to the past memory are italicized. Even so, the seemingly random associative links need constant revisiting and comparison with other sections before a fairly understandable picture of the past finally emerges.

It is worth noting that the repeated reference to time, as clock time, transgresses the personage bound focalization of Benjy and Quentin in particular and extends to the sections in which both Jason and Dilsey present a somewhat less 'jumbled' account of the past. This insistence on clock time in all sections enables the reader to consider the presented subject matter from several perspectives, thus improving the objectivity of his conception of the fictitious world presented in autonomous interior monologue. The effect of the repeated references to time is to create an impression of 'tempus fugit'; as the decay of the Compson household indicates, a time which is unstoppable. Consequently, the suggestion is established that the characters have to move impetuously, swiftly in order to keep up with it, thus creating the impression of being automatically driven.

The infuriating time is the dominating factor of the Compson's world, the Compson's household. As for Benjy and, for different reasons Quentin, it is the time of which Freud in The Unconscious (1957: 187) states that 'the processes of the unconscious system are timeless', meaning the processes of the unconscious system are not ordered temporally nor are they altered by the passage of time; in fact they have no reference to time at all. Indeed this fact is presented through the autonomous interior memory monologue of all

characters in the novel who experience much of the delirium with time.

Thus the time which has 'no reference to time at all' is most effectively illustrated through the feebleminded imbecile Benjy. Due to the lack of normal language acquisition, he is an individual whose level of mental development does not allow him to profit from the ordinary type of school education.

Although Benjy lives entirely on the unconscious level of experience he is nevertheless able at any moment to recall incidents by association which have left an imprint on his memory. Regarding this phenomenon, Faulkner states in Light in August (1947: 111) that:

Memory believes, before knowing remembers.

Faulkner attributes to Benjy not only memory but the ability to revive his memories: in fact Benjy has the ability to recapture incidents of the past much profounder than any normal person. Past events recur in his mind so powerfully that he is unable to distinguish them from the present reality. Memories which are emotionally overpowering, make him moan and howl. This could 'guide' the reader to the assumption that he is more animal than human. This is borne out, of course, by the comparison of his 'shambling gait' to that of a 'trained bear' referred to above. However, in spite of his severe retardation, he is not dispossessed of human attributes; indeed, he is, in certain crucial ways more sensitive than other characters in the novel. But his howling expres-

sions of despair highly agitate people around him.

Benjy's stilted, often incomplete and interrupted memory monologue is marked by his limited thought processes which are, amongst others, due to the lacking concept of his own identity. In his mind time covers only the difference between night and day. The only reason he knows the difference of night and day is because of the change in the light intensity. While the future is completely non-existing, past and present are equally real to him, as he cannot fathom chronological sequence. He consequently lives in an uninterrupted present in which all events, whether they are in the past or in the present, receive his continued and equal attention. Because of this, Benjy recalls events precisely as they took place, as memory operates even in the unconscious.

Benjy's emotionally tinged memories are stimulated when he becomes excited in response to pain. He then expresses himself by either whimpering, crying or howling; the moment harmony is disrupted, as it, for example, happened when Caddy told him that she would run away, he feels insecure and therefore threatened. This stimulates his memory and he reports the event precisely as it happened:

'I'll run away and never come back.' Caddy said.

I began to cry. Caddy turned round and said

'Hush. So I hushed.

(Faulkner, 1982: 24)

As may be inferred from this instance, Benjy's remembering

mind links events by associating these to detail: a word or physical sensation associated with a specific occasion will recall a second event containing identical or near identical detail. Reliving an event or events in memory, invariably begins with the detail in the past which is more or less similar to an event in the present. Then he shifts the beginning of the sequence and finishes it, if he is not otherwise interrupted. In this way he relives fifteen separate sequences during the course of one day. Although the remembering mind exists in an absolute temporal void, the moment of remembrance is brought about by stimulation of a physical sensation, highlighted in the following example at the sight of T.P.'s lightning bugs:

'... He wants your lightning bugs, T.P. Let him hold it a while.' T.P. gave me the bottle of lightning bugs.

(Faulkner, 1982: 39)

Caddy coming to his aid, actually symbolizes the childlike, secure world, the state of tranquillity and love Benjy (and Quentin) yearn for. Benjy's shared childhood and devotion to Caddy as well as his endearing perceptions of animals and plants in his environment are features of his world which remain forever constant. The love he feels for his sister is expressed in recurring verbal expressions in his autonomous memory monologue. They are located in the following repeated phrases:

Caddy smelled like leaves.

Caddy smelled like trees.

Caddy smelled like trees in the rain. ...

(Faulkner, 1982: 13,4, 25)

With repeated phrases he also expresses his instinctive relationship with, and love for nature, animals, plants and as shown in the above example, for the people he loves:

I could smell the clothes flapping, ...

I liked to smell Versh's house. ...

The bed smelled like T.P. I liked it. ...

(Faulkner, 1982: 13, 20, 32, 33)

A memory may also be triggered by one or more senses, as is illustrated in the next episode where Benjy relives his experience of his grandmother's death by evoking both what he heard and what he could smell. The linking event from the present in this instance is direct, in that Roskus refers to two deaths in Benjy's childhood which had made an indelible impression on his mind - that of a dog and that of Damuddy, Benjy's grandmother:

'White folk dies too. Your grandmammy dead as any nigger can get, I reckon.' 'Dogs are dead.' 'And when Nancy fell in the ditch and Roskus shot her and the buzzards came and undressed her.' Then they stopped and it was dark, and when I stopped to start again I could hear Mother, and feet walking fast away, and I could smell it. 'Hush.' he said, 'Shhhhhhh.' But I could smell it. ... A door opened and I could smell it more than ever, ... He shut the door, but I could still smell it. ...

(Faulkner, 1982: 37,38; emphasis MW)

Besides having an extraordinary sense of smell, Benjy's remembering mind distinguishes very clearly between light and dark. This is also the reason for his ability to differentiate between 'bright cold' and 'dark cold' reported in memory monologue:

'What is it.' Caddy said. 'Did you think it would be Christmas when I came home from school. Is that what you thought. Christmas is the day after tomorrow. Santy Claus, Benjy. ... Come on, let's run to the house and get warm.' She took my hand and we ran through the bright rustling leaves. We ran up the steps and out of the bright cold, into the dark cold.

(Faulkner, 1982: 14; emphasis MW)

Most examples of Benjy's memory releases are triggered by externally determined events. This is evident both from the above example citing Damuddy's death and the incident, already referred to above, when in the opening scene of the novel the golf players' calling out for their caddies, triggers the association with the name of his beloved sister, Caddy.

Another frequent associative image which releases Benjy's memory is that of water, which is once again associated with Caddy: on 7 April 1928 Luster tells Benjy to sit in the water. He does so and at once recaptures an event which took place thirty years ago when Damuddy died and Caddy squatted in the water getting her dress wet and her drawers muddied.

On the same evening in 1898, Caddy climbed a tree so that she could have a better view of the room and at the same time tell the children what was taking place there. As Benjy remembers 'the muddy bottom of her drawers' (Faulkner, 1982: 41), the scene immediately shifts and a thought transference takes place:

'Push me up, Versh.' Caddy said. 'All right.'
 Versh said, 'You the one going to get whipped. I ain't. He went and pushed Caddy up into the tree to the first limb. We watched the muddy bottom of her drawers. Then we couldn't see her. We could hear the tree thrashing.

(Faulkner, 1982: 41)

Undoubtedly the presentation of inner language in Benjy's case is very effectively used as it enhances the illusion of directness and plausibility. This manner of presentation places the reader in a privileged position as he receives vital information and impressions. In this way the reader has the unusual opportunity of experiencing the mental handicap of a retardate. Benjy's jumbled flow of consciousness expressed through autonomous memory monologue is of course experienced without attention to chronological order. This, on the other hand, leaves the reader to patiently investigate the numerous shifts between actual scenes from the present and the remembered scenes from the past in the fifteen separate sequences comprising the section on Benjy in the course of April 7, 1928.

6.2.2 June 2, 1910: Quentin Compson

Quentin's narrative is a record of his last day's thoughts, the day of his suicide. In it, the relationship between the explanation of the last day and the memories of earlier days are varied. The text can thus not be viewed as being consistently equivocal. It is a rather complex narrative, portraying an emotional adolescent mind in stasis, with the exception of the reproduction of remembered dialogues and events. However, the emotive expressions are not limited to memories only: they similarly appear at the moment he remembers and comments on the incidents of his last day.

As is the case with Benjy's constant switches between actual and remembered scenes, Quentin's reflections on the incidents of his last day also immediately trigger memories of, *inter alia*, past statements by his father, dialogues in which his mother or Caddy participate, remembered scenes or traumatic events. Similar to Benjy's memory monologue, these switches between present and past can be termed 'thought transferences', precisely because descriptions of and reflections on the events of his last day tend to lead very rapidly to remembered scenes. In this regard Cohn (1978: 248) observes that it is customary in such texts for the most recently remembered episode to have a privileged role, 'acting as a kind of triggering device that releases into the mind a shower of memories from the more distant past'. Whereas the memories may be presented in time-montage fashion, as is the case with Benjy's vivid reliving of the past, the generating episode itself 'is usually remembered

in the temporal sequence of its occurrence, in the fashion of an autobiographical narrative'. It is especially this latter aspect, together with the detailed account of his present experiences of the last day, which distinguish Quentin's structured reflections on both the blow-by-blow chronological account of his actions and movements of the last day and his recollection of past events from Benjy's jumbled remembrances and random switches to the past.

The monologues of the two brothers also differ in another important sense. In Benjy's case the past tends to predominate to the extent of any stimulus from the present, however insignificant, providing a pretext for reliving certain scenes from the past, in a sustained memory monologue. Given the restrictions of jumbled memories disclosing the inner life of a severely retarded person, it is left to the reader to try and decipher the significance of the remembered scenes. By contrast, Quentin's obvious intellectual advantage over his brothers, as the one earmarked for an expensive and decidedly unaffordable university education (Benjy's field had to be sold to pay the tuition fees at Harvard), the reader can assume that, in Quentin's case, the switches to the past would have a logical base. This is indeed the case as it soon becomes clear that the key to Quentin's pre-mediated decision to commit suicide lies in the past and that, in fact, the past provides the explanatory base for the emotionally charged account of his last day.

It is also important to take into account, especially in Quentin's case, Cohn's (1978: 249) explanation of the struc-

ture and function of what is termed by her 'the generating episode in memory monologues'. Comparing it to the 'live present' of autonomous monologues such as the Penelope section in Joyce's Ulysses, she observes that:

It shapes the principal time-plane to which the temporal chaos of earlier memories relates and periodically returns. But at the same time it introduces additional ambiguities into memory monologues.

Although in Quentin's section it is indeed the case that the present tense is sometimes used both for the generating episode in the present and the remembered past event or scene, the actual ambiguity is brought about by the fact that the generating episode is not merely 'explained' by the past occurrence, but that it also 'interprets' the remembered event, scene, or conversation in terms of the present, thereby helping the reader gradually to gain an idea of the forces that contributed to the disintegration of the Compson family.

In this regard, it is significant that Quentin's memories are dominated by recollected scenes in which his father, mother and especially Caddy feature prominently.

The reader is acquainted through Quentin's mind with the character of Mr Compson. He is as a weak man who finds refuge from his own inadequacies in liquor and philosophizing of nihilistic ideas. Quentin recalls his father's remarks:

...Some day in late August at home are like this,

the air thin and eager like this, with something in it sad and nostalgic and familiar. Man the sum of his climatic experiences Father said. Man the sum of what have you. A problem in impure properties carried tediously to an unvarying nil: stalemate of dust and desire.

(Faulkner, 1982: 114; emphasis MW)

From Quentin's interior memory monologue, his remembered dialogues with his father and other textual data, the reader can easily gather that Mr Compson subscribes to a largely nihilistic, modernist view of life. Being a typical representative of that which was their greatest preoccupation of the time, he is determined to teach Quentin that, according to his world view, there is no more simple relationship between object and form: in him and through him the modernist's tenet, the disturbed inner (nihilistic) reality of man is portrayed, which reveals the complexities of psychological essence. This reality is made up of fleeting moments and indistinct shapes.

