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Faulkner's polyphonic narrative

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a narratological reading of selected novels of William Faulkner. The body of primary texts relies, first and foremost, on Faulkner's canonical novels, *Absalom, Absalom!, As I Lay Dying*, and the three novels included in *The Snopes Trilogy.* The theoretical approaches used to underpin the analysis of this selection of Faulkner's novels include: Bakhtinian texts on the theory of the novel, texts in structural narratology, and selected texts in cognitive narratology. This research project relies on the presupposition that only a synthesis of the approaches in question will facilitate the illustration of the complexity, sophistication and technical mastery of Faulknerian narrative, with its complex set of developments on several narrative levels. The main secondary sources in classical narratology - written by Genette, Stanzel, Chatman, Bal, Barthes, Greimas, Todorov, Lanser and Prince - provide a theoretical foundation for this research project in the domain of narrative theory and narratology, which aims to clarify Faulkner's narratives' structure, narrating, narration, focalizing, focalization, focalizers and narrators. The above-mentioned foundational narratological theorists and their concepts, together with the texts in rhetorical narratology by Phelan and Rabinowitz and cognitive narratology by Fludernik, make up the main body of secondary sources, while Bakhtinian ideas of novelistic heteroglossia and dialogism are responsible for the main line of argument in this thesis.

The introductory chapter (Chapter One) of the thesis provides a brief explanation of the key concepts and theories by Bakhtin that have been employed in the analyses of the Faulknerian texts. Chapter Two of the thesis compares the monologic model of the novel to the polyphonic one in *As I Lay Dying*, attending particularly to the consequences of heteroglossia and the dialogic principle. This chapter refers to the Aristotelian concept of plot and Ricoeur's concept of time in narrative. Chapter Three is devoted to the examination of the Bakhtinian concept of the 'hero' (character) in the polyphonic novel and in particular 'unfinalizability.' The chapter addresses the narrative qualities of the dead narrator, Addie Bundren, the serial narrator as a collective or group narrator in *As I Lay Dying,* and the polyphonic novel as a verbal discourse and a social phenomenon. In Chapter Four, I propose two readings of the narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!*, employing the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia and cognitive narratology. I argue that *Absalom, Absalom!* represents a

conversational narrative that functions through heteroglossia, and has very complex embedding and frame patterns on its intradiegetic level. I develop my argument by pointing out the similarities in Bakhtinian dialogism and Fludernik's cognitivist model of an experiencing mind. Chapter Five is concerned with the Bakhtinian notion of the speaking person in the polyphonic novel, with an emphasis on the complex processes involved in active understanding during contact between the speaker (utterer) and the listener (receiver). Chapter Five sheds light on the mixed-type type of narration in *Absalom, Absalom!* It explores the difference between multivocality and polyphony of voices and considers the consequences of both narrative phenomena in relation to the emphasis on the agon of the contrasting voices of the homodiegetic narrators and heteroglossia in *Absalom, Absalom!* This chapter connects the novels included in *The Snopes Trilogy* to *Absalom, Absalom* and *As I Lay Dying,* based on similarities in their narrative techniques. Chapter Six presents *The Snopes Trilogy* as a continuous and sequential narrative – Flem Snopes's story of coming to riches. In this chapter, I will examine more closely the plot dynamics and the correlations between the main characters in the trilogy. Following this line of argument, Chapter Seven focuses on the high degree of ideological solidarity, revealed when the entire town of Jefferson speaks with one voice in Faulkner's narratives. Chapter Seven concentrates on the way hearsay and rumours function in Faulkner's narratives, with an emphasis on the social dimension of the Bakhtinian concept of polyphony. This chapter draws on the Bakhtinian concepts of carnival and heteroglossia as synonyms for diversity and plurality, and examines the idea of catechism that stands for the group-thinking and collective-thinking so typical of the Jefferson townsfolk in Faulkner. The thesis builds on Bakhtin's line of argument as postulated in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* and *The Dialogic Imagination,* Bakhtin's concepts of heteroglossia as explained in *Discourse in the Novel,* and the concept of a polyphonic narrative as defined in *The Dialogic Imagination*. The thesis aims to use Bakhtin's ideas in order to further appreciation of Faulkner's art and his complex narrative structures.

Contents

Introduction

Faulkner's polyphonic narrative.

My primary research in the past decade has been concerned with American Literature, with the emphasis on American Modernism and, in particular, William Faulkner, renowned for such High Modernist masterpieces as *Absalom, Absalom!* and *The Sound and the Fury.*[1] Being a Slavist, and having dealt with Russian literary criticism and theory for over two decades, it was impossible for me to overlook the gap in the existing Faulkner criticism. Most published research on Faulkner has been devoted solely to the problematic subject matter of Faulkner's works, which involve social discrepancies and inequalities resulting from slavery. The very few existing analyses of the narrative structure of his long fiction date back to the 1970s and 1990s.[2] Although extensive research has been carried out on Faulkner's literary works, no single study exists that adequately deals with the problems of his polyphonic narrative in his greatest novels.[3] This is why the thesis that follows is organised by reference to Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's ideas concerning discourse in the novel and is devoted to a close narratological examination of Faulkner's polyphonic narrative that draws on the most recent work in narratology.

The thesis that follows has been divided into seven chapters. A brief introductory chapter is designed primarily as a means of indicating the scope of the Bakhtinian thought I use here to illuminate characteristic features of Faulkner's polyphonic novels. The subsequent seven chapters of this thesis, devoted to Faulkner's polyphonic narrative, approach this matter by focusing, first of all, on narrative voice, and, indirectly, by means of narrative voice, on the aesthetics and architectonics of Faulkner's polyphonic narrative. Throughout, I adopt two basic approaches. One is the above-mentioned idea of polyphony and the other is narrative theory as it is widely understood in Western literary theory, beginning with Aristotle, and running, in recent times, through Genette and Ricouer, to Fludernik. In other words, the two complementary approaches are utilized in this thesis: one grounded in the Eastern literary traditions, the other in the Western literary traditions. In this thesis, I do not question the ability of structural and cognitive theories to provide good analytic methods for the exploration of a Faulknerian narrative. Rather, this thesis has been written in order to draw on the existing criticism in the field of narratology and the theory of the novel, and establish a new triadic viewpoint on what Prince describes as "mechanisms of narrative, its form and functioning" in

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[1] See my discussion of the narrative techniques in *The Sound and the Fury* (MA dissertation, University of Gdansk, Poland, 2009 'Narrator and narration in section one of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*').

[2] Joseph W. Reed, Jr. *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1973). André Bleikasten, *Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying'* (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1973).

[3] The biggest number of doctoral dissertations has been devoted to the study of William Faulkner's art.

relation to Faulkner's polyphonic novels.[4] The research methods followed are based on Bakhtin's texts on the theory of the novel, the major texts in structural narratology, and selected texts in cognitive narratology. Drawing on Bakhtin, whose analysis of Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel is the most insightful account of the polyphonic novel yet produced, I want to focus particularly on a matter that remains unexplored in existing analyses of Faulkner's works, namely contradictions between the narrative voices. In Faulkner, as in Dostoevsky, we find narratives notable for their impressive dialectics between the unmerged, frequently contrasting, points of view present in the narration and the clashes between the personalities of the tellers of these stories. For this reason, this analysis of Faulkner's narrative leans toward the position that is known as the Bakhtinian concept of polyphony. The thesis also exploits the fact that Bakhtinian concepts are still not widely known in the Anglophone world, which might simply be because the vast majority of his texts have not yet been translated into English.[5] The thesis is strengthened by use of these untranslated texts.

The central concept around which my thesis will revolve is the notion of polyphony as a special, more advanced kind of polyvocality and multiplicity of narrative voices. As such, this presents an advancement of Faulkner's techniques and variations on the point of view method as used, for example, in *The Sound and the Fury.* In this thesis, the discussion will address the central question of the Bakhtinian theory of polyphony (heteroglossia) – "Who is talking?."[6] Michael Holquist speaks of the 'overwhelming multiplicity' of the voices in the polyphonic novel. What we are to understand by polyphony in Dostoevsky and Faulkner is the combination of many different narrative voices that co-exist and are correlated but never merge with one another. In addition, in his seminal investigation of Dostoevsky's novels, Bakhtin conceded that consciousness is always a product of responsive interactions and cannot exist in social isolation. This lays the foundation for Bakhtin's social poetics. Accordingly, this study offers a critical consideration of the individual polyphonic novels based on Bakhtinian social poetics.

There is a two-fold justification for the choice of analysandum for this research. The discussion centres on revealing the ways Faulkner's polyphonic narratives function, with an emphasis on the implications for the theory of the novel in general and particularly in relation to the major differences between monologic and polyphonic novels. In choosing the novels for discussion, I have tried to find examples that best cover the basic issues concerning polyphonic narrative: the

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[4] Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin, New York: Mouton, 1982), p. 163.

[5] The list of works by Bakhtin available in English has been enclosed at the end of this thesis and is included in the extended bibliography.

[6] Michael Holquist, 'Answering as Authoring: Mikhail Bakhtin's Trans-Linguistics,' *Critical Inquiry,* 10 (1983), 307-319. *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work,* ed. by Gary Saul Morson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 59.

differences between the polyphonic and monologic novel; the dialogic principle and heteroglossia; and the opposing relationship between the carnival and catechism, as introduced by Bakhtin. As noted above, the concept of polyphony originates in social poetics and the idea of a man as, first and foremost, a social being for whom communication means being. I shall add a complementary thesis to this principal one: namely that, in the Faulknerian novel, despite its often achronological and fragmentary nature of narration, the plot serves as a specific point of orientation for the readers to help them try to make sense of the competing narrative voices involved in heteroglossia, which lies at the heart of polyphony.

This thesis will begin by briefly outlining the key concepts involved in Bakhtin's theory of polyphony. Bakhtin's thought constantly revolves around a problem, which is, in essence, the basic premise of his social poetics – the 'I.' In the introductory chapter, I shed light on other major presuppositions of Bakhtinian thought on the matter, such as, for example, the concept of the other as being indispensable for the complex and prolonged processes of self-knowledge. The fundamental purpose is, once again, to demonstrate why, in the polyphonic narrative, as opposed to, for example, the point of view narrative, the emphasis is laid on communication and contact between personalities (that is, between consciousnesses). For many literary critics, Bakhtin's heteroglossia and dialogism are associated only with a spoken dialogue and dialogic interactions between the real speakers. As Holquist puts it:

> The extraordinary sensitivity to the immense plurality of experience more than anything else distinguishes Bakhtin from other moderns who have been obsessed with language. I emphasize experience here because Bakhtin's basic scenario for modelling variety is two actual people talking to each other in a specific dialogue at a particular time and in a particular place. But these persons would not confront each other through the kind of uncluttered space envisioned by the artists who illustrate most receiver-sender models of communication. Rather, each of the two persons would be a consciousness as a specific point in the history of defining itself through the choice it has made – out of all the possible existing languages available to it at that moment – of a discourse to transcribe its intention *in this specific exchange.* The two will, like everyone else, have been born into an environment in which the air is already swarmed with names.[7]

In this thesis, I wish to further the understanding of both Bakhtin and Faulkner and suggest that what is at issue here is not so much dialogue itself but the deeper processes of communication as contact between different consciousnesses.

Thus, my primary purpose in Chapter One has been to show that heteroglossia is contact established between different personalities (consciousnesses) that come together by means

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[7] Introduction to *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. xx.

of social encounter. Next comes the comparison and contrast between polyphonic and monologic narratives. This is why I refer to the classical concept of plot and contrast the Aristotelian poetics of plot with the Bakhtinian theory of extra-plot connections. This is one of the characteristic features of polyphony. I will then move on to a discussion of the role of plot in the construction and shaping of Faulkner's polyphonic narratives. I shall undertake to demonstrate the consequences of heteroglossia and the changes to the authorial voice, which in polyphonic narratives becomes just one of many narrative voices, thus losing its leading role. The question of the authorial voice is linked here directly to the concept of the character and the narrator. In this way, the issue of the power relations in the polyphonic novel is first considered in terms of social poetics rather than Aristotelian poetics. In this chapter, I will also refer to Ricoeur's concept of time and its impact on the theory of plot and narrative. I will return to Ricoeur's concept of time in Chapter Three, when I speak of Fludernik's theory of experientiality in regards to the tellers of Sutpen's legend in *Absalom, Absalom!* In this first chapter, I will also extend Phelan's thought, by providing an analysis of a deceased narrator, the novel's protagonist – Addie Bundren.

In Chapter Two, I will first outline the Bakhtinian concept of the unfinalizability of characters (heroes) and the changes to the narrative it brings about. Then, I will connect the new concept of the hero with the Bakhtinian openness of time and eventness. I will then examine the consequences of the changes of status of the character (hero) in the polyphonic novel as opposed to monologic novels. In this chapter, I will also undertake a detailed discussion of the status and role of plot in Faulkner's polyphonic novels. Finally, Chapter Two is also given over to a direct examination of carnival as an aspect of heteroglossia.

The novel most cherished by Faulknerians, *Absalom, Absalom!,* is key to the understanding of all Faulkner's narratives. Since there is no definitive critical work on *Absalom, Absalom!* in the narratological context of the other Yoknapatawpha novels, I have attempted to fill this gap. I agree with Hugh M. Ruppersburg that most of the previous studies of *Absalom, Absalom!'* have been of 'a detective' or 'impressionist'[8] nature, and therefore their entire focus has been given to the character's knowledge rather than to the novel's multivocality and polyvocality.[9] Accordingly, I

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[8] See, for example, Albert Joseph Guérard, *Triumph of the novel: Dickens, Dostoevsky, Faulkner.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 302-338, in particular pages: 302, 324, 326, 332, 333, and 338. Ch.8 *Absalom, Absalom!: The Novel as Impressionist Art.* On *Absalom, Absalom!* as the novel written in the aura of Conradian Impressionism, with emphasis on the similarities with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness, Chance,* and *Lord Jim* by means of repetition and by means of 'conjecture.' For the comparison of Faulkner's narrative techniques to Conrad's impressionism see also: David Minter, W*illiam Faulkner: His Life and Work* (Baltimore and London: the Johns Hopkins University Press), p. 49.

[9] Hugh M. Ruppersburg, *Voice and Eye in Faulkner's Fiction* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1983), p.81.

devote Chapter Three of the thesis to demonstrating the mechanisms of heteroglossia at its highest point – agon – while unravelling the complex social relationships between the speakers, thus revealing their social bias. In this chapter, I synthesize the divergent dialogism (dialogic principle) with the idea of agon (heteroglossia).

Chapter Four is concerned with the speaking persons. Here I discuss *Absalom! Absalom*! in terms of the Bakhtinian concept of personal development through knowing oneself. I identify the distinguishing characteristics of the Bakhtinian concept of the other and the other's role in knowing oneself and shaping the speaker's 'I'. The formal structure of *Absalom, Absalom!* directs the reader to see that each listener of the Sutpen story attempts to understand not only the novel's legendary personage – Sutpen himself – but the tellers of his legend. Significant Faulkner criticism is concerned with exploring the identities of the speakers.[10] My concern here is rather to look at their personalities through the prism of the social relations they are part of. I will also suggest that in *Absalom, Absalom!* the reader encounters the elements of Socratic dialogue, which will be covered in more detail. I will end this chapter with a discussion of *Absalom, Absalom!* as a mise en abyme type of novel.

It is also necessary to take into consideration different approaches to Faulkner's polyphonic novel. In this regard, I will draw particularly on Fludernik's theory of experientiality.[11] I will point out the striking similarities between a conversational narrative and polyphonic narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!*, and I will reveal how the Bakhtinian theory of the novel as a mixture of genres supports Fludernik's theory of narrative. I will discuss telling and re-telling patterns in *Absalom, Absalom!* I will argue that *Absalom, Absalom!* is a composite of three oral genres: Labovian's spontaneous narrative of personal experience; the narrative of vicarious experience; and witness narrative. Approaching *Absalom, Absalom!* as a mixture of these three oral genres, I will argue, explains the occurrence of the Bakhtinian dialogic effect. Examples such as these will also help to clarify the heteroglossic aspect of Faulkner's narrative. I will conclude the chapter with a brief consideration of the incorporated genres in the novel, in particular confession and the epistolary genre. Bakhtin frequently emphasises the importance of the category of genres in the literary theory and history, strongly criticising, for example, those critics who don't see "beneath the superficial hustle and bustle of literary process the major and crucial fates of literature and language, whose great heroes turn out to be first and foremost genres, and whose trends and schools are but second or third-rank

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[10] Southard Marybeth, "'Aint None of Us Pure Crazy:' Queering Madness in *As I Lay Dying*," *The Faulkner Journal.* XXVII.1, Spring 2013, pp. 47-64. See also Hugh M. Ruppersburg, *Voice and Eye in Faulkner's Fiction* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1983).

[11] Monika Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London, New York: 1996), pp. 355 and 371. Especially sections 1.3 and 8.6.

protagonists."[12] Elsewhere, Bakhtin argues that the novel is "made of different clay (from) the other already completed genres."[13] Indeed, the novel, according to Bakhtin, is the only genre that eagerly absorbs other genres and does not change its own genre - as a novel.[14]

In Chapter Five, I enter into the debate surrounding the loose and episodic structure of Faulkner's one and only trilogy - much neglected by critics - *The Snopes Trilogy*. Here, I bring into focus the plot and narratological dynamics and cross-dynamics at work in all three parts of the trilogy and provide a discussion of all three novels as a continuous and sequential narrative. I point to the relationship between logical causal narrative connections and the way the reader re-creates narratives.

In Chapter Six, two readings of the human being - as individual and as part of a community and social group - connect with the Bakhtinian concepts of carnival and catechism. In this chapter, I propose to explore the relationship between the Jefferson townsfolk and Flem Snopes. The narrative analysis undertaken in this chapter has two objectives. In meeting the first objective, I refer to the concept of focalization and the discussion of seeing and telling exchanges in narrative transitions opened by Genette.[15] In this chapter, I propose to explore the relationship between focalization and narration, drawing on *The Snopes Trilogy* as an example. I will also bring into focus the role that gossip and rumours play in shaping Faulkner's narrative. This is a feature that links up with Bakhtin's social poetics, as will be shown using the example of the Jefferson-born Charles Mallison, who is the trilogy's primary narrator. I will characterize Charles as an adult narrator speaking of his childhood memories and impressions, and as a member of the various group-narrators. This characterization turns Charles into a social being, and serves as an explanation of the mentality of the townsfolk of Faulkner's Jefferson and the people inhabiting his imaginary Yoknapatawpha country. This is because Charles is a Jeffersonian above all. The basis for Bakhtin's theory of polyphony is social diversity. My discussion of the we-narrator (a village narrator, a communal narrator, a group narrator) in *The Snopes Trilogy* will make clear that what, or rather who, makes the Jefferson

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[12] "Epic and Novel," pp. 7-8. In Michael Holquist, p. 70 "Textual space and genres," *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world* (London and New York: Rutledge, 1990). See also M. M. Bakhtin, *The Problem of Speech Genres,* pp. 61-62. On secondary (complex) genres that can incorporate other genres, for example, novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, Bakhtin argues: "During the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communication."

[13] Bakhtin in Richard Pearce, *Politics of narration: James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), p. 17.

[14] Ibidem, p. 18.

[15] Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 186. Chapters 4 and 5.

narrative diverse is a singular narrator – Ratliff, who, being a foreigner, is by turns tolerated and even respected by the ideologically biased town.

In my concluding chapter, I will reassess the characteristic features of Faulkner's polyphony in the light of my findings resulting from the detailed narrative analyses of the individual novels in question. I will also consider polyphony in relation to other major concepts of Bakhtinian thought, including the chronotope (time-space). This final part of the thesis offers up a discussion of its implications for future research in this area.

Chapter I

Introductory chapter

Faulkner's polyphonic narrative: terms of the Bakhtinian theory of polyphony.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, in his groundbreaking book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929)*,* Bakhtin introduced the notion of the polyphonic novel (многоголосный или полифонический роман). This idea has far-reaching implications for the theory of the novel as a genre, the theory of discourse and narrative analysis in general. Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky's novels is the most important and most comprehensive account of the polyphonic novel to date. Bakhtin's theory of novelistic polyphony is that of an on-going dialogue between the many consciousnesses of a novel and their equal importance for the narrative. In Bakhtin's words, dialogism is "a specific form of interaction between equally important consciousnesses for the narrative that have equal narrative rights within the narrative."[1] Bakhtin speaks of this as "the interaction and mutual dependence between consciousnesses."[2] In addition, as Bakhtin argues elsewhere there is a "plurality of independent and unmerged voices in consciousness; a genuine polyphony of fully-valid voices."[3] In Bakhtin's theory, dialogism is responsible for heteroglossia, and the heteroglossia serves, in turn, as a background for dialogism.[4] Bakhtin writes:

> Dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as a part of a greater whole – there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others. Which will affect the other, how it will do so and to what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of utterance. This dialogic imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, insures that there can be no actual monologue.[5]

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own. M. M. Bakhtin, *Aesthetics of speech genres* (Moscow: Isskustva, 1979), p. 170 "(…) диалогичность как особая форма взаимодействия между равноправными и равнозначными сознаниями."

[2] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works* (Moscow: Russkie Slovari, 2003), vol. 6, p. 29 "взаимодействие и взаимозависимость между сознаниями."

[3] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 4 "Множественность самостоятельных и неслиянных голосов в сознании, подлинная полифония полноценных, голосов." See also *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics.* p. 6.

[4] *The Dialogic Imagination,* M.M. Bakhtin, Ed. by Michael Holquist, Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, p. 364. Bakhtin speaks of "the surrounding heteroglossia (which always serves as a dialogizing background and resonator) – all these create a multitude of devices for representing another's language." or p. 332. "Thus, heteroglossia either enters the novel in person (so to speak) or assumes material from within it in the images of speaking persons, or it determines, as a dialogizing background the special resonance of novelistic discourse."

[5] *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 426.

In this thesis an attempt will be made to examine the close tie between the various, and frequently also opposing, acting consciousnesses in the polyphonic novel – using as examples Faulkner's canonical novels – *As I Lay Dying* and *Absalom, Absalom!*

The basis for Bakhtin's theory of dialogism is the dialogic nature of every utterance: "An utterance is a unit of speech. By its very nature, every utterance is a replica of a dialogue (communication and conflict). By its character, speech is dialogic."[6] However, Bakhtin's concept of novelistic polyphony takes its origin in music, in particular symphonic composition. As Bakhtin puts it:

> Dostoevsky's novels are like a choir, in which each voice sings its own independent and finalized melody; but these melodies are constructed in a way that each can be considered in its own right as accompaniment to other voices, so when singing together they don't result in cacophony but a beautiful musical entity, where each voice maintains its independence, while being at the same time inherent in the whole.[7]

To explain this idea further, Bakhtin also explains the difference between homophony and polyphony:

> The essence of polyphony lies precisely in the fact that the voices remain independent and, as such, are combined in a unity of a higher order than in homophony. If one is to talk about individual will, then it is precisely in polyphony that a combination of several individual wills takes place that the boundaries of the individual can be in principle exceeded. One could put it this way: the artistic will of polyphony is a will to combine many wills, a will to the event.[8]

Writing on the organization of the various voices/consciousnesses in the polyphonic novel Bakhtin relies on the 'counterpoint' principle used in the composition of symphonies in music: "The interrelation and opposition of those complex personalities, their cooperation are based on a principle that is best compared to counterpoint in music."[9] In his account of literary polyphony, Bakhtin further argues: "Every element of a literary work finds itself inevitably at the point of crossing of voices, where two differently directed replicas collide."[10] It is clear from Bakhtin's discussion of polyphony that these

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[6] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 130 "Единица речи – высказывание. Всякое высказывание по природе своей есть реплика диалога (общение и борьба). Речь по своей природе диалогична."