His father's remarks are thus undoubtedly negative contributors to Quentin's own instability which manifests itself by continuously going back and forth between the present and the past as if searching for something which had been lost, namely stability. As a result Quentin loses all contact whatsoever with his actual surroundings when he is with Shreve, Gerald, and Mrs Bland.

Quentin's memory of his father's words begins with his preoc-

cupation with time in '...I don't suppose anybody ever deliberately listens to a watch or a clock... (1982: 73), this effects a stimulation in Quentin's thought pattern which in turn effects a scene shift: 'You can be oblivious to the sound for a long while, then in a second of ticking it can create in the mind unbroken the long diminishing parade of time you didn't hear' (1982: 73, emphasis MW). Quentin's mind here also portrays his obsession with time and, of course with his sister Caddy. He simultaneously associates sister and time with death, hell and punishment. It is the punishment for a deed (incest) he never committed, but confessed to his father. This incident is another stimulant reminding him of Caddy's wedding:

The month of brides, the voice that breathed she ran right out of the mirror, out of the banked scent. roses, roses. Mr and Mrs Jason Richmond Compson announce the marriage of. Roses, Not virgins like dogwood, milkweed. I said I have committed incest, Father I said.

(Faulkner, 1982: 74, Faulkner's emphasis.)

Quentin's mind now moves swiftly from one thought to another as time ticks on. His mind being severely disturbed moving readily into time past from time present and back again. Time here is used both as a theme and a motif: Quentin thinks more and more in abstractions and symbols, images, allusions, memories and their reactions thus adding to his confusion. Confusion is furthered when the 'idle' habits of the present' link up his thoughts by association with his

father's nihilistic outlook expressed in saying that Christ was not crucified, but was 'worn away by a minute clicking of little wheels'. The 'clicking little wheels' are understood by Mr Compson to represent the theme of the ceaseless flow of time, the time as a killer, as a corroder and as the eternal dilemma of life.

Within Quentin's narration, the eternal dilemma of life is symbolized in the spiderwheel-theme:

The buggy was drawn by a white horse, his feet clopping in the thin dust; spidery wheels chattering thin and dry, moving uphill beneath a rippling shawl of leaves. Elm. No: ellum. Ellum.

(Faulkner, 1982: 114)

In Quentin's mind, the allusion to 'spidery wheels' are associated with a lady doing embroidery. Her embroidering activity stimulates his mind and makes him think of 'his white shirt', the 'white horse', and the 'spidery wheels'. These thought associations within Quentin's unusual circumstances, are abnormal psychological manifestations, especially evident in the forms of death images revealing Quentin's inner psychological landscape of anxiety. These images merge once again with the so-called 'stupid assertion of the clock':

The wheels were spidery. Beneath the sag of the buggy the hooves neatly rapid like the motions of a lady doing embroidery, diminishing without progress like a figure on a treadmill being drawn ra-

pidly off stage. The street turned again. I could see the white cupola, the round stupid assertion of the clock.

(Faulkner, 1982: 114; emphasis MW)

The 'stupid assertion of the clock' together with the 'spidery wheels' within the context, suggest the treadmill of time as a venomous killer. Quentin finds himself caught up in a spider's net from which there is no escape.

Throughout all these deliberations and remembrances of Quentin's tortured mind, the reader is constantly reminded that the reflections on 'time past and present' have a deeper significance. So, for example, the reference to 'the stupid assertion of the clock' becomes especially prominent as it is also indicative of a subjective time (Freud's notion that the unconscious system is timeless, that is subjective). Quentin being tormented by the duality of his condition, is unwilling to forget the past, unwilling to rid himself of it, but nevertheless aware that the past is gone forever. Dreading the passing of time and realizing that if he would forget the past, he could become less concerned of his sister's 'sin' and how her deed tortures him, due to what she had done to him and the family he contemplated that of which his father had warned him (Faulkner, 1982: 160). By escaping the inevitable passage of time and consequently preventing the past from disappearing, he lives in a time he has 'created' himself. His father's endeavour 'not to fight time as he would waste his life by holding on to the past and by denying the present', was in vain. Quentin holds on

tenuously to the past and thus lives in a timeless, dream-like world of his own making. The subjective world he lives in is a defence mechanism, against the realistic world in which he imagines he cannot exist.

Quite apart from Mr Compson's adherence to nihilistic ideas, the inadequacy of his fatherhood also becomes apparent in the fact that he is an alcoholic. However, despite Quentin's realization that his father is an alcoholic, he loves and admires him for being a true gentleman of the Southern kind. His respect is mainly based on his father's sense of honour and masculinity which he is determined to emulate. He defends his father against all accusations. Quentin's arrested emotional growth is at least partly owing to his undivided acceptance of paternalistic values, but more especially to his idolization of his father, because he fails to perceive the misogyny, the hate and sneer which is at the root of his father's chivalry, and which actually makes it a sham. It is only when he detaches himself from his father's 'values', by the symbolic act of deciding to kill himself, that he realizes the artificiality of the stereotyped image of women with which his father influences or rather confuses him:

(Father said). . . . it was men invented virginity
not women.

(and)

I know you wouldn't I didn't mean to speak so
sharply but women have no respect for each other
for themselves.

(Faulkner, 1982: 75 and 90)

Thus, although he respects his father's masculinity, he cannot share his bleak, nihilistic perspectives nor his chauvinistic attitude towards women. Despite of not being able to share his father's bleak perspectives, Quentin views himself as the inheritor of a tradition of nobility, a tradition of Southern plantation aristocracy, refined and much romanticized. Thus he proudly exhibits virtues of chivalry, gentility, courage, honesty and integrity. However, he is incapable of adequately living up to his high expectations and thus experiences a conflict between his ideals and the perceived reality.

As both ideals could not be intertwined without great conflict, suicide seemed the only way of escape; especially as the code of honour of a gentleman demanded it his duty to kill himself, should he fail the woman or women he idealized. In Quentin's case, this was his mother and Caddy.

The constant switches to remembered events and impressions from their childhood - whether these are filtered through the seemingly inept mind of a severely retarded or, alternatively, through the sharp intellect of a gifted brother - clearly point to deeper underlying psychological problems in the Compson family. If the father emerges, in Quentin's memory, as a would be philosopher forever reminiscing and escaping in an idealist's world instead of providing a secure environment for his wife and family, then the mother shows even clearer signs of ineptitude due to psychosomatic ailments or even psychotic disorders. 3)

3) See the discussion of the impact of psychology and psychoanalytic theory on literature in Section 3.2.

In fact, if one studies the image of Mrs Compson emerging from the consciousness of her three children, complemented by the part in which Dilsey's viewpoint is provided via the narrator's discourse in the concluding section of the book, it becomes quite clear that she suffers from neurosis, a mental disorder characterized by, *inter alia*, anxiety, compulsions, obsessions and depression. Although she loves her children, the fact that she is a hypochondriac, a neurotic person continuously over-anxious about her own health, precludes her from providing the comfort and security a mother is supposed to provide to her offspring.

Although there is a residue of love evident in both Mr and Mrs Compson, they are too weak to be pillars of strength and role-models to their children. In their absence, it is Caddy and Dilsey, who take on the surrogate mothering of Benjy and Quentin. However, neither Caddy who is always there to offer love to Benjy and Quentin, nor Dilsey can stop the forces already active destroying the children. The disintegration of the adults has, already at the beginning of the novel, made considerable progress.

The utter mood of hopelessness and despair is most dramatically conveyed in Quentin's text which automatically springs from the narrative process: when he recalls a picture from a child's book in which two faces are lifted out 'of the shadows by a weak ray of light', Quentin's consciousness generates images of his mother which by association of semanticity derived from the word 'dungeon' in the metaphor

'until the dungeon was mother herself', depicts his mother as 'a dark underground cell or prison'. The connection between the idea would equal that of a mother, a child would be afraid of. In Quentin's mind this image is linked up with 'a dark underground tunnel' (the dungeon), from which there seems to be no escape. This becomes evident in Quentin's emotionally tinged memory monologue:

'I'd have to turn back to it until the dungeon was Mother herself she and Father upward into weak light holding hands and us lost somewhere below even them without even a ray of light.'

(Faulkner, 1982: 157; emphasis MW)

Furthermore the expression 'and us lost somewhere below without even a ray of light', evokes the image of lost children without hope due to parental inadequacy. Quentin's tortured mind signals a relief, an end of pain at having the picture torn out of the book. This is pity evoking and therefore tragic.

The reader soon realizes that a sense of not belonging, of not being loved, had to be instrumental in Quentin's feeling of utter despair which resulted in his carefully planned suicide. In fact, of all the feelings associated with suicide, it is arguably the feeling of lovelessness which leads to hopelessness and which is the most prominent reason for his decision to commit suicide. He realizes the hopelessness of his condition and becomes more and more convinced that the only way out is to take his own life. How-

ever, one word of comfort at the right moment would perhaps have given him the necessary strength to change his life. The longing for a word of comfort is substantially indicated in his desperate cry for his mother: before he begins his monologue he remembers how he found the gasoline in Shreve's room with which he wanted to clean his vest. He opens the gasoline, then begins his monologue of fragmented memories:

'the first car in town a girl Girl that's what
 Jason couldn't bear smell of gasoline making him
 sick then got madder than ever because a girl had
 no sister but Benjamin Benjamin the child of my
 sorrowful if I'd just had a mother so I could say
Mother Mother

(Faulkner, 1982: 156, emphasis MW)

The words 'if I only had a mother' is heart rendering, incredibly sad and tragic. Quentin's seeking refuge in terminating his life could have possibly been avoided had he not been neglected by a mother who only thought of herself, and a father preoccupied with unnecessary philosophical ideas leading to nothing else but confusion.

Quentin is aware that the central importance of value which adds meaning to his existence also increasingly depends on his father as a figure of authority. In the absence of parental support, Quentin and Benjy both recognize Caddy's kindness and attention as the only source of comfort, this being the reason for holding on to her and the sense of loss when she withdraws herself from them.

It should be clear from the exposition so far, that the explanation of Quentin's suicidal state of mind is to be sought in the past. In fact, the reason for Quentin's instability may be traced back to his childhood: like all the Compson children, with the exception of Jason, who is his mother's favourite, he is deprived of the love and warmth which should have been imparted by his parents. Quentin's father, Mr Compson who loves his children, is however incapable to convert the understanding and sympathy he feels for them into practical, helpful guidance. Mrs Compson's neurotic selfcentredness contributes immensely to the disintegration of the Compson family. Quentin only feels loved by his sister Caddy who, besides Dilsey, is the person capable of uniting the children in such a way as to complete and fulfil them. She emerges from the chapters of her brothers as a lovable character and is portrayed as the image of the twentieth-century girl who is lost between Southern tradition and freedom: she and her daughter Quentin are in fact the two 'lost women' in the then society of the South.

Thus Caddy, in the absence of parental love, represents all Quentin's unfulfilled longings, intimacy and compassionate understanding. Indeed, Caddy's relationship with Quentin is much more intense than that of brother and sister, as she simultaneously is mother and sister to Quentin. However, she is, with the most perplexing enigma of sexual otherness, much more to Quentin: their emotional bond is so intense that sexual desire is involved. For Quentin, this perplexing enigma is another reason for not being able to accept

Caddy's developing sexuality. 4) It is for this reason that Quentin cannot accept Caddy as his peer. Consequently, the childhood-world Quentin treasures so much becomes more and more threatened. Because Caddy is aware of these facts, she draws further and further away from both Quentin (and from Benjy). Caddy's emotional bond with Quentin being so intense, she feels as if she has betrayed her brother sexually after her involvement with Dalton Ames. As a result she is driven to a series of ritual atonements, such as washing herself extensively.

Caddy's promiscuity after her affair with Dalton is viewed as an action of rebellion against the Compsons' oppressive code of feminine chastity, as according to Southern tradition the altar of the pure woman was worshipped. Southern tradition, however, had become too weak and too meaningless to support her. On the other hand Caddy was too sensuous to sustain modern freedom. It is in her and her daughter Quentin's fate that Faulkner has centred the theme of dislocation of love and the image of the 20th century girl lost between Southern tradition and freedom, which is also the fundamental theme of the whole story. It is also the inability to love or the disproportional imbalance of love which is the reason for the decline of the family.

4) Psychoanalytically, in terms of Freudian theory this behaviour could be called 'regression': Quentin is unable to have a normal sexual relationship with the opposite sex, because he has sexual phantasies of his sister who becomes the object of his sexual desire. It is an emotional attitude also called 'fixation' and designates a psychosexual attachment at an early stage of development with difficulty in establishing new attachments, new interests, or new adaptations.

Caddy represents all Quentin's longings for a fulfilled childhood. However, as she develops into womanhood Quentin becomes frustrated as her beginning sexual activities could mean a separation from his sister whose loving personality is a comfort to him. The moment Caddy withdraws herself from him, he knows that his treasured childhood world is lost forever. He cannot bear this thought and therefore he holds on to the past. As it has been established, this becomes one of the main reasons for his suicide: he dreads the thought that as time passes he will forget or be less concerned about what had happened between him and his sister; therefore he is determined to live in the past in which her 'sin' seemed so tragic to him. This is the only way he can hold on to his treasured memories namely, by denying the present and glorifying the past. Being thus determined to glorify the past he actually inaugurates that of which his father warned him, namely to contemplate 'an apotheosis in which a temporary state of mind will become symmetrical above the flesh' (Faulkner, 1982: 160).

The extent to which he is prepared to go to in order to keep Caddy away from her lovers is illustrated by entering into a death pact with her on the night of her meeting with Dalton. Quentin views Caddy's affairs, first with Dalton, then with others, as something to be ashamed of, hence the text's symbolic signals (also present in Benjy's text) of the dirty, muddy drawers. When Caddy offers to commit incest with Quentin because she feels she has betrayed him, he refuses her because he suddenly and instinctively realizes that it is not the actual act of making love but the basic mystery of

sex which threatens the childlike intimacy he has with his sister.

Quentin's determination to keep the past alive is the reason for being stimulated into thinking of Caddy at various occasions of the day he commits suicide. Thus the incident with the little girl he meets instantly stimulates his memories, recalling his 'near sexual experience' with Natalie:

'not a dirty girl like Natalie. It was raining we could hear it on the roof, sighing through the high sweet emptiness of the barn.

There? touching her

Not there

There? not raining hard but we couldn't hear anything but the roof and as if it was my blood or her blood

She pushed me down the ladder and ran off and left me Caddy did

Was it there it hurt you when Caddy did run off was it there

(Faulkner, 1982: 123; Faulkner's emphasis)

This episode ends rather abruptly with Caddy's appearance. Caddy's shadow appears once again as he begins to 'feel the water' before he came to the grey stoned bridge with 'slow moisture where the fungus crept' and beneath it where the water was 'clear and still in the shadow, whispering and clucking about the stone in fading swirls of spinning sky' (Faulkner, 1982: 107). The 'whispering and clucking' about

of the water is an unconscious motivation which stimulates Quentin to relive the emotional moment when Caddy said 'I've got to marry somebody' (Faulkner, 1982: 107; Faulkner's emphasis). Then his memories merge with the moment at which Versh told him about a man who mutilated himself 'A broken razor flinging them backward over his shoulder the same motion complete the jerked skein of blood backward not looping' (Faulkner, 1982: 107). This in turn signals memories of missed opportunities leading to sexual frustration:

It's not having them. It's never to have had them
then I could say O That That's Chinese I don't
know Chinese.

(Faulkner, 1982: 107)

The lack of sexual experience may also explain his fear of women, especially as he views 'not having had sex' as a social stigma. Thus he becomes embittered regretting not having had the experience. 5)

It should be clear that sexual frustrations are amongst the important underlying causes for Quentin's suicidal attitude. Together with his experience of the incapability of his

5) In order to throw more light on Quentin's sexual frustration the psychoanalytical findings of Kaplan in Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life, 1975: 14, may be of interest: Our sexually repressed society has, until recently, failed to regard sex as a natural function. Thus accurate information about the sexual response has not been freely or widely available. This curtain of ignorance plus the highly emotional attitudes about erotic matters provide a fertile culture medium for the growth of ignorance, myths, and misconceptions. ... A great deal of anxiety and guilt can be generated when there is a discrepancy between real experience and unrealistic expectation. Such misconceptions along with the emotional reactions which accompany them can produce sexual maladjustments and dysfunctions.

parents at providing a loving home for the children, his possessiveness towards Caddy, which is his way of expressing his fear of losing her forever, establish powerful reasons for Quentin's anxiety, feelings of guilt and inadequacy.

The absence of punctuation in various instances of Quentin's monologue dealing with memories of Caddy, are indicative of his severe emotional distress. It conveys the immediacy of his experienced hurtful situation, a state of dehumanizing breathlessness due to anxiety, originating from an inability to cope with life. Quentin's memory monologue reflects how his anxiety reaches breaking point; the withdrawal from the turmoil of hurtful relationships becoming his only desire:

Caddy

I stopped at the steps I couldnt hear her feet

Caddy

I heard her feet then my hand touched her ...

do you love him now

not breathing except slow like far away breathing

Caddy do you love him now

I dont know

... the shadow of things like dead things in

stagnant water

I wish you were dead

(Faulkner, 1982: 143)

The quality of the text focuses on Quentin's uninterrupted stream of associations of a stress situation characterized by inner conflict reflecting feelings of loss and confusion:

they lead to repetitions of names such as Caddy, Dalton Ames, Father and Mother. The fragmented, unfinished sentences and phrases reveal a deep-seated anxiety and the struggle he experiences with the meaning of love, life and death, and the hopeless position he finds himself in due to the loveless life he experiences, expressed in the dislocation-of-love-theme of the story.

The manner in which Quentin is incapable of escaping his past in a way mirrors Benjy's frequent and vivid thought transference presented to the reader in a sustained memory monologue. Within the context of the story of The Sound and the Fury, the full circle refers to the inevitable advancement of decay of the Compson household reflected in Quentin's obsession with the self-imposed limited time culminating in suicide.

Quentin's emotional state, his anxiety during the morning of his intended suicide has reached its breaking point. The concept of time becomes an ever more painfully threatening experience from which Quentin seeks subconsciously and then consciously to be released. All through the final day of his life, his thoughts are focussed on the relationships and events which cause him so much pain and which eventually awaken in him a longing for the release from these unbearable bonds. Thus, it becomes a dilemma which he interprets as resolvable only by suicide.

The abstract concept of the image of his own shadow in the water simultaneously presents a recurring symbol of Quen-

tin's longed-for peace, which foregrounds the unifying theme of water with nature. In Quentin's mind water is 'very serviceable': it is precious and clean and purifies like it purified Caddy when she washed herself after having had the affair with Dalton Ames. Simultaneously the destructive effect time has on Quentin can, according to him, only be wiped out with the help of water, as it will afford him a sleep by which he will put an end to all his suffering. Quentin also equates death by water with womb images, grottoes and caves of the sea. These are symbols of perfect protection and peace.

As time progresses the moments when Quentin's consciousness generates memories are simultaneously connected with the action he performs. The examples of memories are evinced from the passages quoting Quentin's tortured thoughts as the final moment of suicide draws near:

I returned up the corridor, waking the lost feet in whispering battalions in the silence, into the gasoline, the watch telling its furious lie on the dark table. Then the curtains breathing out of the dark upon my face, leaving the breathing upon my face. A quarter-hour yet. And then I'll not be. The peacefullest words. Peacefullest words. Non fui. Sum. Fui. Non sum. Somewhere I heard bells once. Mississippi or Massachusetts. I was. I am not. Massachusetts or Mississippi. Shreve has a bottle in his trunk. Aren't you even going to open it Mr and Mrs Jason Richmond Compson announce the

three times. Days. Aren't you even going to open it marriage of their daughter Candace that liquor teaches you to confuse the means with the end. I am. Drink. I was not.

(Faulkner, 1982: 157,8; Faulkner's emphasis)

With Quentin's thought quotation 'a quarter hour yet. And then I'll not be', his anxiety takes momentum, releasing severely emotional memories: preparing himself for his suicide, he thinks ahead to a moment which already lies in the past before beginning his monologue in which an uninterrupted stream of association becomes the connecting power of his quotation of fragmented memories of a more distant past. These are, inter alia, the bells in Mississippi, the arrival of Caddy's wedding announcement and an abundance of further reminiscences which extend over two pages. Then with 'The-quarters began' (Faulkner, 1982: 159), he begins his report in past tense. One can agree with Cohn (1978: 252), when she states 'Here, then, the text seems to conform to the structure of a chronological monologue that directly quotes past thoughts and memories, rather than to the structure of a memory monologue'.

6.3 FIXATION ON SEXUAL PROBLEMS AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON THE COMPSON CHILDREN

It should be clear from the discussion of the memory monologues of Benjy and Quentin that the emotional trauma to which both are subjected, is at least to some extent attributable to either their own sexuality or their experience of

their sister's sexual development. Not only do both happy and disturbing memories of their relationship with their sister Caddy predominate in the disclosure of their 'inner life', to the point of becoming obsessive, but such memories remain the cause of emotional disruption also in the 'present' of the novel. A harrowing example of Benjy's utter despair in being reminded of Caddy in the scene with the golfers at the beginning of the novel is indirectly reported on by Luster and Dilsey:

Ben watched, whimpering, slobbering. ... 'Will you hush now?' He shook Ben's arm. Ben clung to the fence, wailing steadily and hoarsely. 'Ain't you gwine stop?' Luster said, 'Or is you?' ... 'I tole you he warn't gwine stay quiet,' Luster said. 'You vilyun!' Dilsey said, 'Whut you done to him?' 'I ain't done nothin. I tole you when dem folks start playin, he git started up.'

(Faulkner, 1982: 279,280)

This example is reminiscent of the behaviour of the adult retarded Benjy, in that he would repeatedly resort to howling as the most intense form of emotional expression he was capable of whenever memories about Caddy would be triggered by a word or incident (see the discussion in section 6.2.1 above). In the last section of the novel such behaviour is interpreted, for the reader, in the more 'objective' language of the narrator's discourse, as 'the grave hopeless sound of all voiceless misery' (Faulkner, 1982: 281).

Although he is unable to express his association of Caddy

with the intense yearning for a tranquil childhood in intelligible words, he instinctively fears any sign of Caddy's developing sexuality, understanding this as a threat to his perception of a childhood idyll. Thus, any change in Caddy's appearance which draws attention to her growth towards womanhood, results in expressions of despair. At these occasions Benjy, who senses the change in her immediately, urges, or rather demands of her to wash herself, so that her innocence can once again be restored to the sweet guiltless smell of leaves and trees. The increased verbalizations in his mind feature, for example, in expressions such as 'she smells like leaves', 'she smells like trees'.

An example of a fear evoking instance caused by Caddy's sexual identity development, presented itself when Caddy is fifteen years. In Benjy's memory monologue this emotionally charged incident at the time the family finds out what she had been up to is described as follows:

Caddy and I ran. We ran up the kitchen steps, onto the porch, and Caddy knelt down in the dark and held me. I could hear her and feel her chest. 'I won't, she said. 'I won't any more, ever. Benjy, Benjy.' Then she was crying, and I cried, and we held each other. 'Hush.' she said. 'Hush. I won't any more.' So I hushed and Caddy got up and we went into the kitchen and turned the light on and Caddy took the kitchen soap and washed her mouth at the sink, hard. Caddy smelled like trees.

(Faulkner, 1982: 49; emphasis MW)

Immediately Caddy adheres to Benjy's demands by washing her mouth so that Benjy's world is once more in order. This is reflected in the last sentence 'Caddy smelled like trees'.

When Caddy loses her virginity, and Mrs Compson tells her to come into the room, Benjy looks at Caddy and intuitively recognizes the change in her. He begins to howl and in his stunted way demands of Caddy to wash herself. She immediately senses Benjy's outrage and complies to his wishes. After having washed herself, the sweet smell of trees and leaves was, to Benjy's delight, once again restored.