[7] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 340 "Романы Достоевского похожи на хор, в котором каждый голос поёт свою самостоятельную и законченную мелодию; но эти мелодии построены так, что всякую из них можно рассматривать как аккомпанемент каждой из остальных, так что при одновременном пении создается не какофония, а стройное музыкальное единство, в котором каждый голос сохраняет свою самостоятельность, и в то же время он неотделимая част целого."

[8] *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* p. 21.

[9] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 340 "Взаимоотношение и противопоставление этих сложных личностей, их взоимодействие построены на принципе, который лучше всего можно сравнить с контрапунктом в музыке."

[10] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 115 "Каждый элемент произведения неизбежно оказывается в точке пересечения голосов, в районе столкновения двух разнонаправленных реплик."

voices coexist and have constant impact on one another, whilst remaining, overall, independent and autonomic:

> The combination of unmerged voices is an aim in its own right and the final product. Any attempt to represent this world as finalized in the ordinary monologic sense of the word – as subordinated to one idea and one voice – should be inevitably overthrown. An author contrasts the self-consciousness of each character separately, not with his own knowledge of that character, enfolding and finalizing the character as if from within, but with a plurality of other consciousnesses, developing in an intense interaction with the author and with one another.[11]

This produces a polyphonic structure in which each individual voice operates in relation to other contrasting and complementary narrative voices but without any over-arching resolution:

> The polyphonic structure is conditional on every participating personage representing its own psychological world – where it is impossible to bring those 'worlds' under one thematic scheme; subject them to a thematic discipline. They need to maintain their autonomy, and therefore they can be united only by means of counterpoint.[12]

As this suggests, the absence of resolution through a single 'thematic scheme' or 'thematic discipline' is crucial to the polyphonic novel. This, however, raises the question of the position and role of the authorial perspective in the polyphonic novel compared to its position and role in a monologic novel, as, for example in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* or Hawthorne's *The Scarlet letter.* Bakhtin hereby draws a clear-cut distinction between the traditional monologic novel and the polyphonic novel on the basis of polyphony as an on-going dialogue between voices of equal importance for the narrative, including the authorial voice. Most importantly, given that polyphony involves voices of equal importance for the narrative transmission, the voice of the omniscient narrator of a traditional monologic Victorian novel (the authorial voice in Bakhtin and Stanzel) loses its monopolistic power and is displaced in favour of a new 'freed' hero/character. Bakhtin argues:

> There is no authorial voice that would monologically control the world from above. Authorial intentions aspire not to oppose this dialogic arrangement with firm definitions of people, ideas, and things, but, on the contrary, namely, to aggravate

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[11] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 115 "Сочетание неслиянных голосов является самоцелью и последней данностью. Всякая попытка представить этот мир ка завершённый в обычном монологическом смысле этого слова, как подчинённый одной идее и одному голосу, неизбежно должна иотерпеть крушение. Автор противопоставляет самосознанию каждого героя в отдельности не своё сознание о нём, объемлющее и замыкающее его извне, но множественность других сознаний, раскрывающихся в напряжённом взаимодействии с ним и друг с другом."

[12] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 340 "Полифоническая структура обусловлена тем, что каждое действующее лицо, как сказано выше, представляет собой особый психологический мир – эти 'миры' нельзя подвести под простую тематическую схему, подвергнуть их тематической дисциплине. Они должны сохранять свою автономию, и поэтому только путём контрапунктического противопоставления можно объединить их в одно полифоническое целое."

colliding voices, to deepen their interruption in the minute detail, to the microscopic structure of events.[13]

Instead, in the polyphonic novel, the hero has a fully valid independent voice:

> Dostoevsky's main characters, in fact, according to this very concept are not only objects of the authorial word, but also subjects of their own directly meaningful words. A character's words therefore are not at all settled here by ordinary characteristics and sjuzhet-pragmatic functions, and they do not express the author's own ideological stand (as they do, for example, in Byron's works). A character's consciousness is represented as another, strange consciousness, but at the same time it does not materialise or close, it does not become a simple object of authorial consciousness.[14]

As a result, Bakhtin observes:

> There comes a character, whose voice is constructed as the voice of the author himself in an ordinary novel, not the voice of one of his characters. A character's word about himself and about the world is also fully valid, as much as for an ordinary author's word; it is not subordinated to an objective image of a character, as one of his characteristics, and it does not serve as a speaking-trumpet of the authorial voice. An exceptional independence in the structure of a literary work belongs to a character (hero); his (her) voice is equal with the authorial voice and conjoins in a specific way with the authorial voice and the fully valid voices of other characters.[15]

As a consequence, Bakhtin provides us with a new definition and a new concept of the novel: the polyphonic novel. For Bakhtin "A novel is constructed not on abstract differences in meaning nor on merely narrative collisions, but on concrete social speech diversity."[16] Elsewhere, Bakhtin defines the polyphonic novel as: "a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a

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[13] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 115 "Авторского голоса, который монологически упорядочивал бы этот мир, нет.Авторские интенции стремлятся не к тому, чтобы противопоставить этому диалогическому разложению твёрдые определения людей, идей и вещей, но, напротив, именно к тому, чтобы обострять столкнувшиеся голоса, чтобуглблять их перебой до мельчайших деталей, до микроскопической структурыявлений."

[14] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 5 "Главные герои Достоевского, действительно, в самом творческом замысле художника не только объекты авторского слова, но и субъекты собственного непосредственно значащего слова. Слово героя, поэтому, вовсе не исчерпывается здесь обычными характеристиками и сюжетно-прагматическими функциями, но и не служит выражением собственной идеологической позиции автора (как у Байрона, например). Сознание героя дано как другое, чужое сознание, но в то же время оно не опредмечивается, незакрывается, не становится простым объектом авторского сознания."

[15] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 5 "(...) появляется герой, голос которого построен так, как сторится голос самого автора в романе обычного типа, а не голос его героя. Слово героя о себе самом и о мире так же полновесно, как обычное авторское слово; оно не подчинено объектному образу героя, как одна из его характеристик, но и не служит рупорм авторского голоса. Ему принадлежит исключительная самостоятельность в структуре произведения, оно звучит как бы рядом с авторским словом и особым образом сочетается с ним и с полноценными же голосами других героев."

[16] *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 412.

diversity of individual voices, artistically organized."[17] Bakhtin suggests that in a polyphonic novel we need to look beyond plot in order to understand the real polyphonic connections:

> Hence it follows, that ordinary sjuzhet-pragmatic connections of the natural order of things or psychological schemata in Dostoevsky's world are insufficient: after all, these connections intend on objectivity, a realization of the characters in the authorial conception; they connect and combine images of characters in the unity of a monologically perceived and comprehended world, and not on the plurality of equally valid consciousnesses with their worlds. The ordinary sjuzhet pragmatics in Dostoevsky's novels plays a secondary role and carries specific not ordinary functions. The final unifying elements, creating the unity of his novelistic world, are of another type; a primary event, being disclosed in his novels, does not give way to sjuzhet-pragmatics's interpretation.[18]

In contrast to the monologic novel, plot in the polyphonic novel is no longer the major formative force in a narrative; instead, contact between the various equal consciousness provides this force with the resulting foregrounding of dialogism and heteroglossia. Accordingly, Chapter One of the thesis addresses the question of plot: it furnishes a detailed discussion of the traditional concept of plot; it then considers extra-plot connections in the polyphonic novel and the role of plot in Faulkner's polyphonic novels. In Chapter Five, I will return to this issue, when I bring into focus plot and narratological dynamics responsible for the polyphonic nature of Faulkner's only trilogy – *The Snopes Trilogy*. What we have here, as Bakhtin persuasively argues, is a revolution in the novelistic genre:

> What in the European and Russian novel before Dostoevsky was the final whole – a unified monologic world of the authorial consciousness, – in Dostoevsky's novel becomes one of the aspects of reality; what bound the whole together, – sjuzhet-pragmatics order and personal style and tone, – becomes here a subordinated moment.[19]

As this suggests, plot in a polyphonic novel is subordinate to heteroglossia:

> Sjuzhet in Dostoevsky is absolutely devoid of finalizing functions. Its aim is to put a character in various circumstances. Disclosing and provoking the character, whilst bringing people (characters) into contact with one another and bringing people

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[17] *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 262.

[18] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 5 "Отсюда следует, что обычные сюжетно-прагматические связи предметного или психологического порядка в мире Достоевского недостаточны: ведь эти связи предпологают объектность, опредмечённость героев в авторском замысле, они связывают и сочетают образы людей в единстве монологически воспринятого и понятого мира, а не множественность равноправных сознаний с их мирами. Обычная сюжетная прагматика в романах Достоевского играет второстепенную роль и несёт особые, а не обычные функции. Последние же скрепы, созидающие единство его романного мира, иного рода; основное событие, раскрываемое его романом, не поддаётся сюжетно-прагматическому истолкованию."

[19] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 25 "То, что в европейском и русском романе до Достоевского было последним целым, - монологический единый мир авторского сознания, - в романе Достоевского становиться частью, элементом Целого; то, что было действительностью, становиться одним из аспектов действительности; то, что связывало целое, - сюжетно-прагматический ряд и личный стиль и тон, - становится здесь подчнённым моментом."

(characters) together in such a way that they don't remain within the frames of contact by means of sjuzhet-related events but go beyond those limits. Genuine connections begin where sjuzhet ends, fulfilling its service function.[20]

These changes to the function of the plot in the polyphonic novel have serious consequences for the novel as a literary form.

In short, what we are to understand by novelistic polyphony is an on-going dialogue produced through contact between the individual narrative voices. This contact between the various consciousnesses is responsible for the dynamic quality of polyphony: "Dynamism as a specific form of interaction between fully-valid and equally important consciousnesses."[21] This can be in turn associated with the unfinalizabilty of polyphony. I will discuss unfinalizability in a later chapter.

I would like to point out, at this stage, that much of Bakhtin's analysis of the polyphonic novel is dependent on the concept of the 'I' and the 'I' as related to the other 'I.' In this context, nothing can be more suggestive than the Bakhtinian stance on the sociolinguistic nature of the human being. Bakhtin points to the role of language in human life: "Language, word – is almost everything in human life." [22] I would suggest that, if we adopt this line of reading, a novel becomes effectively sociolinguistic landscape. Bakhtin argues: "Any concrete utterance is a social act. Being also a single material complex – of a sound, pronunciational, visual – an utterance at the same time is a part of social reality. It organises communication, directed at a response, whilst itself reacting to something. It is a prerequisite of communication."[23] As a result, Bakhtin suggests:

> What is characteristic for the novelistic genre is not the image of a man on its own, but namely an image of language. But, in order to become an artistic image, it should become active speech on speaking lips, being conjoined with an image of a speaking man. If a specific subject of the novelistic prose is a speaking man and his word, laying claim to social recognition and dissemination, as a specific language of different

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[20] M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaja literatura, 1963), p. 42 "Сюжет у Достоевского совершенно лишен каких бы то ни было завершающих функций. Его цель – ставить человека в различные положения. Раскрывающие и провоцирущие его, сводить и сталкивать людей между собою, но так, что в рамках этого сюжетного соприкосновения они не остаются и выходят за их пределы. Подлинные связи начинаются там, где сюжет кончается, выполнив свою служебную функцию."
[21] "(…) динамичность как особая форма взаимодействия между равноправными и равнозначными сознаниями."
[22] "Язык, слово – это почти всё в человеческой жизни."
[23] M. M. Bakhtin, *Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, p. 163 "Но иначе обстоит дело с единичным конкретным высказыванием, хотя бы состоящим и из одного слова. Всякое конкретное высказывние – социальный акт. Будучи также единичным материальным комплексом – звуковым, произносительным, зрительным, высказывание в то же время – част социальной действительности. Оно организует общение, установленное на ответную реакцию, само на что-то реагирует; оно неразрывно вплетено в событие общения."

speech acts (heteroglossia), then the central problem of the artistic representation of language is the problem of an image of language.[24]

Bakhtin introduced here two terms, distinguishing between outer dialogue with the other (внешний диалог) and the world and inner dialogue (внутренний диалог) with oneself. However, as Bakhtin remarks: "The dialogue with oneself interlaces with the dialogue with the other and the specific artistic shape they take on is a transfer from oneself onto another and back."[25] It must be conceded, then, that dialogism is the major characteristic feature of novelistic polyphony. This was first noted by Bakhtin in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics:* "Everything in Dostoevsky's novels comes down to a dialogue, to dialogic oppositions as its center. Everything – a means, dialogue – an aim. One voice does not finish anything and does not resolve anything. Two voices – are the minimum of life, the minimum of being." [26] A new concept thus is posed: a doubled-voiced vision of the hero in an on-going dialogue with himself/herself and the dialogue with his/her environment and other voices in it. Bakhtin argues: "If two strange juxtaposed utterances - not knowing anything about one another - only minimally touch upon the same thematics or thought, they inevitably come into a dialogic relation with one another. They come into contact by means of the same thematics."[27]

The novelty of the Bakhtinian theory of the novel stems also, as I have suggested, from the new concept of the hero arising as a consequence of polyphony, bringing our attention to the changes the hero/character undergoes throughout his fictional life in a polyphonic novel because of his active consciousness and the never-ending processes of self-knowledge and self-definition. Bakhtin accordingly develops the claim that at the heart of heteroglossia lies the hero/character with his/her active consciousness involved in the complex processes of self-definition, which is responsible for the unfinalizabilty of the hero in a polyphonic novel and the unfinalizability of a polyphonic novel itself. Bakhtin writes:

> The protagonist of Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground,* listens to every strange word about himself, looks, as it were, in all mirrors of strange consciousnesses, knows

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[24] M. M. Bakhtin, *Questions of Literature and Aesthetics* (Moscow: Khudozhestvjennaja literatua, 1975), p. 149 "Для романного жанра характерен не образ человека самого по себе, а именно образ языка. Но язык, ятобы стать художественным образом, должен стать речью в говорящих устах, сочетаясь с образом говорящего человека. Если специфический предмет романного жанра – говорящий человек и его слово, претендующее на социальную значимость и распостранение, как особый язык разноречия, - то центральная проблема художественного изображения языка, проблема образа языка."

[25] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 383 "Переплетение диалога с самим собою с диалогом с другим и специфическое художественное оформление этого сплетения: перенос с себя на другого и обратно."

[26] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 103 "Всё в романах Достоевского сходится к диалогу, к диалогическому противопоставлению, как к своему центру. Всё – средство, диалог – цель. Один голос ничего не кончает и ничего не разрешает. Два голоса – minimum жизни, minimum бытия."

[27] "Два сопоставленных чужих высказывния, не знающих ничего друг о друге, если только они хоть краёшком касаются одной и той же темы (мысли), неизбежно вступают друг с другом в диалогические отношения. Они соприкасаются друг с другом на территории общей темы, общей мысли."

all their possible refractions of himself; he knows his own objective definition – neutral, leaning towards a strange consciousness as well as his own consciousness, and takes into consideration the point of the view of third parties. But he also knows that all these definitions, both partial and objective, are in his hands and do not finalize him, namely because he is conscious of them: he can go beyond their limits and make them inadequate. He knows that the final word is his and, at any cost, tries to maintain this final word as his own, a word from his self-consciousness, in order to become within it somebody else than who he is now. Its self-consciousness lives by its unfinalizability, its openness and undecidedness.[28]

As stated in the previous paragraph, unfinalizability in a polyphonic novel takes its origin, first of all, in the self-conscious processes of self-knowledge and self-definition taking place throughout the fictional life of heroes/characters, and is doubled by the on-going dialogue between the many consciousnesses, forming heteroglossia as polyvocality. Paradoxically, however, the nature of polyphony permits a strong individual 'I' *sui generis* with all its individual characteristics. As Bakhtin argues: "An artistic perception is oriented rather towards an image of the speaking man in his individual concreteness."[29] Bakhtin lays particular emphasis on the fact that voices taking part in polyphony cannot be replaced, in the same way that a human being – who is unique due to genetics, social place and place of existence etc. – cannot. Bakhtin argues: "The activity of my self-consciousness is always at work and continuously goes through experiences as my own, it does not let anything go and again revives the experiences that want to fade away and get forgotten - in this is my responsibility, my loyalty to myself in my future, in my own direction."[30] This Bakhtinian theory of the individual has implications for characterisation in fiction: "Self-consciousness, as an artistic dominant in creation of a character, cannot be placed alongside other features of his image; it absorbs these features as its material and deprives them of any defining and finalizing the hero/character power." [31]

Here, following Bakhtin, we can reiterate that any hero can be depicted as self-conscious.

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[28] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 31 "Герой из подполья прислушивается к каждому чужому слову о себе, смотрится как бы во все зеркала чужих сознаний, знает все возможные преломления в них своего образа; он знает и своё объективное опредение, нейтральное как к чужому сознанию, так и к собственному самосознанию, учитывает точку зрения 'третьего.' Но он знает тоже, что все эти определения, как пристрасные, так и объективные, находятся у него в руках и не завершают его именно потому, что он сам сознает их: он может выйти за их пределы и сделать неадекватными. Он знает, что *последнее слово* за ним, и во что бы ни стало стремиться сохранить за собой это последнее слово о себе, слово своего самосознания, чтобы в нём стсть уже не тем, что он есть. Его сасосознание живёт своей незавершенностью, своей незакрытостью и нерешенностью."

[29] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 181 "Художественное познание направлено именно на образ говорящего в его индивидуальной конкретности."

[30] M. M. Bakhtin, *Aesthetics of oral genres*, p. 117 "Активность моего самосознания всегда действенна и непрерывно прходит через переживания как *мои*, она ничего не отпускает от себя и снова оживляет переживания, стремящиесят отпасть и завершиться, - в этом моя ответственность, моя верность себе в своём будущем, в своём направлении."

[31] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 31 "Самосознание, как художественная доминанта построения героя, не может лечь рядом с другими чертами его образа, оно вбирает эти черты в себя, как свой материал, и лишает их всякой определяющей и завершающей героя силы."

In the polyphonic novel these on-going and formative processes never cease, becoming the aim of the hero's life. Thus Bakhtin observes of Dostoevsky's protagonists: "Dostoevsky was looking for such a character, who would be mainly self-conscious, whose entire life would be concentrated on the sole role of knowing thyself and the world around."[32] As a result, the hero/character in a polyphonic novel is in a constant flux. Bakhtin points out: "By its nature, inner (the dialogue with myself) and outer dialogue (the dialogue with others) in Dostoevsky's works destroys all possible finalised characteristics of both the characters and their world. Personality loses its external substantiality – its clear-cut external nature – becoming an event more than being."[33] This has implications for the relationship between dialogue and action – and, as a result, for the form of the novel. The thesis can be put in this way:

> It is quite clear that at the centre of Dostoevsky's artistic world should be dialogue – not dialogue as a means but as an aim in its own right. Dialogue here is not the threshold to action, but an action itself. Dialogue is not a means of disclosure and discovery, as if it were already a ready-made character of a man; no, here man not only reveals himself from outside, and first becomes who he is - not only for others, but for himself alone. To be – it means to communicate dialogically. When dialogue ends – everything ends. That is why dialogue, as a matter of fact, cannot and should not end. Within the structure of a novel, this is revealed as the unfinalizabilty of dialogue, and primarily – as its plain infinity.[34]

According to this perspective, the dialogue with the other and the dialogue with oneself are brought together and are responsible for 'the unfinalizability' of the polyphonic novel. Chapter Two of the thesis offers a discussion of the narrative phenomenon of polyphonic unfinalisabilty using as an example Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying.* I pursue this point further in Chapter Four, in an effort to understand the complex multi-layered nature of dialogism.

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[32] M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, p. 11 "Достоевский искал такаго героя, который был бы сознающим по преимуществу, такаго, вся жизнь которого была бы сосредоточена в чистой функции сознавния себя и мира."

[33] M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, p. 140 "Внутренний и внешний диалог в произведении Достоевского растопляет в своей стихии все без исключения внутренние и внешние определения как самих героев, так и их мира. Личность утрачивет свою грубую внешнюю субстанциональность, свою вещную однозначность, из бытия становится событием."

[34] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 190 "Вполне понятно, что в центре художественного мира Достоевского должен находиться диалог, притом диалог не как средство, а как самоцель. Диалог здесь не преддврие к действию, а само действие. Он не средство раскрытия, обнаружения как бы уже готового характера человека; нет, здесь человек не только проявляет себя вовне, а впервые становится тем, что он есть, повторяем, - не только для других, но и для себя самого. Быть – значит общаться диалогически. Когда диалог кончается – всё кончается. Поэтому диалог в сущности не может и не должен кончиться. В плане романа это дано как незавершимость диалога, а первоначально – как дурная бесконечность его."

Bakhtin proposes: "What is important for Dostoevsky is not how his character presents to the world but how the world presents itself to the character and who he is for himself."[35] He goes on: "Every element of a literary work is inevitably taking place in the intersection between two differently directed replicas (two different voices)."[36] This is why Bakhtin suggests that the hero in a polyphonic novel is, first of all, a speaking and communicating being. Bakhtin remarks: "We don't see him, we hear him."[37] Bakhtin pointed out that a hero in a polyphonic novel differs from that in a monologic novel in that he is not depicted; rather he or she self-depicts. As Bakhtin puts it: "An author of a polyphonic novel has changed his attitude towards the character from a materializing – finalizing perspective to a dialogic one."[38] Thus, it is important to emphasize that a hero in a polyphonic novel is, first of all, a speaking man: "Dostoevsky's character is not authorial image but a fully-valid word, mere voice; we cannot see him – we hear him; everything that we see and know, with the exception of his world, is not essential and is taken from his words as material, or stays outside of it as a provoking and stimulating factor."[39] As a result, Bakhtin suggests: "Dostoevsky does not create a mere image of a finalised character but rather a fully valid voice of a character who speaks about himself and about his world."[40] Elsewhere Bakhtin develops this line of thought, writing: "A word is not an expression of an inner personality; rather, an inner personality is an expressed and tired-out word."[41]

For Bakhtin, the novel is the only truly developing genre and therefore a genre superior to all other literary genres, with the polyphonic novel being the supreme novelistic genre.[42] It is necessary

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[35] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 26 "Достоевскому важно не то, чем его герой является в мире, а то, чем является для героя мир и чем является он сам для себя самого."

[36] "Каждый элемент произведения неизбежно оказывается в точке пересечения голосов, в районе столкновения двух разнонаправлённых реплик."

[37] M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 53 Bakhtin argues: "Dostoevsky's hero is not an objectified image but an autonomous discourse, *pure voice*; we do not see him, we hear him; everything that we see and know apart from his discourse is nonessential and is swallowed up by discourse as its raw material, or else remains outside it as something that stimulates and provokes."

[38] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 456 "(…) полифонический автор сменил своё отношение к герою с овеществляюще-завершающего на диалогическое."

[39] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 31 "Герой Достоевского не образ, а полновесное слово, *чистый голос*; мы его не видим – мы его слышим; всё же, что мы видим и знаем помимо его слова, - не существенно и поглощается словом как его материял, или остается вне его как стимулирущий и првоцирущий фактор."See also *The Dialogic Imagination,* p. 336. "A characteristic of the novel as a genre is not the image of a man in his own right, but a man who is precisely the *image of language.* But in order that language to become an artistic image; it must become speech from speaking lips, conjoined with the image of a speaking person." Or p. 332. "From this follows the decisive and distinctive importance of the novel as a genre: the human being in the novel is first, foremost and always a speaking human being with his own unique ideological discourse, his own language. The fundamental condition, that which makes a novel a novel and that which is responsible for its stylistic uniqueness, is the *speaking person and his discourse."*

[40] M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 47 "Достоевский строит не образ героя, а именно слово героя о себе самом и о своём мире."