This incident is reported as follows in Benjy's emotionally tinged memory monologue:

Caddy came to the door and stood there looking at Father and Mother. Her eyes flew at me and away. I began to cry. It went loud and I got up, Caddy came in and stood with her back to the wall, looking at me. I went towards her, crying and she shrank against the wall and I saw her eyes and I cried louder and pulled at her dress. . . . Her hand was against her mouth and I saw her eyes and I cried. . . . She opened the door to her room, but I pulled at her dress and we went to the bathroom and she stood against the door, looking at me. Then she put her arm across her face and I pushed at her, crying.

(Faulkner, 1982: 67; emphasis MW)

The above example provides the reader with an image of Benjy's pity evoking naivete, a characteristic which can only elicit the sympathy of the reader towards this unfortunate human being. Benjy is drawn to his sister because he instinctively recognizes the sincerity of her love.

The most illustrative example of Benjy's physical and mental abnormality is initiated in Faulkner's text at the occurrence of Benjy's mind being stimulated when Mr Compson asks Jason whether he had left the gate open: 'Did you leave the gate unlatched when you came in, Jason'. After this incident Jason tells his father that Benjy must now be sent to Jackson, providing that 'Mrs Burgess don't shoot him first' (Faulkner, 1982: 53); and it was also after this incident that it was decided to have Benjy castrated.

During the afore-mentioned conversation, it was precisely at Jason's last words 'I could have told you, all the time', that an instantaneous thought transference took place in Benjy's mind and his memory switched over to that emotionally geared time when he watched the girls coming along in the twilight:

I wasn't crying, and I tried to stop, watching the girls coming along in the twilight. I wasn't crying. 'There he is.' They stopped. 'He can't get out. He won't hurt anybody, anyway. Come on.' 'I'm scared to. I'm scared. I'm going to cross the street. 'He can't get out.' I wasn't crying. ... 'He won't hurt you. I pass here every day. He just

runs along the fence.' They came on. I opened the gate and they stopped, turning.

(Faulkner, 1982: 53,54)

Here, Benjy's jumbled memory monologue is indicative of his emotionally charged state; it reports on the incident with the school girls who were instinctively afraid of Benjy, but because they thought the gate was always locked, they stopped to watch him. However, when he touched the gate and it opened, he caught one of them, the others running away:

... I was trying to say, and I caught her,
trying to say, and ...

He then connects the girl's scream with his own fear at the moment of the castration operation scene, starting with 'she screamed'...

and I was trying to say and trying and the bright shapes began to stop and I tried to get out. I tried to get off of my face, but the bright shapes were going again. They were going up the hill to where it fell away and I tried to cry. But when I breathed in, I couldn't breathe out again to cry, and I tried to keep from falling off the hill and I fell off the hill into the bright, whirling shapes.

(Faulkner, 1982: 53,4)

Because of the indelible physical and emotional experience, this scene impregnated itself vividly in Benjy's mind: the gate opened, he ran after the girls and caught one. At this

very moment when he caught the girl and she screamed, the incidents merge and effect a thought transference. His mind switches over to the fear evoking day of his operation, when he tried to say something but could not... . Shapes in white (physicians) left their shadows in his mind. He tried to get the chloroform mask off his face, but could not. When he inhales the vapour which produces insensibility, he has the sensation of not being able to breath.

From the above discussion on Benjy's instinctual feelings for love and his problem with sexuality, it should have become clear that his confusion about sexuality is not to be attributed to a kind of paranoia, but rather to his retarded disposition, caused by his severely inhibited physical and mental underdevelopment, his alienation from his own physicality. Being thus slow and deprived of a normal physical and mental development - he shows signs of a mentality which is most likely below an IQ of 70, which is generally taken as the upper limit of feeble-mindedness - he is unable to know how to behave in the presence of the other sex.

It should consequently have become obvious that because Benjy lacks identity, he is unable to unite distinct elements of personality which provide an understanding of physical functions.

In the case of Quentin, despite his intelligence, it has been suggested (see section 6.2.2 above) that a major cause for his decision to commit suicide could be traced back to unresolved feelings, including sexual desire, he entertained

towards his sister Caddy. For both brothers their sister Caddy embodies love, which makes her emotional attachment to other men as well as her blooming sexuality unacceptable.

Quentin, on the other hand, who is sensitive, intelligent and in comparison to Benjy, certainly a normal human being, has a problem with sexuality which stems from an obsession with his sister Caddy.

Caddy's relationship with Quentin is so intense that their emotional involvement extends itself to border on sexual desire. The established perplexing enigma of sexual otherness is the reason for his not being able to accept her developing sexuality. Amongst others, it is also this unresolved obsession with his sister which leads to an acute nostalgia for his lost childhood which he ascribes to the intrusion of sex.

Quentin is a virgin, his only sexual contact with a woman was with a girl named Natalie. However, this episode ended abruptly, as Caddy just appeared at the wrong moment. Viewing his lack of experience with women as a social stigma, he realizes that it had originated from his own fear of women.

About Quentin's sexual dilemma (see the discussion in section 6.2.2), one may finally point out that, psychoanalytically speaking, Quentin's behaviour can be explained as a symptom called 'regression' which is a kind of paranoia, a mental disorder characterized by delusions. Quentin's inability to have a normal sexual relationship with the opposite sex is because he has sexual phantasies of his sister who eventually becomes the object of his sexual desire. As

pointed out above, this behaviour is indicative of an emotional attitude called 'fixation', which means the designating of a psychosexual attachment at an early stage of development, resulting in a difficulty experienced at establishing new attachments, new interests, or new adaptations.

As will be argued (see chapter 7) the sexual paranoia portrayed in Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 is of a totally different kind, in so far as in Faulkner's text, Quentin's obvious sexual abnormality is attributable to human perplexity, a condition which constitutes a dilemma which, in his mind, is only resolvable by suicide. Because of its human aspect, it foregrounds the idea of the individual and as such reflects the inner dynamics creating an illusion of psychological depth, a depth which is missing in the portrayal of sexual and other dilemmas the characters experience in Pynchon's text. Due to the power of psychological in-depth portrayal then, the projecting of a character into a fully comprehending object of contemplation, the reader is rendered an intuitive mental perception of Quentin's character in Faulkner's text, with whom he can identify.

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out that the sexual problems discussed above with reference to the brothers Benjy and Quentin, resulting in the castration of the first and the suicide of the second, leaves only the despicable and miserly brother, Jason, depicted as the 'villain' of the story, to carry on the family name. However, at the age of thirty-five he is still single. His only sexual relationship is with the prostitute Lorraine; the possibility of father-

ing children is thus highly remote. The major theme of disintegration in the story is consequently powerfully reflected through Jason, who is the only hope for the continuation of the Compson line after Quentin's suicide, his father's demise and Benjy's serious mental and physical retardation.

6.4 CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS - COLLECTIVE DISINTEGRATION OF A FAMILY

Although it is virtually impossible or even desirable to reach an ultimate conclusion, it must be stated that the phenomenon of interior monologue is most effectively presented as the revelation of personality through a depiction of the workings of characters' minds in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury. Personality is revealed not so much through behaviour as through thoughts, emotions, and fantasies culminating in irrationality, disorder, and in an obscure working of the characters' minds. It is through attempting to depict the workings of a mind through interior monologue that the subconscious becomes the subject by which the reader comes into direct contact with the character's mind, inviting him to arrive at his own assessment by considering the range of subjective experiences each character reports.

Quentin creates his own world in which time becomes subjective, his sexual deviations lead to depressive neurosis which in turn lead to selfdestruction.

Although Caddy occupies a major position in the story, she is largely absent from the narrative present. Faulkner how-

ever included her predominantly through the stream of consciousness of her brothers. I would argue that her position is more forcefully illustrated through these characters or better said through her brothers' consciousness than through her own fictional realm.

As for Mrs Compson, it must once again be emphasized that her behaviour shows such tremendous insensitivity towards her children that she can only be described as an extreme psychopath. All her actions point in that direction: she has four children, but she is only able to be a mother to Jason.

Dilsey who shows more love and consideration towards the children cares for them, whilst Mrs Compson retreats to her bedroom with psychosomatic headaches. She is an inadequate mother, abnegating her responsibilities. It speaks for itself that she views her son's suicide as being 'inconsiderate'!

Finally, the autonomous interior monologue used by the author, offers a method for exploration of character dramatizing the structure of characters' inner life so that the reader becomes aware of their innermost thoughts. Thus the penetration of the consciousness of characters (in particular Benjy and Quentin) provides the geography of the character's personality and is as such a most effective method of portrayal. With 20th century vision the philosopher Schopenhauer, who was most seriously concerned with art stresses the importance of the portrayal of the inner landscape with great accuracy thus:

The more inner and the less outer life a novel presents, the higher and nobler will be its purpose. ... Art consists in achieving the maximum of inner motion with the minimum of outer motion: for it is the inner life which is the true object of our interest.

(Schopenhauer, 1961: 98)

CHAPTER 7

SHIFTING IDENTITIES AND IRRATIONAL QUESTS IN THOMAS PYNCHON'S
THE CRYING OF LOT 49

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Whereas Thomas Mann portrays the inner life of his characters in a more or less broad spectrum, characteristic of his own type of writing in conjunction with various other techniques of characterization in his novel Buddenbrooks, Faulkner concentrates on the portrayal of the inner life, stressing the subject of human weakness in The Sound and the Fury by foregrounding the manner in which his characters reach no revelatory insights but indeed abide trapped within their own restricted, egocentric consciousness. Nonetheless, Faulkner provides the reader with a mental image of and insight into an internally consistent picture of his characters' lives, in which themes of dissolution and detriment abide throughout the narrative. Character portrayal in The Sound and the Fury is thus construed as the psychological configuration of the individual, comprising as part of a whole, inner dynamics such as particular repressions and emotions. The idea of the individual, of course, creates an illusion of psychological depth and owes much to the elation of subjective perception, that is, to Freud's psychoanalytic theory. This allows the reader to identify with such fictive characters as for example Quentin Compson.

In stark contrast to both Thomas Mann's and Faulkner's por-

trayal of character, postmodernist writing accentuates the point that characters are not real people, but that they are rather aggregates of attributes derived from words on pages in narrative texts where their names appear.

Thus challenging the notion of character in-depth representation of individuality prevailing in modernist fiction such as evident in the discussion of Faulkner's novel, the characters or better said the personae represented in postmodernist fiction such as in Pynchon's novel are elements of artificiality, so-called flat characters rather involved in 'role playing' and in textual processes, frequently engaging with their own fiction-making. Thus the most striking feature of postmodernist writing is the foregrounding of the text as the most problematic aspect of the text itself. As far as this is concerned, the metafictional narrator John Barth, in The Literature of replenishment, the old art of storytelling, describes postmodern literature as 'an awkward, faintly epigonic, suggestive less of a vigorous or even interesting, new direction (Barth, 1980: 66).

7.2 TRENDS IN MODERNIST WRITING

Before discussing the way in which 'character' is presented in Thomas Pynchon's text, it is necessary to consider the textualisation of character in the context of some aspects which have come to be associated with postmodernist writing. Postmodernist works of art are often regarded as impertinent and outrageous. Whereas a good story or play, according to generally accepted conventions, is supposed to have a clever-

ly constructed coherent story, a subtlety of characterization and motivation, a story in the postmodernist mode is signified by absurdity and disharmony. Indeed, postmodernist texts are often perceived as being incongruous, unreasonable, illogical often ridiculous narrations which have no story or or plot, mostly without recognizable characters presenting the reader or audience with mechanical puppets.

In Thomas Pynchon's post-modernist 's novel, The Crying of Lot 49, the author presents evasive, at times ungraspable possibilities, as the narrator hints at secrets he refuses to disclose. Whereas the loss of order for the modernist author led to the belief in its recovery at a deeper level of the mind, the act of composing a novel in itself seems to be, for postmodern writers, basically the most fundamental assumption, as it is believed to be no different from constructing 'one's own reality'. Consequently, for postmodern fiction, writing is an end in itself and becomes as such the main object of attention.

Pynchon's fiction however also operates from the basis that the world as text does not make sense, or that it consists of a plurality of sub-texts in dialogue or in conflict with one another. Consequently, the strategies of fiction-making itself are foregrounded. As such it can be argued that postmodernism is fiction about fiction, or metafiction. It uses metafictional strategies which involve all conventions and strategies of fiction, inducing the reader to re-examine the nature of fiction itself. As novelists have become more aware of the theoretical issues involved in constructing fic-

tion, the novels tend to embody dimensions of self-reflexivity and formal uncertainty. The question of 'to be or not to be' is turned into 'maybe or maybe not'. Elaborating this trend, several very different writers who reflect on the metafictional quality of their texts may be quoted, as they all explore a theory of fiction through the practice of writing fiction. One example thereof is Lawrence Sterne's writing which shows this particular literary quality or trend, thereby establishing itself as a precursor of post-modernist writing proper:

The thing is this.

That of all the several ways of beginning a book which are now in practice throughout the known world, I am confident my own way of doing it is the best - I'm sure it is the most religious - for I begin with writing the first sentence - and trusting the Almighty God for the second.

(Laurence Sterne, 1976: 438)

Metafiction or postmodernism contributes to the fact, now much more than ever before, that a response and simultaneous contribution to the sense that reality is provisional and therefore relative, is necessary. This realization, namely that relativity is considered to be the most important aspect in life is foregrounded in forms which reject former literary conventions such as the adherence to an ordered reality, like the meticulously worked out plot, chronological sequence, authoritative omniscience, the rational link between the actions of characters and so on. Taking these

realizations at their face value, it may be argued that traditional values have now like never before outlived their importance, their relevance. Illustrating this issue, mimesis becomes a mimesis of the writing rather than of that which it is written about: the mirror itself being the device of artistic mediacy.

Metafiction thus foregrounds its own artificiality, whilst participating in fiction-making simultaneously refers to the abstract nature of life itself. One agrees with Patricia Waugh (1984: 6) when she elaborates:

Metafictional novels tend to be constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition: the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion. In other words, the lowest common denominator of metafiction is simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction. The two processes are held together in a formal tension which breaks down the distinction between 'creation' and 'criticism' and merges them into the concepts of 'interpretation' and 'deconstruction'.

It could be argued that, although man has always experienced problems as illustrated in the foregoing discussions, this is especially due to the increased crisis period in which we live, a period which is uncertain, insecure, a time where man has become more of a problem to himself than ever before

in all recorded history. As already stated in my introductory notes, Martin Heidegger's opinion that 'at no time man has become more questionable to himself than in our time' reflects this crisis situation, and therefore at least explains the dissatisfaction with traditional values. Just the same as the tempo of daily life is revolutionized, radically affecting our relationship towards others, so art likewise reflects upon the entire universe of conflicting ideas. Whereas the forms of fiction in modernism expressed the firm belief in an objectively existing world of history, contemporary or postmodern fiction reflects how man experiences life as problematic. As far as the fiction of today is concerned, narration consistently aims at holding up a mirror to an estranged reality which reflects that which is presently experienced, namely that man now believes to be in a fractured reality.

Considering how life has changed, it only follows that this change should also be reflected in the post-modern technique of writing. Still in quest of the search for meaning in life, this search is intensified and is now more than ever to be found not in the psychologically expressed depth of individuality, but in a sense of exhaustion reflected in an outworn literary tradition. Inner dynamics as repressions, and obscure emotions are now more than ever before the product of combined influences of complex social factors, in literature reflecting the protagonist's past, interiority, his inherent peculiarity, his personal idiosyncrasies.

The idea of the individual is indebted to the Romantic ele-

vation of subjective perception, as well as to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory which creates an illusion of psychological depth allowing the reader to identify with fictive personae, as has been seen in the discussion of William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (see chapter 6 above). These fictive personae signify distinct characteristics and qualities collected from words used in the narrative in which they appear.

By contrast, in postmodern fiction, the diversities of 'role-play' lived within the framework of one human-being serve to destroy an undivided individuality. What this suggests as far as fiction is concerned, is that discourse seems to have replaced the conventional psychological depth of character:

... the case of being trapped inside an outworn literary tradition may be taken as a special symptom of the feeling that we are all trapped in our systems for measuring and understanding the world: that in fact there is no 'reality' except our systems of measuring.

(Forrest-Thompson, 1973: 4)

Characters who have thus been 'trapped' inside of an ever more demanding modern life space, are mirrored in post-modern literature as having to wrestle with language, because they are:

(being), robbed of a personal, unique, inner life, these characters metafictionally comment on the nature of language and will appear in those Post-

modern texts which explicitly undermine, or at least question, traditional representation.

(Aleid Fokkema, 1990: 172)

7.2.1 Thomas Pynchon's writing strategy

The comments above illustrate that the fictional representation of contemporary subjectivity has deviated immensely from the idea of a unitary self, as the unitary self is no more existing. Postmodernist fiction aptly expresses this shift from the idea of a unitary self to a commodity-mad society.

Thomas Pynchon captures the idea of the shift from a unitary self to a commodity-mad society in reflecting from reflections, by holding up a mirror to the different angles of life as it is experienced in this our time from different points of view. As such he assumes the role of the ultimate postmodernist or metafictional narrator who endeavours to shed different lights on organizations, as far as his story is concerned, on the issue of wills and inheritance (if indeed there are wills and therefore inheritance) by hints as to what the Inverarity's estate stands for or does not stand for, what may or may not be. As such he is the grand Magician who captures the mystical aspects perfectly.

Indeed Pynchon himself could almost be termed a mystical personality. He has not been seen in public since 13 September 1962, a year before the publication of his first novel. He is the author of four novels: *V.* in 1963, The Crying of

Lot 49 in 1966, Gravity's Rainbow in Vineland in 1989 and his short stories Slow Learner in 1984. In describing Pynchon, whose place of abode is unknown, it may be adequate to use two often-cited post-modernist terms, namely that he is decentred and dispersed very nearly out of existence! Nevertheless, Pynchon's agents declare that he (obviously) does exist, and rumours assert that he lives in Mexico and California. Attempts were made to identify him with the equally reclusive JD Salinger, but this assumption was discharged by a dismissive note from Pynchon himself: 'Not bad, keep on trying'. The companion piece to the triptych 'Bordando El Manto Terrestre', which is mentioned in The Crying of Lot 49, the owner of the Remedios Varo painting 'Invocation', has kept his name from being published from the decisive catalogue of Varo paintings. One may consequently question whether Pynchon is not the owner?

His involvement with fiction is so immense that nothing else seems to remain: for the reader he 'lives' in his writing, indeed I would attempt to use the metaphor in stating that he IS Mr Fiction, the ultimate post-modernist himself. Consequently, it is also his mode of narration which has such an immense impact on literary studies.

As the reader will have inferred, Thomas Pynchon is exceptionally well-informed in various fields of knowledge. In the novel under discussion, allusions to subjects such as inter alia, Jacobean drama (one of the funniest medleys ever written), religion, philosophy, physics computer science are abundantly evident. He often refers to abstruse fields

of esoteric knowledge of which it can be said that these can only be understood by a 'chosen few'. In other words these references are beyond the understanding of most people. However, to pursue every abstruse allusion in order to lift the secrecy of 'whatever', only causes confusion. The reader is thus confronted with the same dilemma as the main character in the novel, namely Oedipa Maas, the heroine who discovers the plot or at least tries to, in her obsession with 'words', 'words' (Pynchon, 1979: 53).

7.3 CHARACTER AS TEXTUAL CONSTRUCT

By making use of the technique of 'narrated monologue', in Cohn's (1978) terms, the category designated to a presentation of the consciousness of a character in the third person, rather than the first person as is the case in the Faulkner novel, Pynchon creates the impression that the reader has direct access to the seemingly unedited and unmediated thoughts and impressions of the main character of Oedipa Maas. Thus it is that, with the exception of a few deviations towards narratorial omniscience, the reader's information of the fictional world is restricted to what is filtered through the consciousness of the main character. The novel thus still portrays a technique that ranges freely through the mental strata. As the discussion unfolds, one will however become aware in what ways and to what extent postmodernist writing undermines the convention of a coherent character of psychological depth.

Most postmodernist writers undermine what, for example

Margolin's (1989: 9-24) five minimal conditions for the recognition of an individual character on the narrated sphere represent. These are, existence, identity, uniqueness, paradigmatic unity and continuity. 1) In typically postmodernist fashion Pynchon undermines most of these categories, in that the 'characters' the reader encounters in this text are presented as artificial constructs rather than 'life-like' persons with clear identities. In this regard the model developed by Fokkema (1991: 75) for analysing postmodern character is useful in that adherence to or deviation from the codes distinguished by her could help the reader in determining the unique presentation of 'character' in postmodernist texts. As we have seen in the analysis of Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks the logical, biological, psychological and social codes as well as description and the code of metaphor and metonymy co-determine the realist convention of characters being sufficiently 'life-like' for the reader to identify with them as human-like 'persons'.

A clear indication that the main character in Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 is a textual rather than a 'life-like' construct can be inferred from her name, Oedipa Maas. In

1) Margolin (1989: 9-24) defines these categories as 1) existence, or the possibility of confirming the membership of an individual X in a narrative domain W_n ; 2) identity, or the possibility of determining some of the properties of the individual in each state of affairs of the narrative; 3) uniqueness, or the possibility of distinguishing the individual from all other participants in the same state of affairs; 4) paradigmatic unity, or the possibility of ordering the individual's properties in each state of affairs into a pattern of some kind; and 5) continuity, or the possibility of linking the individual into a global pattern of properties. (See Section 4.3.4).

Fokkema's semiotic model she emphasizes the fact that the proper name is like a signal in the text that identifies a character, the proper name being the signifier of character is also a complete sign in itself.

Upon closer investigation it becomes clear that the name Oedipa has nothing to do with Freud's Oedipus complex, as we know very little about her childhood. 2) The name has, however, a lot to do with Sophocles' Oedipus (Oidipous), who went in search of his identity to guess the Sphinx's riddle (and in ignorance married his mother) and of whom one can say he was the first detective. The similarity suggests that the novel belongs to the genre of the detective story, as Oedipa, like a detective, goes in search of the Tristero and ends up in the estate of Pierce Inverarity, a millionaire real estate developer, who was once Oedipa's lover, and has now made her the executor of his will. The implications experienced during the search cause a dynamic and complex process of signification as a combination and recombination of elements from the expression plane (or signifier) and the content plane (or signified).

Oedipa's search for the existence of the meaning of the enigmatic 'Tristero' parallels her attempts to establish an identity of her own. Thus the 'detective' convention functions

2) In psychoanalytical theory, the complex which is largely unconscious, develops in a son from attachment (sexual in character) to the mother (also and, if it would have been applicable, Electra complex, indicative of attachment from daughter to father, with antagonism towards mother, more or less a counterpart of the Oedipus complex), and jealousy of the father. This results in a feeling of guilt and emotional conflict.

simultaneously with regard to shifting identities and seemingly irrational quests in the text, thereby indirectly helping the reader, by means of Oedipa's reflections on society, to recognize both the complexity and the apparent absurdity of institutions and structures. What Oedipa is about to find out about American society is how this society has become a vast information machine, wherein information is circulated faster than it can be absorbed. Under this stressful pressure, Oedipa's brain gets dizzy and the circuits overload. Communication comes to a standstill. In such a situation paranoia sets in: an endless number of signs bombard her and us, as empty data is simultaneously reinterpreted into complete, coherent systems.