[41] МФЯ стр. 151. "(…) не слово является выражением внутренней личности, а внутренняя личность есть выраженное или загнанное во внутрь слово."

[42] *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 3. "The study of the novel as a genre is distinguished by peculiar difficulties. This is due to the unique nature of the object itself: the novel is the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as

here to clarify exactly what is meant by genre: "Genre is a consistent typologically constant form of the whole utterance, a regular pattern for the creation of the whole."[43] Bakhtin does not deny the importance of the category of genre in literary studies. However, he clearly distinguishes between the generic role of genres prior to Dostoevsky's creation of the polyphonic novel. According to Bakhtin, before the polyphonic novel, one could equate the category of genre with a sort of ready-made pattern or formula that writers followed whilst composing their work. Bakhtin argues: "For a writer-creator genre serves as an inner pattern - a great artist wakens in it its notional possibilities."[44] Thus, Bakhtin provides the following definition of genre: "Genre is a norm, designating form, a structure of the whole literary work. In the broader sense, we can, of course, talk about genre in other fields, perhaps, social genre, speech genre, - in short, genre determines the form of the whole literary work and determines it prescriptively."[45] Bakhtin, however, questioned the applicability of this concept of genre to the novel and the generic power of the polyphonic novel: "Literary systems are comprised of canons, and 'novelization' is fundamentally anticanonical. It will not permit generic monologue."[46] Bakhtin's intention here is partly to show how the polyphonic novel opens new horizons by incorporating many literary and oral genres such as, for example, dialogue, confession, tale, diary, and letter. As a result, Bakhtin established what he called 'the rule of genre inclusiveness' in the novel: "[T]he novel can include, ingest, devour other genres and still retain its status as a novel, but other genres cannot include novelistic elements without impairing their own identity as epics, odes or any other fixed genre."[47] In this context, he draws our attention to the role of other genres incorporated in the novel: "The role of these incorporated into a novel genres is so great that it might seem as though a novel lacks its primary approach to reality and needs a preliminary processing of reality by other genres, that the novel itself is only a syncretic union of such primary oral genres."[48] By making

yet uncompleted. The forces that define it as a genre are at work before our eyes: the birth and development of the novel as a genre take place in the full light of the historical day. The generic skeleton of the novel is still far from having hardened, and we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities." See also M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 3, p 423.

[43] M. M. Bakhtin, *Theory of speech genres*, "Жанр – это состоявшая типологически устойчивая форма целого высказывания, устойчивый тип построения целого."

[44] "Для писателя – ремеле жанр служит внешним шаблоном, большой же художник прбуждаёт в нём заложенные в нём смысловые возможности."

[45] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 3, p. 423 "Жанр – это норма, но определяющая форму, стрруктуру целого литературного произведения. В более широком смысле можно, конечно, говорить о жанре в других областях, может быть, бытового жапра, жанра высказывания, - одним словом, жанр определяет форму целого, но определяет её нормативно."

[46] *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. xxxi. From Introduction.

[47] *The Dialogic Imagination*, from Introduction, p. xxxii.

[48] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 49 "Роль этих входящих в роман жанров настолько велика, что может казаться, будто роман лишен своего первичного словесного подхода к действительности и нуждается в предварительной обработке действительности иными жанрами, сам же он – только вторичное синретическое объединение таких первичных словесных жанров." p. 320.See also The Dialogic

this observation, Bakhtin proposed the following paradox: on the one hand, the ability of the novel to incorporate other genres calls in question its canonical, and therefore, generic powers; on the other hand, it opens new non-standardized horizons in the theory of the novel as a developing genre.[49] In Chapters Thee and Four, I undertake an examination of primary genres incorporated in *Absalom, Absalom!* and examine at considerable length Faulkner's polyphonic novel as a genre *per excellence*.

Bakhtin writes on heteroglossia in the context of the novel's ability to incorporate other genres. He begins by affirming:

> A novel allows inclusion in its body of various other genres, both literary (framed short-stories, lyrical plays, poems, dramatic scenes, and alike) and non-literary (moral, rhetorical, scientific, religious and others). In principle, any genre might be incorporated in the structure of the novel, and, in fact, it is very difficult to find a genre that could not be incorporated in the structure of the novel, and, in fact, it is very difficult to find a genre that could not be incorporated in a novel. [50]

Having said this, he goes on to note: "Genres incorporated in a novel usually maintain in it their structural elasticity and independence, as well as their linguistic and stylistic characteristics."[51] In short, the incorporated genres strengthen the heteroglossic quality of the novel:

> All these incorporated-in-the-novel genres bring to it their own languages and therefore divide into layers the unity of the novel and deepen anew its heteroglossia. Languages of non-literary genres, incorporated in the novel, often gain such a meaning that the introduction of a conventionalist genre (for example, epistolary) marks a new era not only in the history of a novel, but also in the history of a literary language.[52]

In other words, the polyphonic novel is characterised by its generic and dialogic openness.

Imagination on "the most basic and fundamental forms for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel – incorporated genres."

[49] See also M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 400 on the impact of novelization on incorporated genres and novel as the only truly developing genre. And p. 417 and 422.

[50] M. M. Bakhtin, *Questions of Literature and Aesthetics* (Moscow: Khudoshestvjennaja literature, 1975), p. 134 "Наконец, остановимся ещё на одной из самых основных и существенных форм ввода и организации разноречия в романе – на вводных жанрах. Роман допускает включение в свой состав различных жанров, как художественных (вставные новеллы, лирические песы, поэмы, драматические сценки и т.п), так и внехудожественных (бытовые, риторические, научные, религиозные и др.). Принципяльно любой жанр может быть включён в конструкцию романа, и фактически очень трудно найти такой жанр, который не был бы когда-либо включён в роман. Введённые в роман жанры обычно сохраняют в нём свою конструктивную упругость и самостоятельность и своё языкавое и стилистическое своеобразие."

[51] Ibidem.

[52] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 49 "Все эти входящие в роман жанры вносят в него свои языки и потому расслояют языковые единство романа и по-новому углубляют его разноречивость. Языки внехудожественных жанров, вводимых в роман, часто получают такое значение, что введение соответствующего жанра (например, эпистолярного) создает эпоху не только в истории романа, но и в истории литературного языка. "

In the next chapter, I will begin my exploration of Faulkner's polyphonic novel by attending to the organisational role of the Faulknerian plot in the narrative structures of his novels. I will explore how the polyphonic narrative constituted by the competition of the many consciousnesses of homodiegetic (first-person) narrators relies on a simple plot. In order to do this, I propose to explore the relationship between the story, plot and discourse in *As I Lay Dying.*

Chapter II

The categories of plot and character in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*.

Wesley Morris and Barbara Alverson Morris claim that: "Faulkner's concern (…) is not classically mimetic, not with the clear articulation of experience through a well-made plot or a realistic description of a setting. Rather, his emphasis falls on the modern issues of narrative voice, expression, and communication."[1] This characteristic of Faulkner's fiction is implied already by the very nature of the polyphonic novel. However, the research to-date does not take into account the organisational role of the Faulknerian plot in the narrative structures of his novels, and the way a simple plot facilitates understanding of the polyphonic narrative constituted by the competition of the many consciousnesses of homodiegetic (first-person) narrators.[2] André Bleikasten first highlighted this correlation: "For what strikes us immediately is less the story itself than the way it is told, or rather the contrast between the tale and the telling, between the simplicity of the anecdote and the sophistication of the narrative method."[3] In this chapter, I propose to explore the relationship between the story[4], plot[5] and discourse[6] in *As I Lay Dying.* This chapter proposes a definition of narrative that rests on the idea of narrative as, first and foremost, a correlation between a story and discourse.[7]

What is at issue in this chapter and the following chapters is not so much the opposition of the two Aristotelian categories of plot and character as their equivalence in Faulkner's polyphonic novel. A close analysis of the narrative in *As I Lay Dying* will show the equivalence of the category of

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[1] Wesley Morris and Barbara Alverson Morris, *Reading Faulkner* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 197. For a similar account of the dialogic nature of Faulkner's narrative, see also p. 10.

[2] André Bleikasten, *Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying'* (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 66. Bleikasten observes of *As I Lay Dying*: "each monologue takes its place in a polyphonic ensemble": "The multiplicity of voices and eyes and the even greater multiplicity of relationships established between them make each character in the novel both subject and object: the focal point of perception in one section is simply a perceived image in the next.", pp. 66-67.

[3] Bleikasten, p. 3.

[4] "The content plane of narrative as opposed to its expression plane or discourse; the 'what' of a narrative as opposed to its 'how'; the narrated as opposed to the narrating; the fiction as opposed to the narration (in Ricardou's sense of the terms); the existents and events represented in a narrative. Also: "The fabula (or basic material arranged into a plot) as opposed to the sjuzhet or plot." Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), p. 91.

[5] "The main incidents of a narrative; the outline of situations and events (thought of as distinct from the characters involved in them or the themes illustrated by them). Also: "The arrangement of incidents; mythos; sjuzhet; the situations and events are presented to the receiver." Prince, p. 71.

[6] Prince, p. 21. "The expression plane of narrative as opposed to its content plane or story; the 'how' of a narrative as opposed to its 'what'; the narrating as opposed to the narrated; the narration as opposed to the fiction (in Ricardou's sense of the terms)."

[7] Contrast. Joseph W. Reed, Jr. *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 8. Reed argues that one of the principles of composition in Faulkner is: "the telling never becomes the tale." Reed gives *Absalom, Absalom!,* with its narrative complexity, as an example to this rule.

plot, as a set of meaningful narrative events, and the category of person[8]. In addition, the equivalence of categories of plot and character in *As I Lay Dying* also helps to locate *As I Lay Dying* within the larger context of the Faulkner's canon. For the purposes of this thesis, the focus will be given to the consequences this equivalence has for the entire narrative structure of *As I Lay Dying.* In other words, I will argue that the novelty and complexity of the narrative structure in *As I Lay Dying* is, first of all, due to the fact that categories of plot and person are of equal importance throughout the novel. This argument links up with Hugh M. Ruppersburg's analysis of Faulkner's novels. Ruppersburg writes that: "Faulkner conceived of fiction as an organic form: his novels and stories rely upon a deep, inherent relationship among structure, language, theme, plot, and character. All narrative elements interdepend."[9] I would also like to suggest some explanation for it. As Ilse Dusoir Lind argues, Faulkner's novels are characterized by what she calls a specific 'double-focus' of narrative.[10] Lind backs up her argument with *Absalom, Absalom!*: "The Sutpen tragedy is the novel's centre of dramatic interest, but the narrators are the centre of the novel. In the execution of this double focus exercises the full play of the genius."[11] The result, as Minter argues, is: "a novel almost perfectly balanced between two different kinds of intensity – between great dramatic moments, on one side, and great psychological and intellectual complexities, on the other."[12] The same holds true for all the novels under analysis in this thesis.[13]

Thus, in the first part of this chapter, I shall focus mainly on plot and its undiminished role in the construction of the Faulknerian narrative. I will also address some crucial aspects of the classical (traditional) approach to narrative with the emphasis on the Aristotelian theory of primacy of plot, prior to the core discussion of the equivalence of the categories of plot and the character in *As I Lay*

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[8] William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (New York: Vintage International, 1990). All the references made to *As I Lay Dying* are to this edition.

[9] Hugh M. Ruppersburg, *Voice and Eye in Faulkner's Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983). See also Catherine Patten's 'The Narrative Design of *As I Lay Dying'* in *William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying: A Critical Casebook,* ed. Diane L. Cox (New York and London: Garland Publishing, INC, 1985), pp. 27-28. Patten mentions the following narrative elements: 'linear chronology of events; a symmetrical plot design,' a delivering subject revealed through the character's perceptions of events.' See also Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 55.

[10] Ilse Dusoir Lind, 'The design and meaning of *Absalom, Absalom!,'* in *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*, ed. by Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1960), p. 281. See also William H. Rueckert, *Faulkner from Within: Destructive and Generative Being in the Novels of William Faulkner* (West Lafayette; Indiana: Parlor Press, 2004), p. 342. See also David Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* (Baltimore; Madison; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 146 and 150.

[11] Lind, p. 281. Cf. The comparison of Addie and Sutpen as "the shaping centres at the heart of the novel" in Patrick Samway, S.J, 'Truths More Intense than Knowledge: Notes on Faulkner and Creativity,' in *Faulkner and the Southern Renaissance: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha,* 1981, ed. by Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1982), pp. 245-66 (p. 262).

[12] Minter, p. 153.

[13] The main ramification regarding the equivalence of categories of plot and character in Faulkner's polyphonic novel is the novel as a mixture of 'diegesis' (invoked by dialogues between homodiegetic narrators put in the monologues) and 'mimesis' (by means of plot). See telling vs. showing, in Prince, p.96.

Dying. Here I will also consider the ways in which categories of plot and character come together in *As I Lay Dying*, contributing to the unity of the narrative. At this early stage of this chapter, however, it is perhaps useful to show that plot (as a sequence of events and a part of story) is an essential element of any narrative. My goal in the second part of this chapter is more limited: it is to present the historical and generic consequences of the Aristotelian definition of plot as "knowing of the destination"[14] in any type of Faulknerian narrative, including a-chronological ones like, for example, *Absalom, Absalom!* I will then move on to a discussion of the role of plot in the construction and shaping of Faulkner's polyphonic narrative. I will argue that the fabula/sjuzhet distinction, as made by the Russian Formalists, is of particular importance for the analysis of works by Faulkner, where frequently we encounter meaningful dislocations of chronology. This will lead to the question of the linearity of plot despite the fragmentary nature of narrative in *As I Lay Dying*. What needs to be explored is Faulkner's undeniable achievement in *As I Lay Dying* whereby he keeps a very simple linear plot despite of the constant change in point of view – pertaining to each of the fifteen homodiegetic narrators who happen to be mostly the family, friends, and neighbours of the novel's protagonist, Addie Bundren.

In the third part of this chapter, I will deal with the following aspects of plot: its chronology; its logical patterns; its structure; and its main parts and their role in narrative. I will begin by introducing the theoretical framework of Prince's dual logic of narrative, which expresses the syntactic type of logic and the semantic logic in narrative, as well as their correlation. Next, I will explore the ways the fifteen narrators in *As I Lay Dying* perceive themselves and their individual lives in relation to the novel's protagonist. Michael Holquist describes the Bakhtinian concept of a character in a polyphonic novel as follows: "The self (…) is an event with a structure."[15] In saying this Holquist stresses the character's will and power to action. This is precisely the case with Faulkner's polyphonic narrative. In defining 'the how' (the structure) of a multi-focalized narrative in *As I Lay Dying*, I will offer an analysis of the characters-focalizers as characters-narrators. In other words, we will move from 'characters who see and observe' in *As I Lay Dying* to a different function of the same characters – 'the telling' role. This question is important because of the changes to the role of the character (hero)

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[14] Kieran Egan, 'What is a Plot?' *New Literary History* 9.3 (1978), 455-473 (p. 400).

[15] *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His Word* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p.21. "The time and space of self and other." Cf. Tomashevsky's approach to the concept of hero: "Герой вовсе не является необходимой принадлежностью фабулы. Фабула, как система мотивов, может и вовсе обойтись без героя и его характеристики. Герой является результатом сюжетного оформления материала и является с другой стороны средством нанизывания мотивов, с другой – как бы воплощённой и олицетварённой мотивировкой связи мотивов." Trans. "A character is not at all a necessary element of fabula. Fabula, as a system of motifs, can entirely do without a hero and its characteristics. A character is a result of the shaping of material by sjuzhet and is, on the one hand, a means of confining the motifs, and, on the other hand – as if incarnation and personified motivation for connecting the motifs." *Формальный Метод в Литературоведении*, стр. 186. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, p. 186.

in Faulkner's polyphonic novel and the specific autonomy Faulkner's characters gain through self-depicting themselves. Here we need to begin by taking into consideration the type of narrative operating in *As I Lay Dying*. I will first discuss *As I Lay Dying* as an interior monologue novel with clearly distinguishable voices of the fifteen first-person narrators.

2.1. *As I Lay Dying* as an interior-monologue novel.

As I will demonstrate, *As I Lay Dying* is a polyphonic novel with its characteristic heteroglossia and dialogism. There has, however, been some confusion of the interior monologues used here with the stream of consciousness. As a result, many critics have mistaken *As I Lay Dying* for a stream of consciousness novel in the Joycian mode, following the model of *Ulysses*. [16] This misconception stems from the striking similarities in characteristics shared by interior monologue and stream of consciousness. Stanzel writes on the technique of interior monologue: "Interior monologue permits extensive characterization of the idiosyncrasy of consciousness."[17] Examples to illustrate the different modes of thought peculiar to individual characters are abundant in *As I Lay Dying.* For example, we are given the following representation of the most sensitive among the Bundren children, Darl, trying to understand his brother's lack of response to the maternal death:

> *Jewel's hat droops limp about his neck, channelling water onto the soaked*
> *towsack tied about his shoulders as, ankle-deep in the running ditch, he pries*
> *with a slipping two-by-four, with a piece of rotting log for fulcrum, at*
> *the axle. Jewel. I say, she is dead, Jewel. Addie Bundren is dead* (p. 52).

We see Jewel's similar lack of emotions when he loses his mother (pp. 93-94). It is only when Jewel loses his beloved horse that we begin to understand that this is simply the way Jewel copes with the loss (pp. 186-97). Another example relates to Vardaman's child's consciousness. Vardaman's world encompasses such subjects as trains, sweets, food and bananas (pp. 65-66). It also includes the social and economic discrepancies between rich town children and poor Vardaman Bundren. Each of the monologues is very personal and very distinctive.

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[16] Dorothy J. Hale points out that some literary critics do not consider *As I Lay Dying* an interior monologue, '*As I Lay Dying*: Heterogenous Discourse,' *Novel: A Forum on Fiction,* Vol. 23. No. 1. (Autumn, 1989), pp. 5-23. See, for example, Eric Larsen 'The Barrier of Language. The Irony of Language in Faulkner,' *Modern Fiction Studies* 13 (1967), pp. 21-27; Paul R. Lilly Jr. 'Caddy and Addie: Speakers of Faulkner's Impeccable Language,' *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 3 (1997), pp. 170-182; David M. Monaghan 'The Single Narrator of *As I Lay Dying*,' *Modern Fiction Studies,* 18 (1972), pp. 213-20. See also Daniel J. Singal on the intermittent stream of consciousness in *As I Lay Dying*. Chapter 5. "Into the Void," in *William Faulkner: The Making of a Modernist* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p. 145. See also Eric J. Sundquist in Cheryl Lester '*As They Lay Dying:* Rural Depopulation and Social Dislocation as a Structure of Feeling,' *The Faulkner Journal* (2005), pp. 28-50 (p. 37). Sundquist rejects the very possibility of an interior monologue as a major narrative technique in *As I Lay Dying*. See also Eric J. Sundquist, *Faulkner: The House Divided* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), p. 30.

[17] Stanzel, ibidem.

Above all, however, it is important to recognize that the technique of interior monologue in *As I Lay Dying* is fully controlled by the experientiality of the death and the journey that the Bundrens undertake, as well as their individual goals, and their qualities as homodiegetic narrators.[18] What we encounter in *As I Lay Dying* has been best described by Linda Welshimer Wagner: "Here Faulkner works with fifteen voices, separating speeches by characters' names, almost as if in a dramatic scenario (...) Faulkner manages to give a nearly chronological plot line instead of returning to the beginning with each character's story."[19] In other words, the reader gets access to the thoughts of the fifteen narrators but this is not really what is generally understood by the stream of consciousness method based on free-association *per se.* As Sonja Bašić argues: "In stream of consciousness the convention has the mind racing back and forth between points in time, arguments and images, without syntacting ordering or perpetration. More conventional narration usually relies more strongly on chronology, while a stream of consciousness ignores it on purpose."[20] The monologues are organized in such a manner that the events evoked in them, when taken together, establish a chronological plot line. As a result, *As I Lay Dying* does not belong to the stream of consciousness category of novelistic prose. The most crucial indication and implication of stream of consciousness are always a-chronological narrative, suggesting subconscious cognitive processes at work in the narrative. This is definitely not the case in *As I Lay Dying* where any suggestion of a-chronology is clearly the result of the text fragmentation rather than anything else, while the individual accounts are organised along a chronological line.

We can also approach this classificatory question from another angle. Catherine Patten, for example, emphasizes the conscious dimension to the interior monologue technique in *As I Lay Dying*: "Some characters assume importance only through what they tell about others. Their sections usually remain on a conscious descriptive level."[21] Cora Tull is such a character. Her role is mainly to characterize the Bundrens, as she does, for example, when she talks with her husband about the reasons behind the Bundrens' burial journey to Jefferson (pp. 21-25). Cora is clearly suspicious of both the reasons for this trip and Anse's goals. She spreads gossip and speaks of how others see the Bundrens. She gives her own point of view on the Bundrens as a family:

> Not like Addie Bundren dying alone, hiding her pride and her broken heart.
> Glad to go. Lying there with her head propped up so she could watch Cash
> building the coffin, having to watch him so he would not skimp on it, like as

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[18] See Teun A. von. Dijk on 'purpose' as a basic feature of a rational action. 'Action, Action Description, and Narrative,' *New Literary History,* Vol. 6. No. 2. *On Narrative and Narratives* (1975), pp. 273-94 (p. 280).

[19] Linda Welshimer Wagner, 'Faulkner's Fiction: Studies in Organic Form *The Journal of Narrative Technique,*' vol. 1. No.1 (1971), 1-14 (p. 7).

[20] 'Faulkner's Narrative Discourse. Mediation and Mimesis,' in *New Directions in Faulkner Studies*, ed. by Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1984), pp. 302-22.

[21] Sonia Basic, 'William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*: The Narrative Design,' in *William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying: A Critical Casebook,* ed. by Diane L. Cox (New York and London: Garland Publishing, INC, 1985,) p. 26.

not, with those men not worrying about anything except if there was time to earn another three dollars before the rain come and the river got too high to get across it. Like as not, if they hadn't decided to make that last load, they would have loaded her into the wagon on a quilt and crossed the river first and then stopped and give her time to die what Christian death they would let her. (pp. 23-24)

A passage like this tells us less about Cora than it does about the Bundrens. Cora's role here is clearly to depict the Bundrens as a dysfunctional family. The focus is not so much Cora's consciousness *per se* as the perspective it provides onto the Bundrens.