For example, the presentation of postal communication systems, of which there are no less than four in the novel, shrewdly capture and foreground the dangerously powerful might of these organizations. The mail monopolies manifest themselves in the corporate bodies, which control postal communication to such an extent that their officials can, for example, open letters and/or other postal articles. The mail services include the following alternate establishments, as Oedipa puts it, the 'symmetrical four':

- (1) The Peter Pinguid Society
- (2) The W.A.S.T.E. users
- (3) Inamorati Anonymous; and
- (4) The Tristero

Amongst these it seems as if The Peter Pinguid Society is

actually the only group which is not morally corrupt. For its service it uses the internal mail routes of Yoyodyne which is a capitalist enterprise. The letters sent between its members are to a great extent without content. It does, however, act as an embryonic version of a stronger opposition assumed by the Tristero. As the three remaining groups are joined by the muted post horn symbol which they share, it can be argued that they form an equal part of a common allegiance. If the reader ventures to agree with Oedipa's assumption that the organization under whose aegis they perform their services is the controversial Tristero, it stands to reason that this institution could have revolutionary possibilities: Oedipa sums up what, in her opinion the Tristero stands for:

... on to a network by which X number of Americans are truly communicating whilst reserving their lies, recitations, of routine, arid betrayals of spiritual poverty, for the official government delivery system; maybe even on to a real alternative to the exitlessness, to the absence of surprise to life, that harrows the head of everybody American you know ...

(Pynchon, 1979: 118)

It should be clear from the examples provided above that this is a novel about words and other means of communication, apparently necessitating an intricate communication system which is supposed to manage the communication between individuals and organisations effectively. However, towards the

end of Oedipa's frantic attempts to investigate the 'clues' she imagines to have found, she has to ask herself whether a plot has been mounted against her:

...so expensive and elaborate, involving items like the forging of stamps and ancient books, constant surveillance of your movements, planting of post horn images all over San Francisco, bribing of librarians, hiring of professional actors and Pierce Inverarity only know what-all besides ...

(Pynchon, 1979: 118)

This leads to utter confusion and an awareness that her fears of an extensive plot mounted against her may be perceived as paranoia, and that everything consequently might have been a figment of her imagination only. Significantly, such contradicting questions and the concomitant undermining of any sense of security, stability or certainty, lead Oedipa to question her own sanity. In what is still part of the previous quote, Oedipa suspects Inverarity of foul play, in that she thinks that he must have used his money in order to finance all:

...out of the estate in a way either too secret or too involved for your non-legal mind to know about even though you are co-excecutor, so labyrinthine that it must have meaning beyond just a practical joke. Or you are fantasying some such plot, in which case you are a nut, Oedipa, out of your skull.

(Pynchon, 1979: 118)

Such a sense of utter despair and questioning of one's own opinion ultimately results in a profound doubt of one's own identity. Pynchon achieves this effect by making use of characterization techniques such as naming and the foregrounding of role-playing amidst the characters.

7.3.1 Naming and role-playing

As has already been mentioned above, the fact that the main character's name points the reader towards the ancient tragedy by Sophokles, is significant in that it helps the reader to realise that Oedipa has been cast in the role of detective in Pynchon's text. Indeed, the naming of characters, institutions or artistic objects (musical groups, plays, paintings etc) serves a number of purposes in the Pynchon text. The linguistic implications of some of the names are worth investigating. So, for example, the name Metzger, the lawyer who supposedly has to help Oedipa in her duties as the executor of Pierce Inverarity's will, is the German for 'butcher'. As regards Pierce himself, his first name has sexual connotations and alludes to his skill in penetrating the tower of Oedipa's solipsism, textualised by relating it to the fairy-tale of Rapunzel's tower. As for the surname Inverarity, this reminds one of the Latin 'verbero' which means scoundrel, rascal, or it could also allude to 'verberatio' meaning whip, or 'in + veritas' meaning in truth or if the prefix 'in' is as in 'invincible', it would be a negative prefix meaning 'untruth'. Or it could equally mean 'inverse rarities', which is the philatelic term for

postal stamps on which the design deviates from the original: the choice of filling the gap between signifier and signified remains with the reader, who can, after linking up the incidents, decide according to his own discretion.

Seeing that the name Tristero features prominently in Oedipa's quest, it is worthwhile having a closer look at the possible connotations of the word 'Tristero'. The word 'Tristero' may originate from the time of Mittelhochdeutsch (also old French). The adjective 'triste' has only been integrated and derives its meaning as from the end of the eighteenth century through student language. It means sad, uninteresting, inconsolable, desperate, dreary, bored. The Latin origin 'tristis', means sad, of sinister imposition. 3)

The reference to San Narciso, which is the fictional site of Pierce Inverarity's financial interests, plays on the San Francisco of reality. The fact that it also recalls the figure of 'Narcissus', the son of Cephisus in Greek mythology, textualises this name as the reference of the name Oedipa to Sophokles's tragedy similarly places this name in a fictional context. 4)

3) Adapted from Der grosse Duden, 1972: Die Etymologie der deutschen Sprache, Latin Dictionary for Schools.

4) It denotes a beautiful youth who saw his reflection in a fountain. He thought it the presiding nymph of the place and jumped in the fountain to reach it, where he died. The Nymphs came to take up the body in order to pay funeral honours, however they only found a flower, which they called by his name (adapted from Ovid: Metamorphoses, iii: 346). Plutarch furthermore says that the plant is called Narcissus, from the Greek 'narke', which means numbness, that is most likely 'narcosis', meaning the plant which produces numbness or palsy. The nymph Echo fell in love with Narcissus.

That name giving indeed serves as an important characterization technique is also evident if one considers the meaning of the names of some other characters Oedipa comes across, even if only occasionally, while she was trying to solve the 'mystery' of Tristero.

Two rather strange characters are Zapf whose used books are owned by Pierce Inverarity and Emory Bortz. The names of these two men may also be worth considering. 'Zapf' for example comes from the German noun 'Zapf', meaning taproom; hydrant; topper. The verb 'zapfen' means to plug; pin; pivot, tap, or bore. After having received various hints concerning Mr Zapf from the text, it follows that this man's characteristics coincide with the meaning of the word 'Zapf'. Similarly, the name of Emory Bortz also speaks for itself. He is professor of English at the San Narciso College, one of Inverarity's beneficiaries. The German noun 'Borste' means 'bristle'; 'hard brush'. Within the context this indicates a character who does not mind 'brushing something off' in a more or less powerful, unfeeling manner. The choice of names is thus the key to the characteristics of particular characters.

The roles assigned to or assumed by characters not only point to the fact that personality is subordinate to function, but also signal the artificiality of 'identity' as well as suggesting the 'play-acting' prevalent in real life

 Milton describes her thus: 'Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph that lic'st unseen ...' 'Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair, That liketh thy Narcissus are?' The nymph Echo lost her voice in amorous pursuit of Narcissus and is then recalled by Echo Courts: Oedipa is recalled while she is trying to ascertain the meaning of Pierce Inverarity's 'last words'.

situations which give rise to shifting identities. Upon hearing of Pierce Inverarity's death Oedipa recalls, for example, the last conversation she had had with him when he had spoken to her in different voices representing different personalities:

...there had come this long-distance call, from where she would never know (unless now he'd left a diary) by a voice beginning in heavy Slavic tones as second secretary at the Transylvanian Consulate, looking for an escaped bat; modulated to comic-Negro, then are on into hostile Pachuco dialect, full of chingas and maricones; then a Gestapo officer asking her in shrieks did she have relatives in Germany and finally his Lamont Cranston voice, the one he'd talked in all the way to Mazatlan.

(Pynchon, 1979: 6)

Taken together with the possible meanings of his name and surname referred to above, it should be clear that Pierce Inverarity is presented to the reader not as a 'life-like' person (Thomas Mann) nor one with any psychological depth (Faulkner), but as an artificially created construct indulging in role-playing and imitating other people by speaking at random with voices other than his own.

From the above it should be clear that the representation of character as a textual construct relies, on the one hand, on the use of words, such as the choice of names to suggest particular characteristics; while, on the other hand, the re-

ferences to fictional linguistic constructions, be it fairytales, plays or the lyrics of pop groups, underscore the text-embeddedness of characters in Pynchon's metafictional text. It is due to the deliberate fictionalisation of Oedipa's characteristics - such as her role as detective according to Sophokles's famous play, or her role as a captive in a tower (of confusion) according to the well known fairy-tale in which Rapunzel features prominently - that the reader gradually realizes that Oedipa is defined in terms of other texts rather than other human beings. Indeed, it is Oedipa who evokes for herself the role of a maiden imprisoned in a tower from which she is eventually rescued:

And [she] had also gently conned herself into the curious, Rapunzel-like role of a pensive girl somehow, magically prisoner among the pines and salt fogs of Kinneret, looking for somebody to say hey, let down your hair.

(Pynchon, 1979: 12)

What emerges from the manner in which Pynchon uses other texts to determine 'character' can be seen in both the element of playfulness and ambiguity prevalent in the above reference to the 'Rapunzel-like role' into which Oedipa had presumably 'conned' herself. The phrase 'hey, let down your hair' catapults the reader back into the de-romanticized postmodern and postindustrialist era of which both Oedipa, as a presumably modern, well-informed constructed 'person', and the reader himself are inhabitants. On the one hand, the reference to a letting down of hair takes on the contemporary meaning of 'letting go' and as such it serves to de-

romanticize the role assumed from the fairy tale; on the other hand, however, it retains a literal meaning in that, in the fairy tale, Rapunzel's long hair is supposed to provide the means for her rescuer to climb up to her and set her free from the tower (from imprisonment). And just when the reader thinks that he has captured the subtlety and richness of the textual reference, he is reminded of the fact that all of this is artificial, since it says quite explicitly that Oedipa had 'conned herself' into assuming this role, suggesting the underlying stability which sent her to a therapist in the first place.

It should be clear from the above that what is commonly perceived to be a trademark of postmodernist writing, the textualization of 'character', not only induces the reader constantly to be aware of the interplay of different texts from various genres and different eras, in an attempt to understand a construct such as Oedipa Maas, but that it also engages the reader in an intricate intellectual exercise of trying to come to terms with a playful yet challenging text that, despite its references to other texts from different eras, is firmly embedded in the contemporary world of the reader himself, simultaneously reflecting that world and reconstructing it by accommodating modern man's sense of insecurity in a text which deliberately presents itself as unashamedly and self-consciously artificial, thereby celebrating the power of artistic creation whilst simultaneously questioning its ability to reflect a stable sense of what 'reality', 'truth' or 'security' could possibly entail.

7.3.2 Dehumanization and commodification of 'people'

An integral aspect of the postmodern era in which both the reader and Oedipa Maas find themselves, involves the dehumanization, even the commodification of 'people', in a world in which technology reigns supreme and economics define every aspect of our lives. Thus it poses the threat of undermining completely a value system based on typically 'humane' qualities such as 'truth', 'trust' and an awareness of people as individuals instead of defining them according to the roles they are able to assume with respect to the different functions they are supposed to fulfil.

Early in the text, the summary of Oedipa's husband Mucho's unhappiness in a succession of jobs illustrates the futility of trying to resist the forces of commodification. Constantly having to deal with the crises he suffers in his various jobs, also as a disc jockey, Oedipa thinks he is too sensitive and recalls his work as a car salesman:

For a couple of years he'd been a used car salesman and so hyperaware of what that profession had come to mean that working hours were exquisite torture to him.

(Pynchon, 1979: 7; author's emphasis)

The reason for his distress lies in the dehumanization of people, where the 'wrecks' of society are characterized by him in terms of their correspondence to the 'wrecks' they bring to him as trade-ins; and where, in a master-stroke, the hopelessness of contemporary man is summarized in des-

cribing the things found in the cars as a 'salad of despair':

Yet at least he had believed in the cars. Maybe to excess: how could he not, seeing people poorer than him come in, Negro, Mexican, cracker, a parade seven days a week, bringing the most godawful of trade-ins: motorized, metal extensions of themselves, of their families and what their whole lives must be like, out there so naked for anybody, a stranger like himself, to look at, frame cockeyed, rusty underneath, fender repainted in a shade just off enough to depress the value, if not Mucho himself, inside smelling hopelessly of children, supermarket booze, two, sometimes three generations of cigarette smokers, or only dust - and when the cars were swept out you had to look at the actual residue of these lives, and there was no way of telling what things had been truly refused (when so little he supposed came by that out of fear most of it had to be taken and kept) and what had simply (perhaps tragically) been lost: clipped coupons promising savings of 5 or 10c, trading stamps, pink flyers advertising specials at the markets, butts, tooth-shy combs, help-wanted ads, Yellow Pages torn from the phone book, rags of old underwear or dresses that already were period costumes, for wiping you own breath off the inside of a windshield with so you could see whatever it was, a movie, a woman or car you coveted,

a cop who might pull you over just for the drill, all the bits and pieces coated uniformly, like a salad of despair, in a grey dressing of ash, condensed exhaust, dust, body wastes - it made him sick to look, but he had to look.

(Pynchon, 1979: 8)

This is the kind of detailed description reminiscent of Thomas Mann's extensive use of description as a means of characterization. Yet here the indirect characterization in terms of the objects tied to peoples' lives poignantly brings home to the reader the signs of an era marked by uncertainty, insecurity and despair. No wonder the characters in Pynchon's text are in constant need of psychiatric treatment.

In stark contrast to the picture of abject poverty described above, Oedipa very soon discovers, when she tries to come to terms with her new role as co-executor of the will of Pierce Inverarity, that what this man owned was so vast as to be almost ungraspable. Indeed, it is this all-encompassing wealth of 'goods and effects owned' that necessitates the quest Oedipa has to undertake in trying to unravel the mysteries with which she is confronted every step of the way.

Whether desperately poor or indescribably rich, it should be clear from the above that Pynchon defines his characters in terms of their earthly possessions; as such dehumanization, in terms of commodification, remains an integral characterization technique in the text.

7.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND SEXUAL ABERRATIONS

Contrary to its depiction in either Thomas Mann or William Faulkner, where psychological problems were underplayed in the first and individualized in the second novel, in the Pynchon text all sorts of problems are taken for granted as part of the very fabric of the contemporary world which is alternately reflected, dissected and reconstructed in the postmodernist text.

It has already been shown above how Mucho was affected by his job as a salesman of second hand cars; and how his succession of jobs in which he was unhappy continually plunged him into personal crises. Oedipa herself, the reader learns very soon in the text, has the kind of personal relationship with her psychiatrist which allows him to call her in the middle of the night, trying to persuade her to participate in a scheme where she would be used, without telling her so directly, as a kind of guinea pig on which the effects of a new drug could be tested. Oedipa's personal insecurity often translates into psychosomatic symptoms, as can be seen in the following quotation where she is in a quandary about her inability to solve the 'mystery' informing the text as parody of the detective novel:

The toothaches got worse, she dreamed of disembodied voices from whose malignance there was now appeal, the soft dusk of mirrors out of which something was about to walk, and empty rooms waited for her. Your gynaecologist has no test for

what she was pregnant with.

(Pynchon, 1979: 121; emphasis MW)

What is imparted by the emphasized section in the quotation above is simply Oedipa's deep-seated paranoia with which she is pregnant, and which is also a recurring theme in the novel.

These symptoms are exacerbated by the problems she encounters in her attempt to deal with Inverarity's will and to solve the mystery of the Tristero. So, for example, according to Oedipa, the 'livery' which was fashioned in 'black', symbolizes 'the only thing that truly belonged to the company in their exile' namely the night, viz the veil of darkness and mystery. These symbols echo themselves in the sinister black figures of the play The Courier's Tragedy. These can be assumed to represent the mystical Tristero.

Having thus established, from our point of view, the Tristero, this attributes a different dimension to the organization. The evidence of a motive of revenge, if necessary by violence, seems at least feasible. Issues such as wills and inheritance are also challenged, especially the Inverarity's estate. But then, the question still remains as to who the 'real' Tristero is. Could it be that two aspects are incorporated into one single organization? As soon as Oedipa thinks she has found the answer, other findings totally confuse her and the reader.

Question upon question express doubt, causing further confusion. The dilemma Oedipa finds herself in is somewhat

different to Hamlet's dilemma expressed in to be or not to be. Oedipa's and as such the post-modern dilemma is expressed in it may be or it may not be and represents the sophisticated puzzle this ultimate post-modern narrator indulges Oedipa-, and simultaneously the reader in.

The impossibility of finding answers eventually results, for Oedipa and also for the reader, in a lack of trust in her own powers of observation, in that she is not sure whether a plot has been hatched against her or whether she was hallucinating. In a telling example of the effects of the quest on her, Oedipa's instability is made explicit in the following passage:

Or you are hallucinating it. Or a plot has been mounted against you, so expensive and elaborated, involving items like the forging of stamps and ancient books, constant surveillance of your movements, planting of post horn images all over San Francisco, ...Inverarity only knows what-all besides, all financed out of the estate in a way either too secret or too involved for your non-legal mind to know about even though you are co-executor, so labyrinthine that it must have meaning beyond just a practical joke. Or you are fantasying some such plot, in which case you are a nut, Oedipa, out of your skull.

(Pynchon, 1979: 118; emphasis MW)

The coordinating conjunction OR in this paragraph introduces

an alternative which leaves uncountable possibilities ready to be investigated. This is indicative of the intolerable insecurity, resulting in Oedipa's anxiety in the absence of constancy and which keeps her looking for more evidence.

Besides insecurity, psychological problems become manifest in sexual aberrations. The extended 'seduction scene' between Metzger and Oedipa at their first encounter being a particularly extreme example where all sorts of excesses feature, ranging from Oedipa's layers of clothing, to her Metzger's desperate attempts, while rolling about on the bathroom floor, to evade the can of hairspray, to the parody of the game they play in getting rid of their garments. Furthermore, the voyeuristic behaviour of the teenagers watching them from the bathroom door, suggests that this 'real' scene approximates something that could be reproduced in a comedy intended to be watched by others. The impression of something artificially created is strengthened when, in the description of their sexual climax, the reader is left with the impression that all sorts of props, not uncommon to (absurd) theatre, have to be utilized to underline the event, so that the scene is concluded with a triple climax, joining sex, film and pop music:

Her climax and Metzger's, when it came, coincided with every light in the place, including the TV tube, suddenly going out, dead, black. It was a curious experience.

(Pynchon, 1979: 27; emphasis MW)

7.5 IRRATIONAL QUESTS

As already indicated above, name-giving presents an important writing strategy of Pynchon's. The fact that the name Oedipa refers the reader to Sophocles's Oedipus Rex, besides pointing to the textualization of character, suggests that the shared fixation on an all consuming quest at trying to 'detect' the 'truth' in the two texts deserves the reader's attention. The similarities with Sophocles's Oedipus Rex suggest that Pynchon wants the novel to be viewed as a mystery story. Like Oedipus, Oedipa also has to solve a puzzle. Oedipa's end is not as tragic as that of Oedipus. She is still alive at the end of the story. But whether or not she solved her riddle, which can be viewed as a detective element, is anybody's guess.

An integral aspect of the unsolvable riddle is that Oedipa will be forced, or so the reader assumes, to take up another role or roles, should her quest be unsuccessful. So, for example, she deliberates about her future by imagining various scenario's in which

...she may fall back on superstition, or take up a useful hobby like embroidery, or go mad, or marry a disc jockey. If the tower is everywhere and the knight of deliverance no proof against its magic, what else?

(Pynchon, 1979: 13; emphasis MW)

The uncertainty signalled in the text leaves no doubt, even if answers should be given, they are of little to no conse-

quence.

Whereas the detective element in the tragedy Oedipus Rex is not dominant, the detective genre in The Crying of Lot 49 is predominantly utilized like the literature of a whole generation of European writers from Proust to Beckett. The aforementioned discussion thus points to a departure from solid, dependable forms to **confused uncertainty**: individuality is destroyed in a discourse which replaces the conventional psychological depth of character. As a result the character, in this case Oedipa, loses that which was most precious of all possessions, namely personality.

The theme of despair expressed in the vanishing self, is often also illustrated comically. The comical features help to highlight the trend in postmodern literature, which attaches to the term 'post-modernist' a kind of diverse art. The theme becomes incoherent and decentralized, reminiscent of a fragmented subject. It is like man looking into a mirror and instead of seeing there his own image, he sees a stranger or as expressed in Oedipa's frightful experience, no reflection at all. This imagelessness is indicative of the confusion evident also in the detective element in Eugene Ionesco's play Victims of Duty (1962). It strikes a similarity between the strategies employed by the detective to solve a mystery only to become utterly confused.

Like Oedipa, deductively interpreted clues are accumulated, causal links between events in their search for meaning are established, never to find out what they really mean. But

Pynchon's narration does more than that: it parodies the stereotypical detective story by undermining it. A solution cannot be detected, however hard one tries. Oedipa's attempt at detecting the precise nature of the estate of Pierce Inverarity, whose initials PI may logically stand for 'Private Investigator', leaves an excess of unresolved mysteries which are ultimately all utterly resistant to solution. Upon finding an answer to one question, Oedipa finds herself in a vicious circle and has eventually to admit that whatever answer she may find will actually have no relevance at all. In this respect it is noteworthy that the word 'OR' appears time and again foregrounding the Zeitgeist we find ourselves in. Oedipa is the victim of either a hoax or of her own paranoia. If the answer is doubtful, it is epistemological. There may however be an ontological solution, which McHale explains as: 'God exists, and guarantees the existence of the perceived world; or, in this case, the Tristero exists' (McHale, 1987: 24). Whether or not one agrees to explain the detective strategy in terms of epistemological or ontological categories, the outcome still seems doubtful:

... in Lot 49, there is finally no way to decide between the alternatives. The evidence is so finely balanced that one hesitates between the epistemological and the ontological lines of explanation, without finally resolving the hesitation; hence the "fantastic" effect.

(McHale, 1987: 24)

Clues ploriferate as Oedipa delves into each mystery. By

parodying and thus undermining the stereotypical detective story through initiating structurally semantic implications deriving from puns on the word 'plot' which generate a sequence of events in which a solution to the events is indefinitely postponed. Events are closely linked with conspiracies which run parallel throughout Pynchon's fiction. The so-called plot, in the sense of mystery story, is created by Oedipa's determination to establish the existence or non-existence of a conspiracy called the Tristero or the Tristero system.

The importance of textualization extends beyond Oedipa's name, embedded as it is in Sophokles's Oedipus Rex, in that it also informs her efforts to solve the mystery of the Tristero. So, for example, the Tristero or the Tristero system is symbolized in the sinister black figures Oedipa encounters in the play The Courier's Tragedy. For her however, the puzzle as to who the Tristero really is, is not solved. Oedipa is encircled with confusion. IF the Tristero is non-existing, Oedipa's search would be in vain.

In this regard, Pynchon's insistence on creating indeterminacies needing to be filled by the reader is a clever device to urge the reader on to contemplation. How can the riddle be solved? Should it be solved at all? What is it that Pynchon wants so desperately to highlight? Will we ever find the answer through this labyrinth of words and arrive at the desired conclusion? Questions which will, of course remain unanswered.

As for the bizzare sense of humour which is not only evident in 'Inamorati Anonymous', but also in the emotion displayed by the users of the systems, this is reflected in the missing evidence to prove that the Tristero exists. Its seeming clues drive Oedipa to near psychological disintegration:

That night she sat for hours ... For this, oh God, was the void. ... Waves of nausea, lasting five or ten minutes, would strike her at random, cause her deep misery, then vanish as if they had never been. There were headaches, nightmares, menstrual pains.

(Pynchon, 1979: 118; emphasis MW)

This communication aspect suggests that both the existence and the absence of a plot, as well as the inability to decide between them, are mentally unstabilizing possibilities. As such this communication aspect also confirms the metafictionality of the detective genre.

The witty parody of the Jacobean play The Courier's Tragedy, inspires Oedipa to enquire into Inverarity's stamp collection, another irrational quest which divides itself in two parts, namely a historical investigation and a contemporary one. Trying to learn more about the underground postal system, a second line of enquiry unfolds itself when she visits Fangoso Lagoons which is one of Inverarity's many concerns. There it comes to her attention that a company of American troops were cut off by German troops near Lago di Pieta. They were eventually completely wiped out. This seems plausible enough, however later the reader is informed that an

ex-GI using his Mafia connections salvaged the soldiers' bones and shipped them to America. There they were subsequently not buried but used to make cigarette filters! This sheds further light on Oedipa's encounter with one of the Paranoids of the adolescent pop group in Echo Courts. It is also through the Paranoid, for example that Oedipa's attention is drawn to the similarity between Pierce Inverarity's possible use of bones in the making of cigarette filters.