However, as Patten argues: "Before trusting any statement or perception in *As I Lay* Dying, the reader must ask who makes it and under what circumstances. In addition, he must ask whether it represents conscious thought or some deeper level of the self."[22] The question that then comes to mind has to do with the connection between *As I Lay Dying* as an interior monologue novel and a polyphonic novel. Another major weakness of the many interpretations of *As I Lay Dying* is that they fail to consider *As I Lay Dying* as a polyphonic novel with an on-going dialogue between many consciousnesses at its heart.[23] Such views rest on the assumption that *As I Lay Dying* is a novel depicting "the fundamental isolation inherent in the structure of consciousness."[24] However, as Bakhtin explains: "[C]onsciousness never gravitates toward itself but is always found in an intense relationship with another consciousness."[25] The examples given at the beginning of this section support this thesis. The novel puts emphasis on the Bundren family as a social group and the isolation of the individual characters has to be seen within this social context. Darl is concerned about Jewel's response to his mother's death; Cora thinks about Addie dying while watching to make sure that Cash doesn't skimp on the coffin and in relation to the rest of the family making calculations about the last load. Bakhtin argues, "The important thing in (…) polyphony is precisely what happens *between various consciousnesses*, that is, their interaction and interdependence."[26] That is precisely what is foregrounded here. Similarly, Bakhtin writes on the idea of an interior monologue as follows: "Purely private, speechless, isolated experience – the realm of the mystic, the visionary – is essentially impossible *as experience.*"[27] Elsewhere Bakhtin explains this social conception of subjectivity: "To be – it means to be for the other and through the other – for oneself. A human being does not have his

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[22] Patten, p. 27.
[23] See, for example, Joseph W. Reed (1973), and Bleikasten (1973).
[24] See, for example, Calvin Bedient, 'Pride and Nakedness: *As I Lay Dying*,' in *William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying: A Critical Casebook*, ed. Diane L. Cox (New York and London: Garland Publishing, INC, 1985), p. 98. See also Calvin Bedient, 'Pride and Nakedness: *As I Lay Dying*,' *Modern Language Quarterly* XXIX (1968).
[25] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 32.
[26] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 36.
[27] MPL, p. 29.

sovereign inner territory, he is entirely and always on the border, looking into thyself; he either looks into the other's eyes or through the other's eyes."[28] Bakhtin's theory of polyphony rests on the assertion of a man as a social being.[29] Bakhtin argues that 'the individual is constituted by the social, that consciousness is a matter of dialogue and juxtaposition with a social other."[30] Drawing on Bakhtin, I will show that in *As I Lay Dying*, the organization of the sections is designed to depict the three heteroglossic phenomena: the momentary state of individual consciousness; the dialogue between consciousnesses; and the consciousness as a matter of the confrontation with the social other. I would like to propose three examples of such phenomena, one taken from Darl's section, and the other two from Dewey Dell's sections. The most striking examples of the momentary state of individual consciousness can be found in the scenes depicting the Bundren children's emotional reactions to death, for example, Dewey Dell's thoughts:

> From the back porch I cannot see the barn. Then the sound of Cash's
> sawing comes in from that way. It is like a dog outside the house, going
> back and forth around the house to whatever door you come to, waiting
> to come in. He said I worry more than you do and I said You dont know
> what worry is so I cant worry. I try to but I cant think long enough to worry.
> I light the kitchen lamp. The fish, cut into jagged pieces, bleeds quietly in
> the pan. I put it into the cupboard quick, listening into the hall, hearing.
> It took her ten days to die; maybe she dont know it is yet. Maybe she wont
> go until Cash. Or maybe until Jewel. I take the dish of greens from
> the cupboard and the bread pan from the cold stove, and I stop, watching
> the door. (p. 59)

Several things are notable in this paragraph: the sensory perception on the levels of vision and hearing and the way this brings about, by means of association, deeper conscious thought processes; the way the memory works and how we remember the words of others; and, finally, how the three time dimensions connect in the consciousness. This sounds like stream of consciousness, but it actually brings us close to the dialogue between consciousnesses. As in some of the passages already quoted, the emphasis is again placed on eyes and seeing. This is connected here to the Bakhtinian concept of time-space and the Bundrens sharing the same social circle – the family house and the events that take place there:

> And so it was because I could not help it. It was then, and then I saw Darl
> and he knew. He said he knew without the words like he told me that ma

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[28] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works,* p. 126. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*. Михаил Михайлович Бахтин, *Собрание Сочиниений в семи томах*, Т.1. *Философская эстетика 1920-х годов*, стр. 126 и *Собрание Сочинений в семи томах*, Т. 5, *Работы 1940-х и начала 1960-х годов*, стр. 344. "Быть – значит быть для другого и через него – для себя. У человека нет внутренней суверенной территории, он весь и всегда на границе, смотря внутрь себя, он смотрит в глаза другому или глазами другого."
[29] Bakhtin cited in Susan Stewart, 'Shouts on the Street: Bakhtin's Anti-Linguistics,' in *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work*, ed. by Gary Saul Morson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 43.
[30] Stewart, p. 43.

is going to die without words, and I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with the words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us. But he said he did know and I said 'Are you going to tell pa are you going to kill him?' without the words I said it and he said 'Why?' without the words. And that's why I can talk to him with knowing with hating because he knows. (p. 27)

As this suggests, the Bundrens are presented as witnesses to each other's lives. This relates to the question of the consciousness as a matter of the confrontation with the social other, which can be illustrated by Darl reading Dewey Dell's thoughts:

Dewey Dell stoops and slides the quilt from beneath them and draws it up over them to the chin, smoothing it down, drawing it smooth. Then without looking at pa she goes around the bed and leaves the room.
She will go out where Peabody is, where she can stand in the twilight and look at his back with such an expression that, feeling her eyes and turning, he will say: I would not let it grieve me, now. She was old, and sick too. Suffering more than we knew. She couldn't have got well. (…) and she looking at him, saying You could do so much for me if you just would. If you just knew. I am I and you are you and I know it and you dont know it and you could do so much for me if you just would and if you just would then I could tell you and then nobody would have to know it except you and me And Darl. (p. 51)

What I am going to propose is that the narrative in *As I Lay Dying* is mostly of a purely self-aware and non-reflexive nature as the primary consciousness itself. From the above examples, we can see that there is clearly no distance between the events and knowledge about them. This has far-reaching implications. I want to demonstrate how this is appropriate to *As I Lay Dying* as a polyphonic novel. For example, in Cora's section, we see Cora's point of view on Addie's betrayal of Anse and her affair with the Reverend Whitfield and the way Cora condemns Addie's 'sinful' action (pp. 166-168). Then, we have Addie's section (pp. 196-76), where we see that Addie clearly disregards what Cora thinks. Afterwards, we see the Reverend's feeling of guilt and his attempts to tell Anse the truth about his wife. For Bakhtin, a monologue as such does not exist. The same can be said of Faulkner in the novels looked at in this dissertation. Ken Hirschkop describes the Bakhtinian term 'dialogism' as 'the natural state of being of language *sui generis*.'[31] Bakhtin argues: "Any speech ends, but this does not happen in a vacuum, giving place to another's speech (even though only an internal one), waiting for a response, a result and similar"[32] and "Any increase in expression of the personality of a speaking

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[31] Ken Hirschkop, 'A Response to the Forum on Mikhail Bakhtin,' in *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work*, ed. by Gary Saul Morson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 25. See also Gary Saul Morson, 'Dialogue, Monologue, and the Social: A Reply to Ken Hirschkop,' *Critical Inquiry*, 11 (1985), 679-86 (p. 83).

[32] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 5, p. 129. Михаил Михайлович Бахтин, *Собрание Сочинений в семи томах*, Т. 5, *Работы 1940-х и начала 1960-х годов* (Москва: Русские Словари, 1997), стр. 129. "Всякая

person in a monologic speech (i.e. everywhere, where we begin to vividly feel an individual personality of a speaker) results in an increase of his dialogic potential."[33] Writing about the Bakhtinian concept of dialogue, Gary Saul Morson describes it as exclusively "the product of a complex social situation."[34] In other words, according to Bakhtin, as Morson points out, "a variety of other complex social factors share all utterances from the outset."[35] For Bakhtin, monologue is an 'illusion.'[36] Bakhtin writes on monologue as follows: "Any utterance – the finished, written utterance not expected – makes a response to something and is calculated to be responded in return. It is but one link in a continuous chain of speech performances."[37] Morson concludes: "In this sense of the word 'dialogue,' there can be no 'monologue,' because language is held to be dialogic universally and by definition."[38]

For Bakhtin, 'consciousness' originates in society – in many consciousnesses. Bakhtin explains 'the dialogic nature of consciousness' by reference to 'the dialogic nature of human life itself':

> Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium.[39]

In the same way, in *As I Lay Dying* other pieces of dialogue are incorporated into the interior monologues of the fifteen homodiegetic narrators, as for example, in the following family chat between Anse and his youngest son, Vardaman, as given by Darl:

> Vardaman comes around the house, bloody as a hog to his knees, and that
> ere fish chopped up with the axe like as not, or maybe throwed away for
> him to lie about the dogs et it. Well, I reckon I aint no call to expect no more
> of him than of his man-growed brothers. He comes along, watching
> the house, quiet, and sits on the steps. 'Whew,' he says. 'I'm pure tired.'
> 'Go wash them hands,' I say. But couldn't no woman strove harder than
> Addie to make them right, man and boy: I'll say that for her. 'It was full of
> blood and guts as a hog,' he says. But I just cant seem to get no heart into
> anything, with this here weather sapping me, too. 'Pa,' he says, 'is ma sick
> some more?' 'Go wash them hands,' I say. But I just cant seem to get no
> heart into it. (p. 38)

речь кончается, но не пустотой, а даёт место чужой речи (хотя бы и внутренней), ожидание ответа, эффекта и т.п."

[33] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 5, p. 129. Михаил Михайлович Бахтин, *Собрание Сочинений в семи томах*, Т. 5, *Работы 1940-х и начала 1960-х годов* (Москва: Русские Словари, 1997), стр. 129. "Всякое усиление экспресии личности говорящего в монологической речи (т.е. всюду, где мы начинаем живо ощущать индивидуальную личность говорящего) есть усиление её диалогических потенций."

[34] Morson, 'A Reply,' p. 83.

[35] Morson, 'A Reply,' p. 83.

[36] Bakhtin, cited in Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world (*London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 59.

[37] Ibidem.

[38] Morson, 'A Reply,' p. 83.

[39] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 293.

Here Darl provides a description of the setting and then gives direct quotations of the conversations in the family. Following Bakhtin and Richard Pearce, I would suggest that my description of *As I Lay Dying* as a polyphonic novel with an interior-monologue technique should be changed to 'an interior dialogue novel,' predicated on 'contact among consciousnesses.'[40] Thus, we see, for example, the net of social connections within the Bundren family as they observe each other on daily basis in passages like the following:

> He saws again, his elbow flashing slowly, a thin thread of fire running along the edge of the saw, lost and recovered at the top and bottom of each stroke in unbroken elongation, so that the saw appears to be six feet long, into and out of pa's shabby and aimless silhouette. 'Give me that plank,' Cash says. 'No; the other one.' He puts the saw down and comes and picks up the plank he wants, sweeping pa away with the long swinging gleam of the balanced board.' The air smells like sulphur. Upon the impalpable plane of it their shadows form as upon a wall, as though like sound they had not gone very far away in falling but had merely congealed for a moment, immediate and musing. Cash works on, half turned into the feeble light, one tight and one pole-thin arm braced, his face sloped into the light with a rapt, dynamic immobility above his tireless elbow. Below the sky sheet-lighting slumbers lightly; against it in the trees, motionless, are ruffled out to the last twig, swollen, increased as though quick with young (p. 76).

This is clearly not interior monologue, but rather interior dialogue and the contact of consciousnesses. This is typical of a great part of the narrative, which is given to these family conversations.

2.2. The classical (traditional) approach to narrative and narrativity and the Aristotelian emphasis on plot.

The basic structure of *As I Lay Dying* is constituted by the Bakhtinian chronotope of the road, with the Bundrens on the road for ten days, travelling to Jefferson where they intend to bury their mother, thus fulfilling her last wish. The journey-related incidents – the Bundrens' adventures with flood and fire – constitute the major events of the plot. Faulkner himself said: "I simply imagined a group of people and subjected them to the simple universal natural catastrophes, which are flood and fire, with a simple natural motive to give direction to their progress."[41] Bleikasten observes that the forces of nature, the elements of water and fire, become the opponent whereas the community provides assistance to the Bundrens on their way to Jefferson. In this way, according to Bleikasten, the community serves the purposes of the archetypal helper.[42] For example, Tull describes the ways

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[40] Richard Pearce, *The Politics of Narration: James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf* (Rutger's University Press, 1991), p. 18. Pearce discusses interior dialogue in *Absalom, Absalom!* and internal monologues as the 'internal and secret discourses of heroes.'

[41] Faulkner cited in Eric Mottram, 'Law, Justice and Justification,' in *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Fiction,* ed. by A. Robert Lee (London: Vision Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 85-127 (p. 115).

[42] See pp. below on Propp's functions.

the community tries to aid the Bundrens by first trying to persuade them not to cross the flooded river, and then – when these attempts fail – by helping them cross successfully and giving them the following advice:

> 'That bridge wont stand a whole lot of water,' I said. 'Has somebody told Anse about it?'
> 'I told him,' Quick said. 'He says he reckons them boys has heard and unladed and are on the way back by now. He says they can load up and get across.'
> 'He better go on and bury her at New Hope,' Armstid said. 'That bridge is old. I wouldn't monkey with it' (p. 85).

Bleikasten's interpretation of the plot in *As I Lay Dying* is based on Greimasian (A.J.Greimas) principles and the Greimasian "actantial model"[43] of the plot. However, by identifying *As I Lay Dying* with folk tales or myths, Bleikasten ignores the Aristotelian dimension to the plot of *As I Lay Dying*'s in favour of an archetypal interpretation of the action schemata and rejects the very possibility of the Bakhtinian extra-plot connections in the forms of dialogism and heteroglossia.[44] In doing so, Bleikasten disregards the complexity of the reversal-pattern and recognition-pattern in *As I Lay Dying*, and the important improvements and innovations to the category of character in *As I Lay Dying* that will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

Aristotle distinguishes six generic parts, which are as follow: plot, characters, language, thought, spectacle and melody.[45] The first presupposition of Aristotle's theory is that plot is of prime importance and all the above-named narrative elements are subordinated to the category of plot. Ricoeur explains this Aristotelian line of thought as: "placing the six parts into a hierarchy that gives priority to the 'what' or object of representation (plot, character, thought) in relation to the "by which" or means (language and melody) and the "how" or mode (the spectacle); then by a second hierarchization to the 'what' that sets the action above the characters and thought."[46] Aristotle offers

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[43] "The structure of relations obtaining among actants. According to Greimas, narrative is a signifying whole because it can be grasped in terms of such a structure. The original actantial model involved six actants: subject (looking for object), object (looked for by the subject), sender (of the subject on its quest for the object), receiver (of the object to be secured by the subject), helper (of the subject), and opponent (of the subject)." See also "A more recent version of the model involves only four actants: subject, object, sender, and receiver (with helper and opponent functioning as auxiliars)." Prince, p. 2.

[44] For the comparison of *As I Lay Dying* to the Elizabethan stage soliloquy see John Pilkington, *The Heart of Yoknapatawpha* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1981), p. 88.

[45] Aristotle, *Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 50 a 7-9. See also the engagement with Aristotle in Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I, Ch. 2 "Emplotment: A Reading of Aristotle's Poetics," trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). See also the address to Aristotle in Ricoeur *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary studies of the creation of meaning in language.* trans. by Robert Czerny (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p.35.

[46] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* Vol. I, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 35. In particular see: Study 1 – Study 5 entitled "The place of lexis in poetics."

the following definition of plot: "The plot is 'the combination' [*sustasis*] of the incidents of the story."[47] Elsewhere, he writes – "Now the action [that which was done] is represented in the play by the Fable or Plot."[48] The central thesis in Aristotle's *Poetics,* therefore, is "The initiation of action is the plot."[49] Thus, according to Aristotle, plot is simply "the organization of the events" in a literary work, which is by definition nothing else than "initiation or representation of action."[50] Aristotle defines 'a character' as "what confers coherence upon action, by sort of unique 'purpose' underlying the action."[51] In this context, I want to draw attention to the role of 'thought' as given in the *Poetics*: "The thought is what a character says in arguing or justifying his actions;"[52] and "thought is to action what rhetoric and politics are to discourse."[53] Ricoeur explains Aristotle's hierarchization of plot in this way: "Character gives action the coherence of purpose or valuation, and thought makes action coherent by arguing that its reasons are such-and-such. Everything links up within the factor called muthos, fable, plot."[54] Ricoeur argues that this correlation of all the elements, not only the cause-and-effect' organization of events, is essential for the composition of narratives.[55]

Ricoeur points out that the main weakness of Aristotle's theory is the failure to address "the construction of a time capable of being implicated in the constructing of the plot."[56] He observes that Aristotle made no attempt even to conceptualize time in his *Poetics.*[57] Ricoeur offers the following explanation for this omission: "the 'logic' of emplotment discourages any consideration of time, even when it implies concepts such as beginning, middle, and end, or when it becomes involved in a discourse about the magnitude or the length of the plot."[58] Ricoeur argues: "[...] time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative, narrative, in turn, is meaningful

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[47] Aristotle, *Poetics* (1450 a 15). See also Aristotle in Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary studies of the creation of meaning in language,* trans. by Robert Czerny (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 35.

[48] Aristotle, 1450a3.

[49] Aristotle, 50a1.

[50] Ricoeur *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary studies of the creation of meaning in language,* p. 35.

[51] Aristotle, *Poetics,* p. (1450b7-9). Cf, Propp's morphology of characters on pp. below . Cf. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works,* V. I, p. 71. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 1, p. 71. Михаил Михайлович Бахтин, *Собрание Сочинией в семи томах*, Т.1. *Философская эстетика 1920-х годов*, стр. 71. Герой – в общераспространенном, обыденном значении: главное или центральное действующее лицо литературного произведения. Hero, heroine, personage principal, hero, main character, protagonist. Trans. "A hero in its common, every day meaning: is a main or central personage in a literary work."

[52] Aristotle, p. (1450a7).

[53] Aristotle, p. (1450b5-6).

[54] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 36.

[55] Aristotle, p. (1450a7).

[56] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I, p. 40.

[57] However, Aristotle fully defines his theory of time in *Physics*, making it explicit that this concept does not apply to his idea of art.

[58] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* Vol. I. p. 52. In particular Ch. 3 "Time and Narrative: Threefold Mimesis.

to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience."[59] However, Ricoeur's approach to the 'issues of time' seems not sufficient for the purposes an analysis of a complex polyphonic narrative as in *As I Lay Dying*, where not only the human concept of consciousness but also time within plot progression – physical time – and the temporary nature of the logic of events are of crucial importance. Bakhtin, with his sociological poetics, offers a better methodological tool for the narrative analysis of *As I Lay Dying*.

2.3. Plot and its function in *As I Lay Dying*.

Ricoeur focuses on the predicative and assimilative function of the plot in narrative: "It [plot] grasps together and integrates into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events, thereby schematizing the intelligible signification attached to the narrative taken as a whole."[60] This is precisely the case in *As I Lay Dying.* As Ricoeur explains: "By means of the plot, goals, causes, and chance are brought together within the temporal unity of a whole and complete action."[61] According to Ricoeur, reading for the plot is "grasping the operation that unifies into one whole and complete action the miscellany, constituted by the circumstances, ends and means, initiatives and interactions, the reversals of fortune, and all the unintended consequences issuing from human action."[62] The concept of time as perceived by Ricoeur is an expanded version of the Augustinian concept of time, which in turn relates only to the human concept of time and time as filtered through human consciousness.[63] Faulkner's polyphonic novels and all his oeuvre do not lose the plot in the Aristotelian sense. Faulkner masterfully combines the elements of the traditional narrative with the highest modern genre – the polyphonic novel. Ricoeur observes that the modern novel abolishes the plot.[64] However, this does not happen in any of the novels under analysis in this thesis. Ricoeur continues: "We might ask, therefore, whether 'plot' has not become a category of such limited extension, and such an out-of-date repetition, as has the novel in which the plot predominates."[65] However, the capacity of plot in Faulkner corresponds to that initially described by Aristotle in *Poetics.* Plot in

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[59] Ricoeur cited in Richard Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbia: The Ohio State University Press, 2007), pp. 59-60. Cf. Tomashevsky cited in Welsh, p. 55. The most striking example of this approach to narrative can be found in the writings of Tomashevsky for whom 'literary thematics' becomes an organizing principle of narrative. Thus, Tomashevsky replaces events with 'motifs.' See Boris Tomashevsky, 'Thematics' *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1965), pp. 161-95. See also Ruth Ronen, 'Paradigm Shift in Plot Models: An Outline of the History of Narratology,' *Poetics Today*, 11.4 (1990), 817-42 (p. 821).

[60] Aristotle, *Physics*, p. x.

[61] Aristotle, Physics, p. ix.

[62] Aristotle, Physics, p. ix.

[63] See Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* Vol. II., trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of London Press, 1984). For Ricoeur on the theory of time in Augustine, see Vol. I Ch. I. For Ricoeur on the theory of plot in Aristotle, see Vol. I. Ch. II.

[64] However, there is no doubt that Ricoeur highly values Aristotle's contribution to literary theory and what he calls "the intelligible organization of narrative." See Ricoeur (1984) *Time and Narrative* Vol. I. p. 3.

[65] See Ricoeur, *Time and* Narrative, Vol. II. p. 7. In particular Ch. I. "The Metamorphoses of the Plot."

Faulkner can always be reconstructed as a single line of meaningful events. Despite all the experimentation with the narrative in the polyphonic novel, Faulkner has never forgotten the Aristotelian concept of plot.

2.4. Time, Plot and Narrative in *As I Lay Dying*.

Gerald Prince suggests that: "Narrative may be defined (and is usually defined) as the representation of real or fictive events and situations in a time sequence."[66] In the process of narrative presentation in modern novels, the original order of events of the plot may be transformed.[67] Similarly, in the course of narrative presentation some events may occur several times. Yuri Lotman also provides a useful definition of plot: "It is the isolation of events – discrete plot units – and the allotting to them, on the one hand, of a particular meaning, and, on the other, a particular temporal, cause-result or other regulatedness that makes up the essence of plot."[68] On this basis, Lotman presents two components of narrative: the events themselves and their logic of unfolding in the time of narrative. Harold Scheub similarly emphasises the role of time in the unfolding of the plot and therefore the creation and the development of narrative. Scheub argues that: "Time is a key to understanding the mechanisms of the aesthetic system (…). Within the work of art is *narrative time,* chronological time involved in the linear movement of actions and images between an initial conflict and an ultimate resolution (there may be minor resolution along the way)."[69] Scheub modifies the Aristotelian definition of time by admitting the human factor behind any action.

2.5. A good plot.

Discussing plot dynamics, Scheub points to 'suspense' and the feelings of 'anticipation' and 'fulfilment' that it invokes in the reader. *As I Lay Dying* is built on suspense and anticipation. Indeed, the novel's title itself foregrounds anticipation. In addition, the reader waits the novel's equivalent of three days for the Bundrens to set off towards Jefferson:[70]

> *On the third day they got back and they loaded her into the wagon and started and it already too late. You'll have to go all the way round by Samson's bridge. It'll take you a day to get there. Then you'll be forty miles from Jefferson. Take my team, Anse.*
> *We'll wait for ourn. She'll want it so.* (p. 92)

In this passage, distance is translated into time. Consider how space again turns into time in the account of the Bundrens before the river crossing adventure:

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[66] Gerald Prince, "Aspects of Grammar of Narrative," *Poetics Today,* Vol. I, No. 3. Special Issue: Narratology I, Poetics of Fiction (1980), pp. 49-63.

[67] Genette cited in Jonathan Culler, 'Omniscience,' *Narrative,* 12.1 (2004), 23-34 (p. 49).

[68] Jurij Lotman, 'The origin of plot in the light of typology,' *Poetics Today* 1.1 (1979), 161-184 (p. 183).

[69] Harold Scheub, "Body and Image in Oral Narrative Performance," *New Literary History,* Vol.8. No. 3. (1977), 345-67 (p. 350).

[70] *As I Lay Dying,* pp. 52-90.

> The river itself is not a hundred yards across, and pa and Vernon and
> Vardaman and Dewey Dell are the only things in sight not of that single
> monotony of desolation leaning with that terrific quality a little from right to
> left, as though we had reached the place where the motion of the wasted
> world accelerates just before the final precipice. Yet they appear dwarfed.
> It is as though the space between us were time: an irrevocable quality. It is
> as though time, no longer running straight before us in a diminishing line,
> now runs parallel between us like a looping string, the distance being
> the doubling accretion of the thread and not the interval between. (p. 146)

The action slows down as we await the river crossing, and then the action speeds up and we are concentrated on Cash's leg and the Bundrens' attempts to help Cash. The action speeds up again with the incident of the barn burning. The resolution is less fortunate for Dewey Dell due to her failed abortion attempt and to Darl, who is taken to the mental asylum in Jackson and, of course, to Cash, whose leg suffered during the journey.