The importance of the play can be seen in the fact that the sinister black figures symbolize the Tristero. What must additionally be pointed out is that it was due to Oedipa's investigation of the Inverarity's estate that she decided to see the play. The conspiracies in the play itself become a microcosm and catalyst of Oedipa's quest as they also become key features in the story. There is a parallel between the bones of the GIs and the bones of the murdered Lost Guard of Faggio, which the evil duke Angelo turns into ink:

Later on, in the fourth act, their bones were fished up again and made into charcoal, and the charcoal into ink, which Angelo, having a dark sense of humour, used in all his subsequent communications with Faggio, the present document included.

(Pynchon, 1979: 50)

The centrality of the play is sensed by Oedipa, who undeterredly tries to unravel what the Inverarity's estate is all about, as she sets off to discover its origins:

No hallowed skein of stars can ward, I trow,
 Who's once been set his tryst with Trystero.

(Pynchon, 1979: 50)

7.6 CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS-ULTIMATE SENSE OF DISINTEGRATION

From the discussion so far we will have inferred that Oedipa's 'creator' places her into a cognitive dilemma which involves her in issues of verifiable data. She establishes causal links between events only to be utterly confounded: as she draws conclusions from the established links she finds herself in the tunnel of confusion which was also referred to as Rapunzel's tower and/or the tower of Babel where the confusion of languages originated. The only stability in her life seems to be her home, her marriage (?) and her financial position. The events that confuse her and the reader are caused by a *deus ex machina*, something definitely out of her control. Consequently she asks herself, how is she to interpret the phenomena she encounters? Oedipa is only certain of one aspect and that is her dilemma. The hints she is given randomly, urge her on to theorize. She fills in gaps in order to unravel the riddles. However, the more she busies herself with this task, the more she finds that the puzzle set there can most likely never be solved as the stabilizing concept of the middle that which causes a perfect equilibrium is absent.

It is this loss of religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots which mirrors itself in Oedipa's world. She finds

the world in which she has her being destabilized, discredited, reduced, rendered useless; in fact she finds reality sickening:

'...But the reality is in this little universe visible in the circle of that stage is coming out of my mouth, eyes, sometimes other orifices also.'

(Pynchon, 1979: 54; author's emphasis)

All this must be attributed to the loss of stability, the negation of all solidity and sound forms.

As has been shown in the foregoing analysis, Oedipa's confusion becomes ever more intense, as she realizes the impossibility of her quest: will she ever find the truth? What is the truth? Upon trying to make sense of her findings, upon weighing these up, Oedipa eventually comes to the realization that everything is relative. Everything may be analysed from different angles, different view-points.

But for her this kind of investigation does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion. On the contrary, it results in different conflicting and ambiguous answers. Considering the findings from this angle, the answer would be this... . However, considering the findings from that angle, the answer would be that...or? Whatever way, the tunnel of confusion will once more manifest itself in Oedipa's mind, a conclusion equalling zero!

Affording no definitive answers and rather focussing on the state of utter confusion in Oedipa's mind, Pynchon shatters,

contradicts and ridicules the significant definition of the age-old view of a fixed, ideal nature of man. In its place he endeavours to set ambiguous signs for every reader to decipher in the quest for a meaning which when found would only perhaps be a reality.

The conclusions reached by Oedipa in her search for the Tristero thus stress the nature of an uncertainty, as too many of Oedipa's suppositions rest upon unreliable sources and ambiguities.

As far as numerous deaths are concerned, Pynchon shows very little grief. Instead Pynchon's macabre approach maintains to attribute continuous life, transforming the dead into valuable and/or not so valuable products! With this gruesome or at least eccentric manner, Pynchon tries to rehabilitate waste into so-called value, reflective of a modern society intent on commodities, commodifying everything.

It should be clear from the foregoing analysis of the Pynchon novel that, ultimately, every aspect contributes towards a sense of confusion, uncertainty and a loss of individual identity in a world defined by collective materialism rather than personal value systems. Thus Pynchon's writing strategies discussed in this chapter, the textualization of character, the exaggeration and fictionalization of personal problems and, finally, the parody of irrational quests dictating the main character's actions, underscore the immense challenges fictional characters (and their actual counterparts) face in contemporary society. Man's insecurity reigns

supreme in a highly developed world, suggesting that the ultimate disintegration of 'character' in literature, and its inevitable reflection on the relativity of life itself, is reminiscent of a society where the management of W.A.S.T.E. and its concomitant culture of recycling, would appear to indicate the only thing man can be sure of - death and the possible uses to which 'dead' or 'waste' material could be put.

8 CONCLUSION

The purpose of looking globally at the different styles displayed in the three novels, Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and last but not least, Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49, was to illustrate that the increasing instability in modern man's world necessitated different narrative techniques in response to external change, as human behaviour is indeed causally determined. Thus, new literary forms and techniques evolved which accommodated the fundamental shift from conscious reality to an awareness of the unconscious psychological level of the mind, the portrayal of the inner life of characters.

In tracing the changes registered in the three novels, it has been shown how, as was suggested in the preamble to this study, hitherto long accepted assumptions about religion, education, sex, marriage, social and political absolutes are initially questioned, and eventually even ridiculed. One could say that the questioning started in Thomas Mann with the philosophical deliberations of main characters, continued in William Faulkner as an expression of individual anguish to climax in Thomas Pynchon with a collective ridicule of well-nigh all established norms indicative of a sophisticated society in a highly technologized First World environment.

One level of a comparative reading of the three novels concerns the different techniques of characterisation utilized

in each novel. So, for example, the emphasis on indirect presentation, as opposed to numerous instances of direct definition, brilliant as they may be, distinguishes Faulkner's novel from that of Thomas Mann. The discussion of Faulkner's fragmentary narrative mode of first person narration presented in memory monologue as a variant vehicle for interior monologue, focused on this narrative discourse which can be viewed as a 'genuine monologue', denoting a temporal sequence of related past events yielding to the temporal sequence of present remembrance. The fragmentary narrative mode can be viewed as revealing the past fundamentally dechronolized discourse, due to a radical distrust of the notion of coherence, where facts were related in sequence of their development.

The portrayal of consciousness in William Faulkner's text, set in a fragmentary time frame, was discussed in order to illustrate the extent of the individual anguish to which different characters in the novel are subjected. This disclosure of the inner life of individual characters was discussed in the light of its psychological implications and artistic uniqueness. During the discussion, the human weakness in the characters of the Compson family proved to be revelatory of their trapped condition within their own restricted egocentric consciousness which calls the concept of objectivity into question, thereby rendering as problematic the notion of 'truth' in a relativistic world of shifting values. In discussing this novel it should have become clear that modern literature reflects man's insecurity, his exper-

ience of reality being subjectively mediated in literature. Modern literature such as reflected in Faulkner's novel was thus shown to portray the chaotic and irrational side of human nature, thereby undermining the traditional view of literature as an uncomplicated reflection of an unambiguously perceived reality.

A comparison between William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Thomas Mann's masterpiece Buddenbrooks, showed the synonymous nature of their topics, the disintegration seen as the consequence of the demise of an era (fin de siècle). Thomas Mann's focus on this topic was shown to reflect a disintegration which is seen as the consequence of the demise of an era problematizing the idea of a unitary worldview by focusing on the way in which the characters perceived and understood their particular world in his masterpiece Buddenbrooks. Although Mann still belonged to the tradition of European realism, which one consequently categorizes as a coherent narrative, the author found his centre by framing the related actions inside the consciousness of each one of his characters within a coherent plot.

In contrast to Faulkner's narrative style which deliberately foregrounds a fragmented reality, the perceived reality of time in Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks was shown to be of chronological sequence, the narrated story of people who resided in a world which experienced a new meaning under such influential philosophers as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The intention of this discussion was to make clear that it was the philosophical interpretation of the world as the people

perceived it which became a great influential force in their lives at the end of the century, the much talked about 'fin de siecle'. It was clearly Mann's enchantment, even fascination with the so-called pessimistic philosophy, which permeated his narration. The main purpose of the analysis of deaths in the family, was to show how the emphasis shifted from the material, every-day life relations towards a representation of the inner psychological landscape, reflecting the condition of each character's consciousness; the outstanding and acknowledged philosophical ideas of the great philosophers of Goethe, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer leaving their influential mark on this great literary work. Consequently, the contribution of psychological thought towards the act of perception and interpretation of the literary text was strongly advocated as a major contributor towards an understanding of a new reality reflected in a hitherto unknown literary convention.

Challenging the notion of character evident in modernist fiction, it was argued that the personae which represent postmodernist fiction are not life-like psychologically in-depth representations of individuals. Thomas Pynchon's text adds the complication of self reflective writing to the portrayal of the inner life of a character in both his questioning of the concept of identity and his emphasis on the constructedness of writing.

Compared to the narrative styles of Thomas Mann and William Faulkner, where uncertainty and doubt are still unambiguously reflected, the postmodernist strategies employed by

Thomas Pynchon result in the narrative style itself, through its self-reflective nature, complicating the portrayal of the shifting values characterizing our contemporary world. The complexity and sophistication of literary representation clearly emerge in the context of the textualisation of character, for example, resulting in a blurring of the boundaries between 'reality' and 'fiction'. It also leads to an exposure of the artificiality of the writing act, affecting hitherto well established narrative conventions, such as a cleverly constructed coherent story, a subtlety of characterization and simultaneous motivation. The task of this discussion was to show how the afore-mentioned stories of respectively Thomas Mann and William Faulkner contrasted with a story in postmodernist mode. Pynchon's clever manipulative narrative method challenges the reader to decode an intricate text for which he has to simultaneously take over responsibility. The text itself was shown to be signified by absurdity and disharmony. Indeed, the positions outlined above draw attention to Pynchon's revelation that in this our time of technological advanced development, the 'self' is, of necessity, being estranged from its own individuality. It is in unavoidable contact with its ever advanced 'technical environment'.

By foregrounding the peculiarities of postmodernist writing with examples from the text itself, it was finally the aim of the study to show how the ultimate postmodern writer uses his manipulative method through the convenient shelter of the aegis of the doctrine of metaphors and concealed meaning.

Interesting sexual topics in the text were discussed with the intention to draw attention to the penetration-method as a so-called 'grand introduction' of an ongoing process, of entering his character's (Oedipa's) defence, where the self emerges as constantly open to incursions from its technical environment.

The set sign-posts in Pynchon's text were not only discussed in the light of the peculiarity of its so-called private fiction-making, but they are also indicative of the frightening realization that characters are no more real people, but words made up on a piece of paper, constructs of artificiality. Finally, and on consideration of the study as a whole, the only similarity between the characters in Mann's, Faulkner's and Pynchon's texts being their preoccupation with the confusion they experience.

Each age having its own accepted method of literary discourse, this thesis set out to highlight the different literary conventions which have evolved to the notion of logical and objective reality. However, reality becomes meaningless in the face of a rapidly changing world where nuclear wars have once more become a possibility. It is due to these fear-evoking possible future prospects, that stability has shifted more than ever before to instability and often to anxiety.

Although freedom is advocated to all expressions of art, the findings of the disturbing concerns of a threatened society have left their mark on concomitantly, creative writers who

have, consequently arrived at a sense of exhaustion. Thus fictional forms have reached a cul-de-sac, as a response to a culturally abused world of instability.

It should be clear from the foregoing that a study of the novels reveals that a shift from control to anarchy may be perceived; as was argued throughout this thesis, this may be ascribed to an accelerated transition which was brought about by the shifting values in life as reflected in literature. In this regard, the theories on character made it possible to analyse the relation between 'life' and 'literature' indicated in the title of this study, in that the seemingly irreconcilable views on the nature and function of literary character, vacillating between the extremes of 'life-likeness' on the one hand and 'textembeddedness' on the other, may be taken as representing the values in 'life' and 'literature' referred to in the study.

As has been shown in the analysis of Pynchon's postmodernist text, the sense of insecurity, instability and uncertainty which permeated all of the texts discussed, would appear to have reached a point of exhaustion in postmodernist writing. It culminates in a highly sophisticated, at times extremely ironical, questioning of every conceivable aspect of 'life' and 'literature'.

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