Suspense is for Scheub clearly the prime aim of any narrative.[71] Scheub takes Aristotle as his main point of departure on the issues of plot.[72] Aristotle lays emphasis on the organic structure of plot with its clearly distinguished 'beginning,' 'middle,' and 'end.' The most noteworthy of these seems to be the 'end.' Aristotle points out that the end should come naturally as a result and bring closure to a unified action of the plot. Following Marie-Laure Ryan, it would be tempting to interpret *the Deus ex-machina* type of ending as hastening the plot towards closure. Ryan describes this device as "tying the plot into a knot."[73] However, the end or rather closure of *As I Lay Dying* has more often been categorized as a cheap plot trick.[74] The deceased Addie is immediately replaced with Anse's new wife. Thus, Richardson, for example, observes: "Most of (…) cheap plot tricks involve coincidence, which, by definition is a phenomenon of low probability, since it is the product of an accidental intersection between two independent causal chains."[75]

Wesley Morris and Barbara Alverson Morris consider the *Deus ex-machina* ending of *As I Lay Dying* as the main weakness of the novel.[76] They mention the moments in the novel when it is clearly indicated that Anse might get married again,[77] for example, in accounts by Kate Tull (p. 32) and Cash later in the novel (p. 225).[78] Nevertheless, it is remarkable that Anse gets married the same day he

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[71] Scheub, 1977, p. 349.
[72] Aristotle, however, also spoke of 'reversals' and 'discoveries' as the most crucial elements of a well-constructed plot, *Poetics,* p. 25.
[73] Ryan, p. 63.
[74] See *Poetics,* p. 26 for the Aristotelian definition of the parts of plot. For a more detailed discussion of cheap plot tricks (CPTS) see Aristotle *Poetics,* 5.5,16.
[75] Brian Richardson, *Unlikely Stories: Causality and the Nature of Modern Narrative* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), p. 56. See also Richardson cited in Marie-Laure Ryan, 'Cheap Plot Tricks, Plot Holes, and Narrative Design,' *Narrative* Vol 17. No. 1. (2009), pp. 56-75.
[76] Morris, p. 150.
[77] For example, Kate Tull, p. 32 and Cash, p. 225.
[78] Richardson, p. 56.

buries Addie. Ryan refers to the origins of *Deus ex-machina* in Ancient Greek Theatre, where a god was lowered onto the stage with the aid of a crane.[79] Aristotle himself clearly disapproved of the plot resolution by means of *Deus ex-machina*: "the resolution of plots should also come from the plot itself, and by no means of a theatrical device, as in the *Medea*, or the events concerned with the launching of the ship in the *Iliad*."[80] Ryan describes the equivalent narrative device in the modern novel as: "any unexpected event that brings a happy ending from the outside when the characters have exhausted all possibilities of improving their own fate."[81] When Anse Bundren introduces a new wife to the remaining Bundrens the same day Addie Bundren was buried in Jefferson cemetery, we have a clear example of this kind of an ending.

The arrangement of the various sections of the narrative presents the different responses of the five Bundren children to the death of their mother. Consider, for example, the feeling of anger and despair that torments Vardaman at the moment of Addie's death (pp. 53-57). As an expression of these feelings, Vardaman runs blindly, hitting cows and bumping into other objects, and shouting curses at Peabody (pp. 53-57). As a child, Vardaman clearly misinterprets the context of Addie's death and blames Addie's death on the doctor who attended to her in her final hours: " 'The fat son of a bitch (…) 'He kilt her. He kilt her (p. 54).'"

In the following passage, Vardaman registers his response to the death of his mother:

> I cannot find it. In the dark, along the dust, the walls I cannot find it.
> The crying makes a lot of noise. I wish it wouldn't make so much noise.
> Then I find it in the wagon shed, in the dust, and run across the lot into the road, the stick jouncing on my shoulder.
> They watch me as I run up, beginning to jerk back, their eyes rolling, snorting, jerking back on the hitch-rein. I strike. I can hear the stick striking; I can see it hitting their heads, the breast-yoke, missing altogether sometimes as they rear and plunge, but I am glad. 'You kilt my maw!' (p. 54).

What is striking is how he is distanced from his own crying ('The crying makes a lot of noise') and how there is a similar dissociation of the beating of the animals from his own agency ('I can hear the stick striking; I can see it hitting their heads'). Nevertheless, the reason for the dissociation and the violence is very clear: 'You kilt my maw'. Subsequently, Vardaman does not stop running, and he continues shouting in anger. Then, he decides to hide in the barn. He is crying in the barn while watching Dewey Dell calling him and Cash come home. When they nail Addie's coffin (pp. 65-67), Vardaman is much calmer. He now tries to comprehend the phenomenon of death. He compares the dead Addie to a rabbit. In other words, he draws on his experience of death; the death of animals, for example.

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[79] Marie-Laure Ryan, 'Cheap Plot Tricks, Plot Holes, and Narrative Design,' *Narrative,* Vol. 17. No. 1. (2009), 56-75 (p. 64).
[80] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 8.1,25. And Aristotle cited in Ryan, p. 63. See *Deus ex-machina* in Aristotle 8.6,30
[81] Ryan, p. 64.

Nevertheless, Vardaman is still wondering how Addie will breathe with the coffin lid closed. In the course of this meditation, Vardaman comes to the conclusion that the dead Addie cannot be his mother. Consequently, the dead Addie becomes the not-mother, somebody else. Finally, the dead Addie undergoes another transformation as he registers the putrefying smell of decomposing corpse: "My mother is a fish. (p. 84)." Once the journey begins, he attends to other things. For example, vultures are circling above the wagon and the coffin with Addie's dead body inside, and he notes: "Now there are ten of them, tall in little tall black circles in the sky. (p. 197)." He speaks of Cash who travels on the coffin now because of his broken leg: "Cash is sick. He is sick on the box. (p. 195)." Later, however, we see him again struggling to apprehend the phenomenon of death:

> Cash is my brother. *But Jewel's mother is a horse. My mother is a fish. Darl says that when we come to the water again I might see her and Dewey Dell said, She's in the box; how could she have got out? She got out through the holes I bored, into the water I said, and when we come to the water again I am going to see her. My mother is not in the box. My mother does not smell like that. My mother is a fish.* (p. 196).

Hyatt H. Waggoner sees the structural metaphor in *As I Lay Dying* as "the tale of a journey."[82] As Waggoner puts it, *As I Lay Dying* is "the journey through life to death and through death to life."[83] If the journey is, indeed, a cycle of life and death, as Waggoner suggests, then a new Mrs. Bundren at the end of the novel cannot be referred to as a '*Deus ex-machina*' narrative device. A new Mrs. Bundren is required by the logic of the cycle. The new Mrs. Bundren instantly fills in the vacant place of Addie as Anse's wife and stepmother to his children. This corresponds to the carnivalistic ceremony of the coronation of the king or queen. Bakhtin writes on the carnivalistic processes taking place in polyphonic novel as follows:

> The leading carnivalistic actions are the coronation of a carnivalistic king and subsequently throwing him down his pedestal. This ritual action of coronation and deposition is the basis and the very nucleus of the carnivalistic perception of reality, involving pathos of changes and transitions, death and renewal. Carnival is a celebration of all-destroying and all-renewing time. In this way, we can express the principal thought of carnival. But let me emphasize again: it is not an abstract thought here, but a vivid perception of reality, expressed in alive and practised concrete sensual forms of a ritual action. [84]

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[82] Hyatt H. Waggoner cited in Bleikasten, p. 120. See also Bleikasten's account of 'the journey metaphor' in *As I Lay Dying*, *The Ink of Melancholy: Faulkner's Novels from The Sound and the Fury to Light in August* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 152 and 165.

[83] Ryan, p. 64.

[84] M. M. Bakhtin, *Collected Works,* vol. VI, p. 93. Михаил Михайлович Бахтин, *Собрание Сочиниений в семи томах*, Т.6. *Проблемы Поэтики Достоевского, 1963. Работы 1960-х − 1970-х гг.*Институт Мировой Литературы им. М. Горького Российской Академии Наук (Москва: Русские Словари Языки Славянской Культуры, 2002), стр. 93. "Ведущим карнавальным действом является шутовское увенчание и последующее развенчание карнавального короля. (...) В основе обрядового действа увенчания и развенчания короля лежит самое ядро карнавального мироощущения – пафос смен и перемен, смерти и обновления. Карнавал – праздник всеуничтожающего и всеобновляющего времени. Так можно выразить

A new Mrs. Bundren also corresponds to Faulkner's philosophy. For Faulkner, "authentic being consists precisely and formally in *being what one has not been.*"[85] As Bakhtin writes: "From the very beginning, displacement is revealed through coronation. And such are all carnivalistic symbols: they always involve the perspective of reversal (death) or vice versa. Birth is fraught with death, death – with a new birth."[86]

Depending on whether Anse Bundren had planned on getting a new wife before arriving at Jefferson and had made the appropriate arrangements beforehand, the resolution of *As I Lay Dying* might not be a *Deux ex Machina*-type of ending but simply another act of discovery. In that case, the reader realizes Anse's plans only when they come true at the closure of the novel. Aristotle provides the following definition of discovery: "Discovery, as the term implies, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, and thus to either love or hate, on the part of those destined for good or bad fortune."[87] Aristotle argues that the best complication in the plot comes when discovery (or the scene of recognition) coincides with reversal of fortune.[88] Aristotle defines a reversal as: "a change of direction in the course of events, as already stated, taking place, as we insist, in accord with probability and necessity."[89] The two above-mentioned plot devices – reversal and discovery – form the basis for Aristotle's typology of plot, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.6. Typology of plots in Aristotle.

Aristotle identifies two basic types of plot: simple and complex. A simple plot lacks in reversals and discoveries, and a complex one has both or both even occur simultaneously.[90] Irving Howe claims that *As I Lay Dying* has a simple plot line: "Though in some respects Faulkner's most difficult and enigmatic novel, *As I Lay Dying* has a simple plot."[91] I will suggest the opposite is the case. Aristotle emphasizes that 'reversal' and 'discovery' should naturally fit onto the plot by abiding by the rules of probability

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основную мысль карнавала. Но подчёркиаем ещё раз: здесь это не отвлечённая мысль, а живое мироощущение, вырыженное в переживаемых и разгрываемых конкретно-чувственных формах обрядового действа."

[85] Faulkner in E. Rollyson, Jr. *Uses of the Past in the Novels of William Faulkner* (United States: International Scholars Publications, 1998), p. 2. See also Faulkner's concept of life as motion in Bleikasten (1990), p. 183.

[86] Bakhtin, *Collected Works,* Vol. VI, p. 93. Михаил Михайлович Бахтин, *Собрание Сочиниений в семи томах*, Т.6. *Проблемы Поэтики Достоевского, 1963. Работы 1960-х – 1970-х гг.* Институт Мировой Литературы им. М. Горького Российской Академии Наук (Москва: Русские Словари Языки Славянской Культуры, 2002), стр. 93. Сквозь увенчание с самого начала просвечивает развенчание. И таковы все карнавальные символы: они всегда включают в себя перспективу отрицания (смерти) или наоборот. Рождение чревато смертью, смерть – новым рождением.

[87] See also Aristotle cited in Ryan, p. 57.

[88] Aristotle, p. 28.

[89] Aristotle, p. 29.

[90] Aristotle, p. 29.

[91] Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1991), p. 52.

and causality.[92] Greimas, Courtès, and Rengstorf give the 'change of knowledge' acquired by characters as a distinctive feature of a complex narrative. In this context, Greimas proposes the following definition of a simple narrative: "There is no distance between the events and knowledge about the events."[93] This is generally the rule in *As I Lay Dying*. However, there are clearly reversals of fortune and a few discoveries on the Bundrens' way to Jefferson – for example, the story of Jewel's beloved horse or Addie's betrayal.

Ronen quotes the Aristotelian definition of plot as "a source of unity and order" for all other components of narrative: "So the plot, being an initiation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjoined and distributed. For the thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference is not an organic part of the whole."[94] Ronen, however, shifts the emphasis from the organic to the organizing role of plot. Here she is in the line with a modern revaluing of plot. The Bremondian conception of narrative, for example, is close to this definition of plot by Brooks: "Plot is the organizing line and intention of narrative, thus perhaps best conceived as an activity, a structuring operation elicited in the reader trying to make sense of those meanings that develop only through textual and temporal succession."[95] Ronen writes of this central function of plot as follows: "Plot is perceived as an overall organizing principle and it is assigned the dominant organizing function and the power of narrativizing other textual components."[96] In narratology, writes Ronen, plot is "a conceptual equivalent to narrative logic and to the outcome of narrative understanding."[97] In his *Dictionary of Narratology* (1987), Prince gives two definitions of plot. The first one corresponds to the Aristotelian – "the main incidents of narrative." The second definition, which he calls semantical, treats plot as "the global dynamic (goal-oriented and forward-moving) organization of narrative constituents, which is responsible for the thematic interest [indeed, the very intelligibility] of a narrative and for its emotional effect."[98] Prince develops this definition of plot further by discussing the plot in terms of narrativity, and he introduces a useful distinction between "degrees of narrativity."[99] This distinction

[92] Aristotle cited in Ryan, p. 57.

[93] See Greimas for the most extended discussion of reversals and discoveries by Aristotle. A.J. Greimas, J. Courtes, and Michael Rengstorf *NLH Thinking in the Arts, Sciences and Literature* Vol. VII. No. 3. (1976), pp. 433-447. In particular pages 438 and 439. For the nature of a simple narrative as based on so-called 'fiduciary contact,' seepages 438-9.

[94] Aristotle cited in Ruth Ronen, 'Paradigm Shift in Plot Models: An Outline of the History of Narratology,' *Poetics Today*, 11.4 (1990), 817-42 (p. 824).

[95] Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, INC, 1984), p. 37.

[96] Ronen, (1990), p. 821.

[97] Ronen (1990), p. 822.

[98] Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), pp. 71-72.

[99] Prince in Ronen (1990), p. 822. Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin, New York: Mouton, 1982), p. 153.

is particularly useful in relation to plot analysis. Prince describes the narrative of high narrativity in the following terms: "Narratives of high narrativity will not merely describe change and its results but fundamental change and results. They will take us from the origin to conclusion (…) from the outset of the heterogeneity and difference back to homogeneity and indifference."[100]

2.7. Plot as 'an organizing principle of narrative.'[101]

Peter Brooks opens his discussion of plot and its functions with Ricoeur's definition of plot as "the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story."[102] Drawing on the work of Russian formalists, Brooks pays particular attention to the fabula/sjuzhet[103] distinction and consequently replaces Ricoeur's events and story with these two terms.[104] Following Boris Tomashevsky, Richardson proposes a working definition of fabula/sjuzhet: "the chronological sequence of events of the story and the sequence within which those events are presented to the reader."[105] Bakhtin argues: "As a matter of fact, fabula is only material to be shaped by sjuzhet."[106] As Brooks suggests in his *Reading for the Plot,* the clear-cut distinction between fabula and sjuzhet is of particular importance in the analysis of literary works by Conrad and Faulkner because of the frequent time dislocations found in the work of both.[107] Along similar lines Bakhtin provides the following definition of fabula/sjuzhet: "Fabula – is an event that lies at the basis of sjuzhet, a life-event, moral, political, ethical and other (…) Sjuzhet unfolds in the real time of execution and perception of the text – reading or listening. A line of sjuzhet – is a curved road of derogation, breakages, delays, circular repetitions and other."[108] A comparison of fabula and sjuzhet reveals their dynamics: "Both [fabula and sjuzhet] include the same events but in the [sjuzhet] the events are arranged and connected according to the orderly sequence in which they were presented in the work."[109] For example, on a

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[100] Prince, ibidem.

[101] See Brooks, *Reading for the Plot,* p. 37.

[102] Ricoeur in Brooks, 'Narrative Desire,' *Style* 18.3 (1984), p. 131.

[103] Fabula is treated under mythos in Aristotle, p. 14-15.

[104] Prince, pp. 71-72.

[105] See Brooks's definition in *Reading for the Plot,* p. 147. See Tomashevsky in Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), Brain Richardson, *Unlikely Stories: Causality and the Nature of Modern Narrative* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), p. 10.

[106] Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, p. 146. Формальный Метод в Литературоведении, стр. 146. "На самом деле фабула есть лишь материал для сюжетного оформления."

[107] Brook's *Reading for the Plot* cited in Martin McQuillan *The Narrative Reader* (Routledge, 2000), p. 147. The fundamental distinction between fabula and sjuzhet was made by Boris Tomashevsky, According to Tomashevsky, the term fabula refers to "the aggregate of mutually related events reported in the work."

[108] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, p. 146. Формальный Метод в Литературоведении, стр. 146. Фабула – это то событие, которое лежит в основе сюжета, событие жизненное, этическое, политическое, историческое и иное. (...) Сюжет развёртывается в реальном времени исполнения и восприятия – чтения или слушания. Линия сюжета – кривая дорога отступлений. Торможений, задержек, обходов и пр.

[109] Prince, pp. 71-72. In *As I Lay Dying* the events are presented in a chronological way, which is unusual for Faulkner during his major creative period.

microlevel of narrative, we see pregnant Dewey Dell in the novel's present recollecting her times with Lafe and the fact that Darl knew about her affair:

> We picked on down the row, the woods getting closer and closer and the secret shade, picking on into the secret shade with my sack and Lafe's sack. Because I said I will or wont I when the sack was half full because I said if the sack is full when we get to the woods it wont be me. (…) And so it was full when we came to the end of the row and I could not help it.
> And so it was because I could not help it. It was then, and then I saw Darl and he knew. He said he knew without words like he told me that ma is going to die without words, and I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with the words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us. (p. 27)

This extract from *As I Lay Dying* is a good example of the correlation between sjuzhet and fabula, and the way sjuzhet shapes the fabula. Her sexual experience with Lafe and the two moments of silent communication with Darl are selected from the sequence of life events and constitute the fabula, while her recollection of these particular events constitutes the sjuzhet unfolding in the real time of our reading experience.

In Faulkner's fiction of his major phase, the time of telling (sjuzhet) and the time of told (fabula) are hugely dislocated, with some events being almost intermittent with the time of narration:

> Pa and Vernon are sitting on the back porch. Pa is tilting snuff from the lid of his snuff-box into his lower lip, holding the lip outdrawn between thumb and finger. They look around as I cross the porch and dip the gourd into the water bucket and drink.
> 'Where's Jewel?' pa says. When I was a boy I first learned how much better water tastes when it has set a while in a cedar bucket. Warmish-cool, with a faint taste like the hot July wind in cedar trees smells. It has to set at least six hours, and be drunk from a gourd. Water should never be drunk from metal. (pp. 10-11)

The above-described events take place in the novel's present. At other times, the time discrepancy in the fabula between adjacent events in the sjuzhet comes to half a century. For example, when Addie recalls her life prior to her marriage:

> In the afternoon when school was out and the last one had left with his little dirty snuffling nose, instead of going home I would go down the hill to the spring where I could be quiet and hate them. It would be quiet there then, with the water bubbling up and away and the sun slanting quiet in the trees and the quiet smelling of damp and rotting leaves and new earth; especially in the early spring, for it was worst then.
> I could just remember how my father used to say that the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time. And when I would have to look at them day after day, each with his and her secret and selfish thought, and blood strange to each other blood and strange to mine, and think that this seemed to be the only way I could get ready to stay dead, I would hate my

father for having ever planted me. I would look forward to the times when they faulted, so I could whip them. When the switch fell I could feel it upon my flesh; when it welted and ridged it was my blood that ran, and I would think with each blow of the switch: Now you are aware of me! Now I am something in your secret and selfish life, who have marked your blood with my own for ever and ever.
And so I took Anse. (pp. 169-170)

This is one of a very few instances of extended reminiscence in *As I Lay Dying.* In this way *As I Lay Dying* differs from other novels under analysis in this dissertation. Sjuzhet in Faulkner is not only forever a-chronological but also frequently presented in an abrupt fragmentary narrative mode. Bakhtin writes on the role of sjuzhet in polyphonic narrative as follows:

> The pure languages of characters in a novel's dialogue and monologue are subjected to the task of creating language. Sjuzhet alone is subjected to that role – mutual correlation and disclosure of languages (...) In brief, a novelistic sjuzhet serves to represent speaking people and their ideological worlds. What takes place in a novel is the identification of one's own voice in another's voice, in another's mental outlook, - one's own mental horizon. In it, what takes place is the ideological transference of another's language, in another's outlook – one's own outlook. [110]

As we have seen, Bakhtin points out the formative role of sjuzhet. Brooks and Todorov discuss plot in terms similar to those given by the Russian Formalists as: "the active process of sjuzhet working on fabula, the dynamic of its interpretive ordering."[111] Bakhtin suggests:

> Fabula, for example, does not take on its unity only in the process of sjuzhet development. If we turn our attention away from this development – only a certain degree, of course, - then the fabula will not lose because of its inner content. Thus, if we distract ourselves from the sjuzhet development in *Eugene Onegin*, i.e., from all the digressions, breakages, delays, we will, of course, destroy the structure of this literary work. That said, some unity of love events between Onegin and Tatiana will remain with its internal regularity – life-related, ethical, social. [112]

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[110] M. M. Bakhtin, *Questions of Literature and Aesthetics,* p. 177. *Вопросы Литературы и Эстетики: Исследования Разных Лет* (Москва: Художественная Литература, 1975), стр. 177. Чистые языки в романе в диалогах и в монологах романных перосажей подчиняются той же задаче создания языка. Самый сюжет подчинён этой задаче – соотнесения и взаимного раскрытия языков (...) Одним словом, романный сюжет служит изображению говорящих людей и их идеологических миров. В романе осуществляется узнание в чужом языке своего языка, в чужом кругозоре – своего кругозора. В нём происходит идеологический перевод чуждого языка, в чужом кругозоре – своего кругозора."
[111] Brooks and Todorov cited in McQuillan, p. 148.
[112] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, pp. 146-47. Формальный Метод в Литературоведении, стр. 146. Смотри тоже стр. 146-47. Фабула, например, приобретает своё единство не только в процессе развёртывания сюжета. Если мы отвлечемся от этого развёртывания – до известной степени, конечно, - то фабула не утратит от этого своего внутреннего единства и содержательности. Так, если мы отвлечёмся от сюжетного развёртывания *Евгения Онегина,* т.е. от всех отступлений, перебоев, торможений, мы, конечно, разрушим конструкцию этого произведения, но всё же фабула, как некоторое единство события любви Татяны и Онегина, останётся со своею внутреннею закономерностью – жизненной, этической, социальной.

Elsewhere Brooks explains why it is necessary to clarify exactly what is meant by fabula and sjuzhet in order to understand the meaning of their correlation in shaping of the plot dynamics.[113] Brooks backs up his argument by referring to the novels of Conrad, Proust and Faulkner with their non-linear chronology and the highly fragmentary nature of the 'events in sjuzhet.'[114] However, Brooks points out, in the above-mentioned novels, "linear story could (can) be easily extracted."[115] Here we need to take into consideration three dimensions of the narrative texts as presented by Marie-Laure Ryan: the what of the events; the why of the events; and the how of the events presented in discourse.[116] This threefold characterization of narrative turns plot into "an organizing principle" in what Ryan describes as "a global design of narrative."[117] Ryan cogently addresses what she regards as the particular tendency of the readerly dynamics. Ryan claims that the reader's primary interest lies in the what of events.[118] In addition, Ryan argues: "Through this global design, the narrative text satisfies the reader's demand for the why of events."[119] In this part of the chapter, I will show in what way the three above-mentioned dimensions of narrative-events are interdependent in *As I Lay Dying*. I propose two readings of the structure of plot in *As I Lay Dying*. A horizontal reading will lead me to derive 'the what' of the narrative.[120] A vertical reading will then follow with the explanation for 'the why' of events.[121] In this way, I shall undertake to demonstrate how the events are presented in *As I Lay Dying*.

First, however, I want to bring in Ronen's discussion of plot models and the novel's lack of an omniscient narrator. Ronen begins her discussion by commenting on structuralist contributions to the Aristotelian model of plot and the structuralist attempt to go beyond the 'action-schemata' as established in *Poetics.*[122] Ronen refers to Genette's distinction between the classical 'action-schemata' plot model and more advanced conceptual models. As Genette puts it, "There is room for two narratologies, one thematic in the broad sense (analysis of the story or the narrative content), the other formal or, rather, modal, (analysis of narrative as a mode of 'representation' of stories)."[123] Genette adds: "But it turns out that analyses of narrative contents, grammar, logic, and semiotics have hardly, so far, laid claim to the term narratology, which thus remains the property solely of the analysts

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[113] Brooks *Reading for the Plot,* p.77.
[114] Brooks, ibidem.
[115] Brooks, ibidem.
[116] Marie-Laure Ryan, 'Narrative in real time: chronicle, mimesis and plot in the baseball broadcast,' *Narrative* Vol. I, No. 2, (1993), 138-55 (pp. 138-9, and 143-4).
[117] Ryan (1993), p. 139.
[118] Ryan (1993), p. 143.
[119] Ryan (1993), p. 140.
[120] The term 'horizontal reading' refers to is a method of narrative analysis used to compare multiple accounts of a similar event.
[121] The term 'vertical reading' refers to a linear mode of narrative interpretation.
[122] Ryan, p. 817.
[123] Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 16.

of narrative mode."[124] At this point I need to explain the specific use of the term narratology. There are two basic narratological approaches adopted in research into narrative. One is relevant to the narratological examination of the narrative contents, logics and semiotics. The other covers the questions of the narrative mode – the narrator-related issues.[125] *As I Lay Dying* is a novel with a collective homodiegetic narrator without any trace of the presence of the omniscient heterodiegetic narrator. Howe argues: "Like *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying* stakes everything on the awareness of its characters. There is neither omniscient narrator nor disinterested observer at the rim of the story; nothing being told, all must be shown."[126]

In *As I Lay Dying*, individual narrators describe the main events in the story – their time at Addie's deathbed and how they made their way to the Jefferson cemetery though water and fire and pain. They also give their reasons behind their past and present actions and provide insights into their personal goals in Jefferson. As was pointed out by Calvin Bedient, "The force of *As I Lay Dying* is in its opacity. Faulkner's novel has the particularity of real experience, and this is so rare a quality in modern art that we have forgotten how to appreciate it."[127] Bakhtin writes as follows: "For the acting consciousness itself, its act needs no hero (that is, a determinate person); it needs only goals and values that regulate it and determine its sense. My act-performing consciousness as such poses questions only of the following types: what for? to what end? how? is it correct or not? is it necessary or not? is it required or not? is it good or not? It never asks such questions as the following: who am I? what kind am I?[128] I would suggest that the question then is whether the homodiegetic narrators in *As I Lay Dying* represent only what Bakhtin calls 'acting consciousness' or if they ask more complex existential questions of the *scipto teipsom* kind. For the latter, it is necessary to show the homodiegetic narrators as 'goal-driven' but also capable of deeper thoughts of an existential nature.

2.8. Fabula vs. sjuzhet dynamics.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on plot and sjuzhet and plot as an aspect of sjuzhet.[129] The previous section, provided a brief account of some of the main findings and of the principal issues and suggestions regarding plot, which has arisen in narrative theory so far. In this section, I will present some of the research on the fabula vs. sjuzhet dynamics in relation to

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[124] Genette, ibidem.
[125] Genette in Ronen, p. 818.
[126] Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: Critical Study* (Englewood Cliffs, N.Y.: Prentice Hall, 1983), pp. 182-183. There is no omniscient narrator as such in *As I Lay Dying*. However, Darl gives an account of events he could have not possibly witnessed himself (pp. 47-52).
[127] *Faulkner: New Perspectives.* Ed. by Richard H. Brodhead, pp. 134-152. P. 136. "Pride and Nakedness: *As I Lay Dying*,"
[128] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays,* ed. by Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), p. 139.
[129] See Peter Brooks, p. 13.

decoding narratives. Many narrative theorists have built their views on the Russian Formalist theory of fabula and sjuzhet as the two organizing principles in narrative.[130] Brooks and Prince hold the view that the Russian Formalist distinction between plot/sjuzhet provides a way out of the plot dynamics dilemma and the way events unfold in the narrative. I agree with Prince when he suggests that, as readers, we construct in two ways: "One principle emphasizes the primacy of events over meaning (insists upon the events as the origin of meaning); the other stresses the primacy of meaning and its requirements (insists upon the events as the effect of a will to meaning)."[131] Prince explains: whereas the first one refers to "the (logical) priority of fabula rather than sjuzhet; the second clearly 'makes the fabula the product of sjuzhet."[132] I also agree with Bakhtin who argues: "Thus, fabula and sjuzhet are, as a matter of fact, a united structural element of a literary work. As for the fabula, this element is conditioned by the thematic unity of the represented reality, as for sjuzhet, by the reality of a literary work itself."[133] What is most important here is that both the above-mentioned are necessary for the plot dynamics.[134] The correlation between sjuzhet and fabula plays a major role in narrativity.[135] Bakhtin points out: "Fabula (where it is) characterizes genre from the point of view of its thematic orientation in reality. Sjuzhet characterizes the same, but from the point of view of the real reality of the genre in the process of its social realization. It is impossible and not worthwhile to create any clear boundary between them."[136] (Bakhtin, of course, writes specifically about a polyphonic novel and its heteroglossia and dialogism.) By contrast, Brooks makes a distinction between fabula and sjuzhet and provides the following definition of plot: "(…) "Let us say that we can generally understand plot to be an aspect of sjuzhet in that it belongs to the narrative discourse, and its active shaping force, but that it makes sense (as indeed sjuzhet itself principally makes sense) as it is used to reflect on fabula, as our understanding of story."[137] Brooks comes to the conclusion that "Plot is thus the dynamic shaping force of the narrative discourse."[138]

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[130] Prince (2003), p. 23. Brooks, pp. 13-14,37 and 77-78.

[131] Prince (2003), p. 23. See also Culler (1981) and Brooks (1984), p. 37. Brooks refers to Barthes and equates 'reading for the plot' with the reader's passion for meaning.

[132] Prince (2003), p. 23.

[133] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship,* p. 188. Формальный Метод в Литературоведении, стр. 188."Таким образом, фабула и сюжет являются в сущности единым конструктивным элементом произведения. Как фабула, этот элемент определяется в направлении к полюсу тематического единства завершаемой действительности, как сюжет, в направлении к полюсу завершающей действительности произведения."

[134] Prince (2003), p. 23.

[135] Prince (2003), p. 23.

[136] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship,* p. 187-88. "Фабула (там где она есть) характеризует жанр с точки зрения его тематической ориентации в действительности. Сюжет характеризует то же самое, но с точки зрения реальной действительности жанра в процессе его социального осуществления. Провести между ними сколько-нибудь отчётливую границу невозможно, да и не целесообразно.

[137] Brooks, pp.13-14.

[138] See note 142 above, p. 14.

Walsh is of the opposite view on the dynamics of plot.[139] What is important, according to Walsh, is not the correlation between fabula and sjuzhet but simply the linearity of plot and its role in what Walsh calls "the developmental nature of narrative."[140] Like Bakhtin, Walsh is clearly sceptical of the work done on plot by the Russian Formalists. According to Walsh, the main weakness with the fabula/sjuzhet distinction is that it does not provide a sufficient explanation for the plot dynamics. Walsh quotes the main opponent of Russian Formalism – Bakhtin: "[...] although we can separate story [fabula] from plot [sjuzhet] as the formalists understand it, the story itself is, nevertheless, artistically organized."[141] Just as the Aristotelian theory of plot is devoid of the concept of time, the Russian Formalist theory does not explain the issues of temporality as a crucial and indispensable aspect of narrativity. Bakhtin observes:

> Whatever functions would the material bring into the structure of a literary work, its organic regularity remains dominant. But, in all this, every volume of material is also entirely penetrated with artistic regularity. The material is artistically arranged inside out. Whichever small element of material we would take, in it takes place direct (ethical, cognitive and other) contact of non-artistic regularity with purely artistic regularity. Therefore, although we cannot separate fabula from sjuzhet, as it is understood by Formalists, fabula alone is artistically organized throughout. And to separate 'only material' from artistic organization is quite impossible.[142]

2.9. Crane's tripartite typology of plots.

In the preceding pages, I have attempted to indicate the Aristotelian concept of plot as superior to other elements of narrative – character, thought and language – because of its 'synthesizing' role. I have also suggested the degree to which this synthesizing principle of plot is important in a Faulknerian polyphonic narrative. I agree with Crane that, by means of plot, other elements of narrative mentioned above are brought together.[143] It is this 'principle of synthesis'

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[139] Richard Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Ideas of Fiction* (Columbus: the Ohio State University Press, 2007), p.53.

[140] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship,* p. 14.

[141] Bakhtin in Walsh, p. 54. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 113.

[142] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship,* p. 154. *Формальный Метод в Литературоведении*, стр. 154. "Какие бы функции не нёс материал в конструкции произведения, внутри его господствует своя органическая закономерность. Но при всём этом каждый том материала пронизан и чисто художественной закономерностью. Материал художественно устроен весь и сплошь. Какой бы малый элемент материала мы не взяли, в нём происходит непосредственное соприкосновение внехудожественной (этической, познавателоной и иной) закономерности с чисто художественной. Поэтому, хотя фабулу мы и можем отделить от сюжета, как его понимают формалисты, сама фабула всё же на сквоз художественно организована. И отделить 'только материал' от художественной организации его совершенно невозможно."

[143] Crane cited in Robert Merrill, 'Raymond Chandler's Plots and the Concept of Plot,' *Narrative* 7.1, (1999), 3-21 (p. 3).

intrinsic to plot that elevates plot above other elements of narrative. Merrill writes on Crane's theory of plot as follows: "Crane objects to 'a strictly limited definition of plot as something that can be abstracted, for critical purposes, from the moral qualities of the characters and the operations of their thought.'"[144] In addition to this, Crane's study of plot also invokes the question of the plot's 'purposedness.' In Crane's understanding plot is not simply 'a sequence of events' but 'a sequence shaped for a particular end or purpose.'[145] Crane accordingly draws a tripartite distinction between types of plot: "[…] according to one or another of three causal ingredients (action, character, and thought) is employed as the synthesizing principle 'there are plots of action, plots of character, and plots of thought."[146] *As I Lay Dying* is a mixture of all three types of plot. The main events in the story can be seen as action related (for example, the river crossing) and character related (for example, Dewey Dell's attempts to get an abortion, while the narrative method of fifteen homodiegetic narrators engrossed in their thoughts and thinking bout their goals as they continue their journey to Jefferson cemetery is clearly thought related.

The multiple-perspective in *As I Lay Dying* results in repetition. James A. Snead identifies three types of repetition in *As I Lay Dying*: exact repetition, incremental repetition and ring structure.[147] 'My mother is a fish' is the most memorable example of exact repetition. However, there are plenty of examples of incremental repetition. As a first example, after Cora describes Darl as the most sensitive among the Bundren children (pp. 21-25), Dewey Dell then describes the same events taking place at Addie's deathbed (pp. 27-28). This shows the mutual empathy between the siblings. A more complex example occurs when we encounter Cash's description of the difficulties of the river crossing (pp. 96-97) which covers the same events as described by Darl in his observation of Cash (pp. 97-99). In the next section, Vardaman gives his account of the same river-crossing-related events but with the focus now on Darl (pp. 100-102). The Bundren children are very vigilant observers of each other's lives. We are given a chance to see the same events from a different perspective with every narrator.

2.10. Ricoeur's definition of plot.

In *Time and Narrative*[148] Ricoeur reminds us of the Aristotelian idea of the unity of plot, emphasizing that 'an event' takes its meaning from the degree to which it contributes to the development of plot. Consequently, Ricoeur produces the following definition of story: "A story, too, must be more than just an enumeration of events in serial order; it must organize them into an

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[144] Merrill, p. 3. R.S Crane, 'The Concept of Plot and the Plot of *Tom Jones*,' in *Critics and Criticism*, ed. by R.S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 614-47.
[145] Crane, ibidem.
[146] See Crane, p. 620.
[147] James A. Snead, *Figures of Division: William Faulkner's Major Novels* (Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1986), p. 52.
[148] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* Vol. I, pp. 65-66.

intelligible whole, of a sort such that we can always ask what is the 'thought' of this story.[149] In other words, Ricoeur claims that 'plot' is rather 'a configuration' of events than simply 'a succession' of events. Thus, Ricoeur defines emplotment as "drawing a configuration out of a simple succession."[150] {{).]] The second pertinent detail in Ricoeur's definition of emplotment is that it "brings together factors as heterogenous as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results."[151] The term emplotment needs further elucidation. Ricoeur refers here to the Aristotelian definition of tragedy: "For tragedy at its best the plot should be complex, not simple, and it should be represented of fearsome and pitiable events, for that is the specific feature of this kind of representation."[152] It is no accident that fearful and pitiable events , such as reversals and discoveries, are an important element of plot. Ricoeur calls this feature of plot 'concordant discordance,'[153] arguing that it is responsible for the mediating function of plot. Clearly, what is at stake here is no longer 'plot as an arrangement of incidents,' but plot as "a synthesis of the heterogenous."[154] Ricoeur uses here the phrase – "the constitutive dynamism of the narrative configuration."[155] Ricoeur describes the basic organizational function of plot in this way: "[...] the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story."[156]

2.11. The Aristotelian notion of 'a satisfying ending.'

Extensive research has been carried out on the role of the ending. In *Reading for the Plot,* for example, Peter Brooks devotes the first half of his book to showing how the reader's 'desire for ending' is responsible for step-by-step plot reconstruction.[157] He writes of closure as: "[...] those shaping ends that promise to bestow meaning and significance on the beginning and the middle."[158] As this suggests, plot and narrative generally can be viewed and comprehended only retrospectively. As Ronen puts it: "Only the narrative ending can determine plot structure."[159] Ronen argues that both plot models – syntactic and semantic (thematic) – corroborate this rule. Prince similarly writes of the sense of ending in the narrative thus: "Many narratives can be viewed as teleologically determined

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[149] Ricoeur cited in Ryan, p. 65.
[150] See Ricoeur cited in Ryan, 'Narrative in Real Time: chronicle, mimesis and plot in baseball broadcast,' *Narrative* Vol. I. No. 2 (1993), 138-55 (p. 144).
[151] Snead, p. 52.
[152] Aristotle, p. 31.
[153] Ricoeur, Vol. I, p. 66.
[154] Ricoeur cited in Ryan, p. 65.
[155] Ricoeur cited in Ryan, p. 65.
[156] Ricoeur in Ronen, 817-42 (p. 821).
[157] Brooks, p. 37.
[158] Brooks, p. 19. See the discussion of this aspect of Brooks's work in Emma Kafalenos, *Narrative Causalities* (The Ohio State University Press, Columbus 2006), p. 69. See also the account of Brooks's discussion of reading for the end while reading for the plot, in Mieke Bal "Tell-Tale Theories." *Poetics Today* Vol. 7. No. 3. Poetics of Fiction, (1986): 558-559.
[159] Ronen, p. 821.

(…) Narrative often displays itself in terms of an end which functions as its (partial) condition, its magnetizing force, its organizing principle."[160] Prince elaborates upon this claim: "If narrativity is a function of the discreteness and specificity of the (sequences of) events presented, it is also a function of the extent to which their occurrence is given as a fact (in a certain world) rather than a possibility or probability. The hallmark of narrative is assurance."[161] The 'sense of ending' is also the basis of the theory of plot set forth by Tomashevsky who argues: "By simply retelling the story we immediately discover what may be omitted without destroying the coherence of the narrative and what may not be omitted without disturbing the connection among events."[162] These are points on which Phelan and Rabinowitz radically differ from Tomashevsky and Prince. Here Phelan and Rabinowitz also make a distinction between the traditional Victorian novel and modernist genres and sub-genres of the novel.[163] Phelan and Rabinowitz argue that: "Modernists developed a kind of conclusion that provided a sense of ending without resolving all the major issues of the narrative."[164] None of Faulkner's polyphonic novels provides a traditional ending with a proper resolution. We don't know what will happen with Dewey Dell's unborn child or whether she will be able to get an abortion. We don't know what will happen with Darl. We also don't know how the new Mrs. Bundren will behave towards Anse's children – or, indeed, towards Anse. It is clear that the choices the characters have made do not resolve much but rather they open the possibilities for new choices to be made. The Faulknerian hero is directed towards the future in this novel.

2.12. Chronology and temporality.

Commenting on the sequencing nature of narrative, Meir Sternberg distinguishes between chronological and non-chronological narration.[165] Sternberg calls attention to the fact that as far back as Aristotle a non-chronological arrangement of events has been valued over the simple chronological line of events with clearly stated beginning, middle, and end. Although Sternberg is right that narration can be chronological or non-chronological, the plot line (once reconstructed by the inquisitive reader)

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[160] Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin; New York: Mouton, 1982), p. 157.

[161] Prince (1982), p. 149.

[162] Cf. Bremond's theory of "plot structure as a mechanism of choices among alternative narrative sequences." Bremond cited in Ronen, p. 836. See also Barthes on "cardinal functions in plot as being the risky moments of narrative." cited in Ronen p, 836. See also Eco (1979) cited in Ronen. Eco defines plot structure as "a process of activating some semantic possibilities while narcotizing others." Thus, the fabula is described by Eco as "a process of choosing among alternative courses or possibilities of actualization, and the narrative structure is the outcome of this process." Such a narrative requires reader's active participation because of "inferences, forward anticipations and gap-filling."

[163] David Herman, James Phelan, and Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates,* (Columbus: the Ohio State University Press, 2012), p. 80.

[164] Ronen, p. 821.

[165] Meir Sternberg, 'Telling in Time (I): Chronology and Narrative Theory,' *Poetics Today,* Vol. 11. No. 4. (1990), 901-48 (p. 902).

is always characterized by chronology and temporality – in short, by linearity. The most important question critics, such as John Pilkington, have asked was exactly this one regarding a perfectly chronological linear time of plot.[166] In this context, it is interesting that, as Patten notes, Faulkner reorganised the sections in the manuscript of *As I Lay Dying* in order to make sure the plot line of events is chronologically presented.[167] Further in her article, Sternberg corrects or clarifies her point of view by claiming: "for narrative to make sense as narrative, it must make chronological sense."[168] The linearity of plot is clearly helpful to an understanding of narrative. However, narrative itself does not have to be chronological as a whole. In the first part of her article, Sternberg attempts to characterize plot while taking into account its linearity and causality.[169] Thus, Sternberg argues: "If the events composing it do not fall into some line of world-time, however problematic their alignment and however appealing their alternative arrangement, then narrativity itself disappears."[170] Consequently: "Being chronological, the sequence of events is followable, intelligible, memorable, indeed chronological."[171] In this context, Sternberg makes an interesting observation: "[…] omniscience looks most compatible with chronology, if only because the all-knowing narrator has timely access to the whole truth, so that he can tell without gaps."[172] However, Sternberg finds the chronological omniscient perspective in narrative the least demanding of the reader: "[…] like chronology, omniscient narration is both the least valued and the least explored mode."[173]

In *As I Lay Dying,* we are dealing with a highly complex and deliberate transgression of chronological order on the level of discourse (narration). It has been generally recognized that the main rule underlying the novel is 'causality.'[174] Causality here means the cause-and-effect' relationship

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[166] See, for example, Catherine Patten, 'The Narrative Design of *As I Lay Dying,'* in *William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying: A Critical Casebook*, ed. Dianne L. Cox (New York and London: Garland Publishing, INC, 1985).

[167] John Pilkington on *As I Lay Dying's* "straight line of plot in a traditional novel" in *The Heart of Yoknapatawpha* (Jackson, Ms: University Press Mississippi, 1981), p. 88.

[168] Sternberg (1990), p. 903. Cf. The Russian Formalist claim that "the ordering fabula underlying the work must be disordered in the finished sjuzhet for the sake of aesthetic 'making strange."

[169] Sternberg, pp. 902-06.

[170] Sternberg, p. 903.

[171] Sternberg, p. 903.

[172] Sternberg, p. 903.

[173] Sternberg, p. 906.

[174] See, for example, Rimmon-Kenan's statement: "[…] temporal succession is sufficient as a *minimal* requirement for a group of events to form a story." To put it otherwise, […] any two events arranged in chronological order would constitute a story." See also Mieke Bal (2009), 94: "The necessary combination of one event with one or more actors, a place, and a period of time constitutes the minimal unit of a story. A combination is necessary, since no one of the elements can be produced without the others. An event is not possible without an actor – even if it belongs to an abstract category, like the weather, God, or fate – and must take place somewhere. It always occupies some time." See, too, Tomashevsky's statement that: "a story requires not only an indication of time, but also an indication of cause." Seymour Chatman in Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ohio State University Press, 1987), p. 104. Ruth Ronen, 'Paradigm Shift in Plot Models: An Outline of the History of Narratology,' *Poetics Today* Vol. 11. No. 4. (1990), 817-42 (p. 830). Cf. with the contrasting view presented by e.g. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan and Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 94, Bal and

between the events. As Seymour Chatman puts it: "It has been argued, since Aristotle, that events in narratives are radically correlative, enchaining, entailing. Their sequence runs the traditional argument, is not simply linear but causative."[175] We are indebted to Edmond Volpe for the most rigorous formulation of the theory of causality and a new concept of a man (hero) in a novel. Volpe writes on the Faulknerian hero: "Physically, the human being exists in fragmented time, but when he thinks, he is in the realm of indivisible time."[176] In other words, a man exists in fragmented time but perceives his whole life as a process, as a 'continuum.' Rollyson points out that for the human mind even events very distant from each other in time can be perceived as part of one cause-and-effect process.[177]

Here we need to take into consideration the mechanisms of causative reading since narrative is perceived through reading.[178] Following Aristotle, Peter J. Rabinowitz differentiates between anticipated 'cause-and-effect' and the opposite 'effect-cause'-alternative. The first one is determined to reveal the future events in narrative; the second one to explain the reasons behind these actions.[179] Ricoeur uses the term 'singular causal imputation' to describe the correlation between the above-described principles of causality in narrative. Referring to Aristotle, Ricoeur uses the wording 'one after the other 'and' one because of the other' to denote the complex mechanisms of causality. In *Time and Narrative,* Ricoeur undertakes a philosophical discussion of 'the principle of causality.' Hume is responsible for the most rigorous formulation of the thesis of 'causality.' 'Causality' as understood in the empiricist tradition, means simply "a regular connection between two types of logically distinct events."[180] According to Mandelbaum, however, "causality expresses the continuity of a singular process."[181] Thus, Mandelbaum provides us with the following definition of 'causality:' "The cause is the whole process; the effect is its endpoint."[182] Mandelbaum argues that: "It is only for the sake of

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Rimmon-Kenan in Nelles and Lang, *Frameworks: Narrative Level and Embedded Narrative* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 104-05. Shlomith-Rimmon Kenan, pp.18-19. See Russian Formalists and Tomashevsky (66) in William Nelles and Peter Lang *Frameworks: Narrative level and embedded narrative.* p. 105. Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin, New York: Mouton, 1982), p. 39.

[175] Seymour Chatman in Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ohio State University Press, 1987), p. 104.

[176] Edmond L. Volpe, *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Novels* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), p. 211. Volpe in Carl E. Rollyson Jr, *Uses of the Past in the Novels of William Faulkner* (Lincoln: iUniverse, 2007), p. 45. *Uses of the Past in the Novels of William Faulkner.*

[177] Volpe in Rollyson, p. 45.

[178] See Roland Barthes on narrativity: "The work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language only exists in the movement of discourse or again, text is experienced only in an activity of production." R. Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay* (London: Blackwell, 1990), p. 157. Barthes in Martin McQuillan, *The Narrative Reader* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2000)*,* p. 206.

[179] Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation. The Theory and Interpretation of Narrative Series* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1997), p. 104-05.

[180] Ricoeur *Time and Narrative*, p. 200.

[181] Ibidem.

[182] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* p. 200

convenience that we isolate from the whole process the most variable of its factors and make it a cause distinct from its effect."[183] Following Mandelbaum, Ricoeur concludes: "[…] analysis of the cause of a particular occurrence involves tracing the various factors that are jointly responsible for the occurrence being what it was, and not being different."[184] Although differences of opinion still exist, Ricoeur concludes that "causal explanation always involves linking a cause and effect together in such a way that they may be said to constitute aspects of a simple on-going process."[185]

In relation to narrative, Prince makes a distinction between what he calls 'explicit causality' and 'implicit causality.'[186] However, Ronen suggests that Prince (1982) related causality to narrativity rather than to the plot.[187] Ronen points out that E. M. Forster, as early as 1927, distinguished plot from story by differentiating temporal connections from causal ones.[188] Following Forster, Ronen makes this a rule, claiming that: "[…] The logical connection between cause and effect does not require a chronological contiguity."[189] As a consequence, Ronen argues, narrative can take multiple syntactic and semantic forms. However, because causality and chronology go together, to isolate them from each other is pointless in the process of narrative analysis. Ronen concludes by pointing to a close tie between causality and chronology: "Not only does causality imply chronology, but also both principles are present in narratological plot models."[190] Chronology, Ronen argues, is a mimetic principle whereas causality is a logical one. Ronen suggests that, in analyzing narratives, we need to get beyond the mimetic principle. As examples of non-mimetic logical models of plot Ronen gives Barthes's logical model and Pavel's 1985 causal-model.[191] Ronen writes: "Pavel concludes that chronology is not part of the deep level, whereas the deep narrative structure is autonomous in relation to the chronological order of events."[192] However, Pavel, I would say, fails to fully acknowledge the significance of the time factor, and therefore the human cognitive factor, since by rejecting chronology he also rejects all the aspects of temporality. Ronen writes: "deep narrative structures include a level of abstraction at which the order of presenting plot components (events) in the narrative differs from the temporal order of their occurrence."[193] One of the limitations of Pavel's model of plot is that it does not explain the

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[183] Barthes, pp. 200-201.
[184] Barthes, pp. 200-201.
[185] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* p. 200.
[186] Prince (1987)*,* p. 11.
[187] Ronen, p. 830.
[188] Barthes, pp. 200-201.
[189] Ronen, p. 830. Ronen refers the interested reader to Barthes's distinction between chronology and causality of plot 1966a. Barthes in Ronen, p. 830.
[190] Ronen, p. 830.
[191] Ronen, p. 830.
[192] Ronen, p. 830.
[193] Ronen, p. 829.

narrative using "the real-life schemata" that are bound to human temporality. What remains to be explored after structuralism is the three-dimensional plot: chronology, causality and temporality.[194]

2.13. Faulknerian version of a perfectly chronological narrative in *As I Lay Dying*.

The main characteristic feature of Faulkner's major period is Aristotelian 'strict linearity of plot' and his recurrent experimentation with the non-linear possibilities of arranging material. As I have argued in this chapter, plot is always characterized by linearity.[195] On the other hand, as Ireland argues, it is rather a nonlinearity that is a characteristic feature of modern narrative.[196] From a different perspective, Smith has questioned why so many literary theorists give their entire focus to 'the total linearity' of literary narratives, ignoring the narratives 'social and circumstantial context.'[197] The next chapter unravels the sociological relationship among the basic elements of narrative: character, thought, and language.

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[194] Pavel cited in Ronen, p. 830.

[195] Cf. Ken Ireland, *The Sequential dynamics of narrative: Energies at the margins of fiction* (London: Associated University Press, 2001), p. 56. See, in particular, Ireland's analysis of nonlinearity of *The Sound and the Fury*.

[196] Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, 'Afterthoughts on Narrative: III: Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories,' *Critical Inquiry* (1980), 213-16 (p. 234). Smith in Ireland, p. 51.

[197] Ireland, p. 56.

Chapter III

The Bakhtinian concept of character in Faulkner's polyphonic novel: the 'unfinalizability' of characters (heroes) in *As I Lay Dying*.

In this chapter, I will suggest how the writings of Bakhtin on the theory of novel cast *As I Lay Dying* in a new light by revealing the novel's "new way of conceptualizing time" and a new way of conceptualizing a character not only as "being" but as "becoming."[1] To support this point, I will initially compare and contrast the Aristotelian artificiality of narrative and rigidity of plot with the Bakhtinian concept of the 'unfinalizability of the hero.' Like the Bakhtinian 'hero', Faulknerian characters are always in motion - in the process of becoming. They are always ready to surprise the reader by acting in ways that transcend their apparent characteristics. Moreover, they show a deep awareness of their own process of change and development. In the polyphonic novel, as in real life, it is this constant flux that is responsible for the Bakhtinian "openness of time." As Bakhtin noted, "Time forges the new."[2] In this chapter, I will address the issue of 'the hero' in Faulkner's polyphonic novel. In this regard, I will take up the Bakhtinian concept of 'the Romantic hero' and his/her unfulfilled individual quests. However, the question to be answered in the second part of this chapter is not about what is presented but how it is presented. The fifteen narrators in *As I Lay Dying* take turns to speak of themselves, others and the novel's dead protagonist, Addie Bundren. The fundamental question is, once again, the plurality of voices in Faulkner's novels under analysis. Finally, I will elaborate upon the idea of the serial narrator as a group narrator in *As I Lay Dying*[3] in regards to the Bakhtinian concept of 'carnival' as an aspect of heteroglossia in a polyphonic novel.

3.1. The Aristotelian categories of plot and person.

Time and Narrative, Ricoeur's three-volume study of the nature and the various aspects of narrative, opens by pointing out that Aristotle was convinced of the superiority of plot over character.[4] In support of this, Ricoeur quotes the Aristotelian definition of

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[1] Bakhtin in Paul Cobley *Narrative: the New Critical Idiom,* p. 22.
[2] Ibidem.
[3] Many critics see *As I Lay Dying* as a group-narrative. See, for example, Calvin Bedient cited in Cox. Dianne L. Cox, *William Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying'* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), p. 98.
[4] Aristotle cited in Ricoeur. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), Vol. I, p. 35.

hero/character as "persons engaged in action."[5] Elsewhere, Ricoeur quotes Aristotle on the subordination of characters to plot: "For tragedy is not an imitation of men but of actions and of life. It is in action that happiness and unhappiness are found, and the end we aim at is a kind of activity, not a quality. What is more, without action there would not be a tragedy, but there would be without characterization."[6] Ricoeur points out that Aristotle does not deny the importance of the category of character, only attributes to it minor function. Ricoeur argues that beginning with Henry James and Frank Kermode, literary theorists still continue to make a clear-cut distinction between the two categories but they also emphasize the connection between the two or even their inseparability.[7] As Kermode suggested: "[…] to develop a character means move narration, and to develop a plot means enriching a character."[8]

3.2. The Bakhtinian concept of unfinalizabilty.

Irving Howe writes about the multiple-perspective technique used in *As I Lay Dying* However, Howe does not speak about polyphony. He gives his entire attention to the speaking persons in *As I Lay Dying.* He argues:

> As he expands the scope of his fiction from the family to the town, Faulkner persists in his on-going experimentation with narrative. Here, our disorientation derives less from the use of multiple perspectives than from the multiplicity of plot lines. Each story necessitates another, until plot lines seem to spread out indefinitely. As he did in *As I Lay Dying,* Faulkner refuses us a single, fixed perspective, but not by placing us in several minds successfully; rather, he moves us from one place and time to another as the narrator focuses his attention on one character's story only to turn away to another's, as if he too were trying to keep up with the stories trying to tell.[9]

As noted in Chapter Two, there is no external narrator *per se* in *As I Lay Dying.* In this chapter, however, we will move on from the Aristotelian, Structural and Formal discussions of plot to the concerns of the polyphonic narrative *sui generis.* Bakhtin argues that Formalist

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[5] Aristotle *Poetics*, 48a1. Aristotle in Ricoeur, Vol. I, p. 35. Ricoeur refers the interested reader to the second chapter of *Poetics,* in which Aristotle for the first time speaks of his main principles in narrative theory.

[6] Aristotle, 50 a 16-24. Aristotle in Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol., p. 37.

[7] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol., p. 37.

[8] Kermode in Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol., p. 37.

[9] Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 87.

interpretations overlook much of the narrative analysis because plot is not the only major narrative element. Moreover, Bakhtin asserts that plot cannot be treated as "a narrative technique" but only as an element of narrative: an element of the fictional world not discourse.[10] The next question then is: "what is the status of the plot in a polyphonic narrative?"[11]

Bakhtin writes on the category of plot in the polyphonic novel, using Dostoevsky's novels as the object of analysis:

> Plot in Dostoevsky is absolutely devoid of any sort of finalizing functions. Its goal is to place a person in various situations that expose and provoke him, to bring people together and make them collide in conflict – in such a way, however, that they do not remain within the area of plot-related contact but exceed its bounds. The real connections begin where ordinary plot ends, having fulfilled its service function.[12]

Bakhtin continues this line of thought on plot: "At the points where their [the characters'] fields of vision intersect lie the culminating points in the novel. At these points also lie the clamps holding together the novelistic whole. They are external to the plot."[13] Morson and Emerson attempt to make this Bakhtinian line of thought clearer by suggesting, "the clamps holding the work together are indeed enabled by the plot but not contained in it."[14] More importantly, for Bakhtin, plot is no longer the Aristotelian type of plot "where characters have no volition and they are doomed whether they want or not, to the sequence of events."[15] Instead, Bakhtin advances an argument that plot in a polyphonic novel depends on what characters choose to do and what they say. As a result, according to the Bakhtinian theory of polyphony, it is the category of character that comes into sharp focus:

> Dostoevsky's character is not an image, but a fully-valid word, pure voice; we don't see him – we hear him; everything that we see and

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[10] Bakhtin in Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of Prosaics,* (California: Stanford University Press Stanford, 1990), p. 19.

[11] Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Creation of Prosaics,* p. 247.

[12] M. M. Bakhtin, "Three Fragments from the 1929 Edition of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art,"* in Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984), pp. 276-277. Bakhtin cited in Morson, "Bakhtin, Genres, and Temporality," *NLA* vol. 22. No. 4. (1991), pp. 1071-1092.

[13] Ibidem.

[14] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics* (Baltimore and London: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 14. Bakhtin cited in Wayne C. Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the challenge of Feminist Criticism." in *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work*. Ed. Gary Saul Morson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 152.

[15] Ibidem.

know with the exception of his word, - is not essential and is swallowed up by his word, as its material, or it remains outside of him as stimulating and provoking factors. We will convince ourselves further, that all artistic organization of Dostoevsky's novel is directed towards the discovering and understanding of that word of the character and in relation to him.[16]

Here Bakhtin clearly privileges character over plot. Richard Pearce similarly argues that Faulkner privileges character over plot: "Faulkner avoids closed design by refusing to privilege plot or theme over characterization; indeed, in its inherent openness and ability to be transformed, character in Faulkner furnishes dialogic structure that can never be closed or silenced."[17] It thus becomes clear that the new unfinalized character / hero makes for the novel's unfinalizability, thus creating a new novelistic genre. This corresponds to Bakhtin's remarks on "the fundamental open-endedness of the polyphonic novel." [18] Morson and Emerson write about this main presupposition of Bakhtin's theory of polyphony as follows: "Because the polyphonic author does not know the outcome of dialogues in the real present of the creative process, he cannot decide in advance what will happen to the characters."[19] In short, Bakhtin bases his polyphonic argument on the observation that in a polyphonic novel the author does not predetermine the characters' destiny. Bakhtin claimed: "Plot becomes a way of setting optimally favourable situations for intense dialogues with unforeseen outcomes."[20] As a result, Bakhtin then introduces a new notion of plot. In a polyphonic novel plot plays, what Bakhtin calls, "a mere service function."[21] Plot in a polyphonic novel is no longer "the clamp that holds the work together."[22] Plot is just what happens to happen as a result of dialogue.[23] Accordingly, Bakhtin suggests that we need to get beyond 'plot analysis' to understand the nature of the polyphonic narrative. One of the corollaries of this changed view of plot is that, for Bakhtin, every character must be considered in their sociological context:

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[16] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 31. "Герой Достоевского не образ, а полновесное слово, чистый голос; мы его не видим – мы его слышим; всё же, что мы видим и знаем помимо его сова, - не существенно и поглощается словом, как его материал, или остается вне его, как стимулирующий и провоцирующий фактор. Мы убедимся далее, что вся художественная конструкция романа Достоевского направлена на раскрытие и уяснение этого слова героя и несёт по отношению к нему провоцирующие и направляющие функции."

[17] *Knowledge as Interest and Design,* p. 42. 1991.

[18] *Knowledge as Interest and Design,* p. 42. 1991. Also, TF 1929. P. 277.

[19]19 Ibidem.

[20] Bakhtin cited in Gary Saul Morson "Bakhtin, genres, and temporality," *NLH*, Vol. 22, No. 4. (1991), 247.

[21] Ibidem.

[22] Ibidem.

[23] Ibidem.

> Social man [and there is no other kind] is surrounded by ideological phenomena, by objects – signs ['vesch' – sign] of various types and categories: by words in the multifarious forms of their realization (sounds, writing, and the others), by scientific statements, religious symbols and beliefs, works of art, and so on. All of these things in their totality comprise the ideological environment. Human consciousness does not come into contact with existence directly, but through the medium of the surrounding ideological world. (…) In fact, the individual consciousness can only become a consciousness by being realized in the forms of the ideological environment proper to it: in language, in conventionalized gesture, in an artistic image, in myth, and so on.[24]

The Bundren family as a social unit provides the immediate sociological context in As I Lay Dying. The broader sociological context is added by the existence of secondary characters like Cora and their perspective on the Bundren family as a social group. However, for this chapter, the question I will address is the issue underlying the Bakhtinian sociolinguistic connections: namely, in what sense are the characters related irrespectively of the plot events? This begins with the material conditions of their existence. *As I Lay Dying* depicts the Bundrens as hard workers who cope with their lives in their own particular ways. And this life philosophy is passed from Anse to his children:

> Pa's feet are badly splayed, his toes cramped and bent and warped, with no toenail at all on his little toes, from working so hard in the wet in homemade shoes when he was a boy. Beside his chair his brogans sit. They look as though they had been hacked with a blunt ax out of pig-iron. Vernon has been to town. I have never seen him go to town in overalls. His wife, they say. Say taught school too, once. I fling the dipper dregs to the ground and wipe my mouth on my sleeve. It is going to rain before morning. Maybe before dark. 'Down to the barn,' I say. 'Harnessing the team.' (p. 11).

Anse's feet are a symbol of poverty. It is obvious that Anse must have worked hard all his life. All the Bundren children work hard to support their family. However, as Bakhtin writes: "The real connections begin where ordinary plot ends, having fulfilled its service function."[25] On the example of Dostoyevsky's novels, Morson and Emerson argue that in a polyphonic novel whether the plot is banal or intriguing is not the point. Instead, as noted in Chapter 1, the principal idea behind polyphony is dialogism – contact between the various consciousnesses. As Morson and Emerson put it, in a polyphonic novel: "Plot exists so that it may be

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[24] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics* (Baltimore and London: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 14. Bakhtin cited in Wayne C. Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the challenge of Feminist Criticism." in *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work*. Ed. Gary Saul Morson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 152.
[25] Ibidem.

transcended by characters achieving 'extra-plot' connections."[26] In addition, it is clear from Caryl Emerson's discussion of the Bakhtinian model that all the characters in a polyphonic novel take part in what Emerson denotes as 'perpendicular activities.'[27] Two new principal points are to be demonstrated here. I wish to show, first of all, that the characters/homodiegetic narrators in *As I Lay Dying* are capable of building relationships with others via the verbal medium of speech (in Bakhtin – 'horizontal activity'). Secondly, I wish to show that they also, or, rather, first of all, get involved with the world by the direct medium of their consciousness. This is called 'vertical' activity. Both types of activity of a character/hero in a polyphonic novel have far-reaching implications, as they are responsible for the creation of the novel's social landscape.[28] Emerson uses the term psyche. Emerson points out: "These double activities are constant, and their interactions, in fact, constitute the psyche."[29] However, Emerson notes that for Bakhtin 'the psyche' is not an individual but a 'social entity.'[30] As Bakhtin puts it: "[the psyche] enjoys extraterritorial status [as] a social entity that penetrates inside the organism of the individual person."[31] Emerson accordingly proposes here to put quotation marks between 'inner life', 'inner speech' and 'consciousness.'[32]

I would suggest these are three different modes of subjective representation and that they have to be approached accordingly. The question underlying the 'perpendicular' activities of the hero/character in a polyphonic novel is in what ways 'the consciousness' of the hero is related to the world/his environment and to other characters.[33] I agree with Emerson that plot alone is not responsible for the structure of the polyphonic narrative as it "can only explain the dialogues in terms of past and future action."[34] Instead, we need to focus on the polyphonic possibility of 'many plots' opened by the dialogues. Morson and Emerson write about this openness to "possibility" of plots in a polyphonic novel as follows:

> As Bakhtin also puts the point, the plot that happens to have developed is conceived as only one of many possible plots that could have developed. We are invited to draw 'dotted lines' to other possible plots that could have developed out of the same initial dialogic material. Plot by itself is merely a

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[26] Bakhtin cited in Morson and Emerson, p. 247. PDP, p. 105.
[27] Caryl Emerson, "The Outer Word and Inner Speech: Bakhtin, Vygotsky, and the Internalization of Language," *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 10., No. 2. (Dec. 1983), 245-264 (p. 249).
[28] Caryl Emerson, "The Outer Word and Inner Speech: Bakhtin, Vygotsky, and the Internalization of Language," *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 10., No. 2. (Dec. 1983), 245-264 (p. 249).
[29] Ibidem.
[30] Ibidem.
[31] Ibidem. *MPL*, p. 39.
[32] Ibidem.
[33] Ibidem.
[34] Ibidem pp. 248-9.

'Procrustean bed' that characters escape in quintessential moments of dialogic exchange beyond all plot – and beyond all structure of any kind.[35]

Another major presupposition of polyphony is, therefore, that in a polyphonic novel the Aristotelian 'finalized plot' does not exist as such. Instead of the rigid Aristotelian plot, we encounter here what Bakhtin called "eventness:[36] "[…] a live event played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two or several consciousnesses."[37] Bakhtin explains:[38]

> Not a thought but an exchange of thoughts, not an utterance (isolated and autonomous), but an exchange of utterances with the other within the boundaries of a given society. Thought becomes a real thought in the process of exchange of thoughts, i.e., in the process of speaking out for the other.

My focus is, therefore, not so much on utterances as expressions of consciousness but as exchanges of thought.

3.3 . The Bakhtinian concept of 'man' as a forever-becoming being.

Bakhtin's 'man' (hero) is never 'finalized':

> An individual cannot be completely incarnated into the flesh of existing sociohistorical categories. There is no mere form that would be able to incarnate once and forever all of his human possibilities and needs, no form in which he could exhaust himself down to the last word (…) There always remains an unrealized surplus of humanness; there always remains a need for the future, and a place for this future must be found (…) Reality as we have it in the novel is only one of many possible realities, it is not inevitable, not arbitrary, it bears within itself other possibilities.[39]

In the preceding section we have discussed the Bakhtinian concept of unfinalizabilty in a polyphonic novel as opposed to the 'finalized' Aristotelian concept of plot in a monologic novel. In this part, we shall be looking at 'a new concept of man (character, hero)' in the novel as a consequence of the unfinalizabilty due to polyphony. Bakhtin writes on the novel as a genre: "[…] from the very beginning, the novel 'developed as a genre that had at its core a

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[35] Ibidem. p. 251.

[36] Ibidem.

[37] Ibidem. *PDP*, p. 88.

[38] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 103. "Не мысль, а обмен мыслями, не высказывние (изолированное и самодовлеющее), а обмен высказываниями с другими в перделах данного общества. Мысль становится действительной мыслью в процессе обмена мыслями, т.е. в процессе высказывания для другого."

[39] Bakhtin cited in Gary Saul Morson, "Bakhtin, Genres, and Temporality," pp. 1071-1092. P. 1085-1086.

new way of conceptualizing time."[40] Paul Cobley discusses the consequences this new concept of 'time' in the novel has for 'a man' in a polyphonic novel. As a consequence of polyphony, and therefore unfinalizability, a man in a novel is no longer 'finalized' and 'completed' by plot.[41] The contrary is the case. For Bakhtin, man " is not only being but becoming."[42] Bakhtin writes:

> What is essential for the aesthetic standpoint is the following: I am – for myself – the subiectum of any self – activity whatsoever (seeing, hearing, thinking, feeling, and so forth); in my lived experiences, I start out from within myself and I am directed forward, ahead of myself, upon the world, upon an object. The object, stands over against me as subiectum. The point here is not the epistemological subject-object correlation, the point is the living correlation of me – the one and only subiectum, and the rest of the world as an object not only of my cognition and my outer senses but also of my volition and feeling. The other human being exists for me entirely in the object and his I is only an object for me.[43]

The Bakhtinian man looks from within himself outward to the world, but also from the perspective of the past into the prospective future. As in real life, in a polyphonic novel, man continues to develop until his fictional death. Bakhtin writes of his concept of the 'man/hero' in a polyphonic novel as follows: "[...] man is not a final and defined quantity upon which firm calculations can be made; man is free, and can, therefore, violate any regulating norms which might be thrust upon him."[44] As Morson points out, Bakhtin rejected the idea of a finalized man. In Bakhtin's view, a man/hero is forever able to change and surprise the reader. Bakhtin puts emphasis on human volition and the possibility of choice, or rather of many choices, and the fact that the consequences of our choices form a sort of chain of reactions. In other words, the particular choice (rather than all other choices available at the moment of decision) opens the possibilities of new choices. Bakhtin's provisionally disjunctive conception of 'a man as being' and 'a man as becoming' can readily be compared to how characters are presented in all Faulkner's novels. Faulkner himself speaks of his concept of characters as: "[...] quite real and quite constant; he may sometimes forget what they did, but the character I don't forget, and when the book is finished, that character is not done, he still is going on at the same new

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[40] Bakhtin cited in Paul Cobley, *Narrative: the New Critical Idiom* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000)*, p. 22.
[41] Ibidem. Bakhtin (2008), p. 38.
[42] Ibidem. Bakhtin (1968: 363-4).
[43] M. M. Bakhtin, "Art and Answerability: Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1990), p. 38
[44] Bakhtin cited in Gary Saul Morson, "Bakhtin, genres, and temporality," 1081. *PDP*, 59.

devilment that sooner or later I will find out about and write about."[45] As Andrew Hook says: "It is something of a cliché to suggest that great writers allow their characters independent life; in Faulkner's case the cliché contains a large measure of truth." He goes on: "Faulkner's characters are exactly men-or-women-in motion; they take possession of the stories in which they are invoked; driven, doomed, or whatever, they seem simply to be themselves, doing whatever they are compelled to do."[46]

3.4. Bakhtinian unfinalizability as a consequence of polyphony.

As this suggests, Bakhtin derives a new concept of the hero/character from his reading of Dostoevsky:

> In Dostoyevsky's artistic thinking, the genuine life of the personality takes place at the point of non-coincidence between a man and himself, at this point of departure beyond the limits of all that he is a material being, a being that can be spied on, defined, predicated apart from his own will, at second hand.[47]

Similarly, Cleanth Brooks writes on the Faulknerian concept of 'a man in a novel' as 'forever active,' making individual and ethical choices and bearing their consequences. Bakhtin frequently emphasises the importance of the individual 'I'[48] ("(individual-single-I) and *solus ipse* ('only me alone or alone only) as the subject who contains [cognizable being] in his consciousness:[49]

> This world is given to me from my single place as concrete and unique. For my fated progressing consciousness – it, as an architectonic whole, is located around me as single centre of the origin of an act-deed: it is located with regards to me so far as my act-vision, act-thought, and act-deed originate in me. In correlation with my only place of active origin in the world all conceivable verbose and temporary relations take on a valuable centre, accumulating together

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[45] Quotation taken from one of Faulkner's letters written when he was in the process of writing the last part of *The Snopes Trilogy,* explaining the discrepancies in the various accounts of the same events. Faulkner cited in Andrew Hook, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Fiction,* ed. Robert A. Lee (New York: St. Martin Press, 1990), p. 175.
[46] Ibidem, p. 177. Hook gives Ratliff in *The Snopes Trilogy* as an example of that sort of independence.
[47] Faulkner cited in Andrew Hook, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Fiction,* ed. Robert A. Lee (New York: St. Martin Press, 1990), p. 175. *PDP*, p. 59.
[48] Askoldov emphasizes the difference between the traces of personality of the character of the hero in monologic novels and the Bakhtinian concept of hero as an individual being; he also explores the difference between характер (character), and тип (type) and темперамент (temperament) and личность (personality).
[49] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 1, p. 446. and solus ipse (only me alone, alone I) "индивидуально-единственное Я только я один, один я' только я один или один только субъект содержит познаваемое бытие в своём сознании."

around him in some steady concrete architectonic whole – possible unity becomes a real singularity. My active single place is not only an abstract geometric centre, but emotionally responsible – wilful, concrete centre of concrete diversity of being of the world, in which spatial and time elements – a really single place and unrepeatable historic day and day of finalization – necessary, but not exhaustive moment in a real for me centrality.[50]

The *solus ipse* 'I' is opposed to all other 'I' (Я) and the outer world (внешний мир): it "opposes all other 'Is' and the external world." [51] The hero of Faulkner's major creative period is, like Dostoyevsky's hero, 'a man in motion' because of his development and the choices he makes over his life.[52] As Reed writes on *As I Lay Dying*: "*Becoming* is the subject of *As I Lay Dying*. The change that takes place between beginning and end is far less important than multiple continuing experiences in the middle – because the narrative design determinates that it will be so."[53]

3.5. The Bakhtinian concept of time: its openness.

Without 'volition' and 'freedom of choice' there would be no ethical development of a character. Thus, the polyphonic novel opens a new dimension in the novelistic genre by, as Bakhtin says, "freeing the man." Bakhtin affirms: "The last unfinalized instance in a human being (his freedom and the possibility of absolute regeneration and transformation). The last word belongs not to the author, but to a character, and it is not prompted by the author."[54] Bakhtin points out the two major consequences of 'polyphony' as the phenomenon that 'makes available sides of a human being' not previously assimilable 'from monologic positions, including a real sense of eventness and freedom.[55] This is how Bakhtin writes of Dostoevsky's achievement: "We consider the creation of the polyphonic novel a huge step forward not only

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[50] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works,* vol. 1, p. 26. "Этот мир дан мне с моего единственного места как конкретный и единственный. Для моего участного поступающего сознания – он, как архитектоническое целое, асположен вокруг меня как единственного центра исхождения моего поступка: он находиться мною, поскольку я исхожу из себя в моём поступке-видении, поступке-мысли, поступке-деле."

[51] противопоставляется всем другим. Ibidem.

[52] Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: Vision of Good and Evil,* p. 39. Cf. Forster's (1927) definition of 'round character' as "a complex, multidimensional, unpredictable character, who is capable of convincingly surprising behaviour." Cleanth Brooks, "Faulkner's Vision of Good and Evil," *The Massachusetts Review,* Vol. 3, No. 4 (1962), 692-712. Forster (1927) in Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology,* p. 83.

[53] Joseph W. Reed, Jr. *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 94.

[54] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works of M. M. Bakhtin,* Vol. 3, p. 432. Собрание сочинений, том. 3, стр. 432. "Последняя незавершимая инстанция в человеке (его свобода, возможность абсолютного перерождения-преображения). Последнее слово принадлежит не автору, а герою, и оно не подсказано автором."

[55] PDP, p. 270. Bakhtin in Gary Saul Morson, "Bakhtin, Genres, and Temporality," 1071-1092. (p. 1077).

in the development of novelistic prose. It seems to us that one could speak directly of a special polyphonic artistic thinking extending even beyond the bounds of the novel as a genre."[56] The lack of omniscient narrator is responsible for more freedom given to the homodiegetic narrators.[57] However, the fundamental issue in the Bakhtinian theory of the polyphonic novel, once again, is openness of time. Bakhtin rejects 'determinism' and 'relativism' on the grounds that: both philosophies do not take account of the possibility of choice. To use a Bakhtinian phrase, both the above-mentioned philosophies "close down the time."[58] By contrast, in the polyphonic novel, writes Bakhtin, time "forges the new."

3.6. Bakhtinian presentness as a consequence of polyphony.

The question of 'openness' in a polyphonic novel is directly connected to the polyphonic phenomenon of 'presentness.'[59] Bakhtin explains the historical reason behind the phenomenon of 'presentness' in a polyphonic novel as follows: "From the very beginning, then, the novel was structured in the zone of direct contact with inconclusive present-day reality. At its core lay personal experience and true creative imagination."[60] The question of 'presentness' is first posed in Bakhtin in terms of plot in the novel; it becomes more precise when he speaks of time in the novel: "Each present is one of many possible presents and each plot is in any case conceived as only one of many possible plots."[61] It is clear from Morson's discussion of the Bakhtinian idea of presentness that neither present nor future is predetermined by what becomes past. Bakhtin describes 'presentness' as an intrinsic feature of polyphony: "[…] nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future."[62] Bleikasten writes similarly of 'overwhelming' atmosphere of presentness in *As I Lay Dying*:

> Unlike conventional narrative, *As I Lay Dying*, does not move from a more or less distant past toward a closer past or toward the present. Not is there any question, as in some of Faulkner's novels, of starting

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[56] Ibidem.

[57] André Bleikasten, *Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying'* (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 64.

[58] Bakhtin in Gary Saul Morson, "Bakhtin, genres, and temporality,"(1991), 1073.

[59] See Lothar Hönnighausen on the Bakhtinian 'openness' of Faulkner's novels, in *Faulkner at 100 Retrospect and Prospect: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha,* 1997, ed. Donald M. Kartiganer and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), p. 13.

[60] Bakhtin cited in Jeanne Campbell Reesman, *American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), p. 17.

[61] *PDP*, p. 84. Bakhtin in Morson, "Bakhtin, genres, and temporality," pp. 1080-81.

[62] Ibidem, p. 1086. *PDP*, p. 166.

from the present (of the hero or the narrator) to grope backward in time, of radiating from the hub of memory in action. Whatever the point reached in the course of reading, it coincides most often with the 'now' of a vision and an action: we are in the present, we share it with the hero-narrators of the story, associated with both an action and a narrative in progress.[63]

Bakhtin writes of a similar temporal experience of the reader of Dostoevsky's novels:

What has a meaning only as earlier or later, is a burden in its particular moment. What is justified only as past, or as future, or as present in relation to past and future, it does not matter to him and is not included in his world. That is why his characters also do not recollect, they have no biography in the sense of past as finalized experiences. They remember from their past only that which to them has not ceased to be a present and which they still feel as present: an unatoned sin, a crime, and an unforgiven insult. Only such facts from the biographies of his characters Dostoevsky includes in the frames of his novels, as they are compatible with his principle of simultaneity and presentness. That is why there is no causality in Dostoevsky's novel, no origins, no explanations from the past, from social influences of the environment, the bringing-up etc.[64]

This is the cognitive-ethical context of the Dostoevskean protagonist.

3.7. Bakhtin and the cognitive-ethical context of the hero.

Bakhtin was convinced that his theory of the novel takes an anti-Kantian stand.[65] However, Allan Reid names three typically-Kantian aspects of the Bakhtinian hero that cannot be ignored: "cognition, act and the aesthetic."[66] It is the first of these, which provides the focus for this section.

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[63] Bleikasten, p. 50.

[64] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 6, p. 23. "Возможность одновременного сосуществования, возможность быть рядом или друг против друга является для Достоевского как бы критерием отбора существенного от несущественного. То же, что имеет смысл лишь как раньше или как позже, довлеет своему моменту, что оправдано лишь как прошлое, или как будущее, или как настоящее в отношении к прошлому и будущему, то для него не существенно и не входит в его мир. Поэтому и герои его ничего не вспоминают, у них нет биографии в смысле прошлого и вполне пережитого. Они помнят из своего прошлого только то, что для них не перестало быть настоящим и переживается ими как настоящее: неискупленный грех, преступление, непрощенная обида. Только такие факты биографии героев вводит Достоевский в рамки своих романов, ибо они согласны с его принципом одновременности. Поэтому в романе Достоевского нет причинности, нет генезиса, нет объяснений из прошлого, из влияний среды, воспитания и пр."

[65] Allan Reid, *Literature as communication and cognition in Bakhtin and Lotman* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1990), p. 82. M.M. Bakhtin *Art and answerability: Early philosophical essays,* p. xlv.

[66] Ibidem. For a more extended treatment of Bakhtin and Neo-Kantianism see Clark and Holquist "The influence of Kant in the Early work of M.M. Bakhtin," pp. 229-313. See Bakhtinian ideas on philosophical

Cognition is responsible for what Bakhtin calls the 'action of contemplation,' meaning 'active' and 'productive' thinking.[67] Bakhtin outlined his position on the cognitive-ethical concept of the hero in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*:

> From within my actual participation in the event of being, the outside world is the horizon of my active, act-performing consciousness. It is only in cognitive, ethical, and practico-instrumental that I can (so long as I remain within myself) orient myself in this world as in an event and introduce a certain order into its composition with respect to objects (…). From within my own consciousness – as a consciousness participating in being – the world is the object of my acts: acts of thinking, acts of feeling, acts of speaking, acts of doing.[68]

In Bakhtin, as well as in Kant, cognition and consciousness are of prime importance. Bakhtin argues:

> There is no first or last discourse, and dialogical context knows no limits (it disappears into an unlimited past and in our unlimited future). Even past meanings, that is those that have arisen in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (completed once and for all, finished), they will always change (renewing themselves in the course of the dialogue's subsequent development, and yet to come. At every moment of the dialogue, there are immense and unlimited masses of forgotten meanings, but, in some subsequent moments, as the dialogue moves forward, they will return to memory and live in renewed from (in a new context). Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will celebrate its rebirth. The problem of the great temporality.[69]

In this context, we might consider the following comment by Bakhtin on the hero of the polyphonic novel:

> Dostoyevsky's heroes are never described, they describe themselves. They are never represented at second hand and no authorial 'surplus' finalizes them. Strictly speaking, we do not see them at all, we see, instead, their self-conscious image of themselves. Whatever might require an external perspective to depict, whatever the hero could not himself be conscious of, we do not learn about.[70]

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postulates by Kant and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.* (1781) in *Bakhtin and His others: (Inter)subjectivity,chronotope,dialogism,* ed. by Lisa Steinby and Tintii Klapuri (London, New York, Delhi: Anthem Press, 2013), p. xvii-xviii. For further reading see Bakhtin "The Problem of content, material and form in verbal art" in *Art and Answerability,* pp. 257-326 (1990b, 279).

[67] Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays,* p. 24.

[68] Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability,* pp. 97-98.

[69] Bakhtin in Todorov (1984), p. 110.

[70] Bakhtin in Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson*, Creation of Prosaics*, p. 264. *PDP*, p. 49.

We can understand from this that characters in a polyphonic novel are connected to each other not only by 'the causal' factors of the plot but also by the cognitive link of one consciousness with another consciousness.[71] David Minter points out that for Faulkner: "the I am is all consciousness."[72] Morson and Emerson put this observation in this way:

> Outside of the hero's consciousness in these works there can be no independent objective reality, but only 'another consciousness'; alongside in field of vision [there can be only] another field of vision; alongside its point of view on the world, another point of view on the world.[73]

Emerson's observations correspond with what Bleikasten has said about how the consciousness of the fifteen narrators in this novel comes together in ongoing *agon.* "[F]rom one consciousness to another," writes Bleikasten, "we are baffled by the sudden change of outlook, but at no point does the thread of the narrative break, and by the very switching of viewpoint the narration unquestionably makes up in vividness and variety."[74] Bakhtin argues that this self-consciousenss is 'a deeply social act': "Self-consciousness is impossible without words, a word by its nature exists for another, wants to be heard and understood. Neither consciousness nor self-consciousness can do without the other."[75]

It is this view of the human as 'unfinalised, non-coinciding with itself', as a being that which lives in the medium of ideas (not person history, not that of sjuzeht), which 'discovers itself only in an open dialogic stand' that links the novels of Dostoevsky and Faulkner.

3.7 Propp and characters as 'spheres of action.'

In the context of the priority of character over plot, it is useful at this stage to consider the work of Vladimir Propp. Propps's morphology of characters addresses narrative logic from the side of character not that of plot. However, Propp suggests we treat characters as 'functions' attributed to them by the narrative logic. By 'functions,' as Ricoeur notes, Propp means 'segments of action.'[76] Elsewhere, Ricoeur describes in more detail what Propp's

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[71] Ibidem.

[72] David Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1980), p. 74.

[73] Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work,* p. 74. Ibidem. Cf. Ricoeur's concept of, what he calls, "a wholly immanent narrative consciousness." Ricoeur in William C. Dowling, *Ricoeur in Time and Narrative: An introduction to Temps et Receit*, pp. 96-98. See also Kate Hamburger, *The Logic of Narrative.*

[74] *As I Lay Dying,* p. 52.

[75] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 6, p. 219. "Самосознание как глубинно-социальный акт. Самосознание невозможно без слова, слово же по природе своей существует для другого, хочет быть услышанным и понятым. Ни сознание, ни самосознание не могут обойтись без другого."

[76] Propp cited in Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* Vol., p. 37.

introduced term 'function' entails: "By 'a function,' he means segments of action, or more exactly, abstract forms of action such as abstention, interdiction, violation, reconnaissance, delivery, trickery, and complicity."[77] These are the seven major functions of characters as established by Propp. Consequently, depending on the role played by the characters in the synthesis of the action, Propp distinguishes seven classes of a hero: the villain, the donor (or provider), the helper, the sought-for-person, the dispatcher, the hero and the false hero."[78] In *As I Lay Dying* Peabody serves as a prime example of a helper. Peabody is a doctor who values people more than his own financial interests, as is frequently emphasized in the novel: " 'Damn the money,' I say. 'Did you ever hear of me worrying a fellow before he was ready to pay?"[79] It is Peabody who lends the Bundrens money towards the end of the novel. Peabody is also a sought-for-person for Dewey Dell, when she needs an abortion in the first part of the novel. Jewel is an example of the donor, since he gives his beloved horse away so they can continue their journey and buy new mules. By contrast, MacGowan, who uses the naive Dewey Dell for sex and does not help her in getting an abortion, is clearly a villain. As is Anse, who steals her cake-money.

Let us return, however, to the definition of 'function', Ricoeur defines 'function' as: "[...] an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action."[80] On the basis of his/her actions, each character can also be related to a group. In this context Propp uses the term 'spheres of action.'[81] Propp argues: "The problem of the distribution of functions may be resolved on the plane of the problem concerning the distribution of the spheres of action among the characters."[82] To put it in a different way, we have to establish what is the character's role in regards to the course of action in a tale but also in relation to the distribution of the 'spheres of action,' or rather variations on 'spheres of action,' as proposed by Propp. Propp, for instance, distinguishes between three types of 'spheres of action:' "[...] a sphere of action exactly corresponds to a character (the donor sends the hero), or one character occupies several spheres of action (three for the villain, two for the donor, five for the helper, six for the sought person, four for the hero, three for the false hero), or a single sphere of action is divided among several characters (for example, setting out on the quest brings into plan the hero and the false hero)." [83] Propp makes the

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[77] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* Vol. II, p. 33.
[78] Propp cited in Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* Vol. II, pp. 36-37.
[79] *As I Lay Dying*, p. 44.
[80] Ibidem. p. 33.
[81] Ibidem, p. 36.
[82] Ibidem.
[83] Ibidem.

observation: "Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale."[84] With the 'morphology of character,' Propp shifts the center of narrative theory from the category of plot to that of a character but he also fixes characters within a limited range of roles.

Ricoeur suggests: "Whereas Aristotle had subordinated characters to plot, taken as the encompassing concept in relation to the incidents, character, and thoughts, in the modern novel we see the notion of character overtake that of plot, becoming equal with it, then finally surpass it entirely."[85] Faulkner's polyphonic novels constitute a prime example of novelistic fiction where characters are of crucial importance. However, in all three novels under analysis in this dissertation, plot still takes a central position and remains the only constant narrative element in this "changing of point of view." The Faulknerian polyphonic novels prove that both characters and plot are correlated, and this correlation gives Faulkner's novels its specific quality. The narrative focus is given to characters that also happen to be homodiegetic narrators in the novels in question. However, plot retains its organizational function. This demonstrated by the ease with which the reader can name the major events in *As I Lay Dying.*

3.8.   The Faulknerian romantic hero and his/her individual quests.

All the Bundrens – Anse and his children – have their own reasons for going to Jefferson. However, Anse is the only one who reveals his personal reasons for making the journey with Addie's dead body: one being respect for her last wish, the second being his new teeth.[86] A third, of course, though this is not disclosed until the end, is his desire for a new wife. A particularly striking example of 'a Faulknerian hero and her unfulfilled quest' is that of Dewey Dell. Dewey Dell tells her love-story; the story of a country girl made pregnant by a man who left her as soon as he got to know of her pregnancy (p. 26). For Dewey Dell not her mother's funeral, but an abortion, is the ultimate aim. What is interesting about Dewey Dell's and Anse's individual quests, aside from the fact that Addie wants to escape the consequences of her affair with Lafe and Anse wants a new wife, is the way these two quests intersect throughout the novel. This is clearest when Anse takes Dewey Dell's money to get new teeth for himself and his new wife.

" 'Dont you touch it! If you take it you are a thief.'

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[84] Propp cited in Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* Vol. II, p. 33.

[85] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* Vol. II, p. 9.

[86] *As I Lay Dying* p. John Pilkington, *The Heart of Yoknapatawpha (*University Press of Mississippi, 1981), p. 100.

> 'My own daughter accuses me of being a thief. My own daughter.
> 'Pa. Pa.' 'I have fed you and sheltered you. I give you love and care, yet my own daughter, the daughter of my dead wife, calls me a thief over the mother's grave.'
> 'It's not mine, I tell you. If it was, God knows you could have it.'
> 'Where did you get ten dollars?'
> 'Pa. Pa.'

Gradually, we see how Dewey Dell's plan amounts to nothing. Moseley tells her he does not have any abortion remedy, and he asks her to leave his pharmacy immediately before she gets him in trouble (pp. 198-205). MacGowan, a clerical assistant, pretends to be a doctor, and Dewey Dell trades sex for six capsules filled with talcum powder. The moment she leaves the cellar of the shop, she knows that she has been conned (248-249). Most importantly, the question of Dewey Dell's abortion remains open until the very end when Anse steals her money.

What I should like to bring into focus is Dewey Dell's determination to get an abortion. She never leaves the cakes unattended, even for a moment, as she knows that with the cake-money she will be able to pay for her abortion when they get to Jefferson. Even right before they enter the town (pp. 227-228), when she goes into the bushes to change her clothes for her best outfit, she takes the cakes with her so the family men cannot eat them and so she can pay with the cake money for her abortion.

The basic structure of *As I Lay Dying* is clearly the Bakhtinian chronotope of the road with the Bundrens travelling for 10 days to bury Addie in the Jefferson town and fulfil her last will. at the same time, however, as we have seen, for Dewey Dell it is not her mother's burial that is the ultimate quest, but an abortion, while Anse wants new teeth and, as we later get to realize, a new wife. What is curious about the two quests is that they are paralleled throughout the novel and then, unexpectedly, the fulfilment of Anse's quest put an end to Dewey Dell's abortion plans.

3.8.   The serial narrator in *As I Lay Dying* as a group narrator.

The Bundrens are a close-knit family and therefore they have had every chance to observe each other on a daily basis over decades. For example, Jewel speaks of Cash, sawing a coffin, with their dying mother watching Cash through her bedroom window (pp. 3-5). The heteroglossic structure of *As I Lay Dying*, moreover, directs the reader to see each of the Bundrens watching their dying mother, watching themselves and each other over the decades, and even an outside-of-the-Bundren-family narrator like, for example, Cora, watching the Bundrens. In addition, we cannot forget to mention complete strangers like for

example Moseley. The group of strangers-narrators that the Bundrens meet on their way to Jefferson has its say as well.

However, I want now to turn to another aspect of the Bundrens as a group, the fact that as a group they act upon Anse's wish even though the consequences of their actions might be catastrophic, which is frequently emphasized by the many outsider-narrators. For example, the Bundrens are so determined to cross the flooded river and get to Jefferson that they ignore warnings from Tull, Quick and Peabody, and the horrific stories of the destructions caused by the same river when it burst its banks in 1888:

> It was ten oclock when I got back, with Peabody's team hitched on to the back of the wagon. They had already dragged the buckboard back from where Quick found it upside down straddle of the ditch about a mile from the spring. It was pulled out of the road at the spring, and about a dozen wagons was already there. It was Quick found it. He said the river was up and still rising. He said it had already covered the highest water-mark on the bridge-piling he had ever seen. 'That bridge wont stand a whole lot of water,' I said. 'Has somebody told Anse about it?' 'I told him, Quick said. 'He says he reckons them boys has heard and unloaded and are on the way back by now. He says they can load up and get across.' Pp. 85-86. Tull.

At this point, Armstid advises them to cross the river as soon as possible; otherwise, they will be unable to do anything due to flooding. And even though Whitfield comes with news that the river has destroyed Tull's bridge, it is clear that nobody and nothing – neither water nor fire – will stop the Bundrens on their way to Jefferson.

This is further evidence of the close-knit nature of this family. In the same vein, there are many examples of the Bundrens' children obedience towards Anse. For example, when Anse decides to put Cash's broken leg in a concrete cast (pp. 206 -209). Cash bravely resists the pain. As Gillespie remarks, putting Cash's broken leg in a concrete cast without oiling it beforehand wasn't the wisest decision (p. 224). Peabody is even more blunt, speaking on the matter:

> 'Dont you lie there and try to tell me you rode six days on a wagon without springs, with a broken leg and it never bothered you.'
> 'It never bothered me much,' he said.
> 'You mean, it never bothered Anse much,' I said. 'No more than it bothered him to throw that poor devil down in the public street and handcuff him like a damn murderer. Dont tell me. And dont tell me it aint going to bother you to lose sixty-odd square inches of skin to get that concrete off. And dont tell me it aint going to bother you to have to limp around on one short leg for the balance of your life - if you walk at all again. (*p.* 240).

For another example of the Bundrens' children blind obedience to Anse, we can consider the scene where Anse sells Jewel's beloved horse to be able to continue their journey (pp. 184-193). Despite his obvious affection for his horse, Jewel offers no protest. The Bundren children are obedient to their father even at the price of physical and emotional pain.

Reed makes an attempt to differentiate between different types of group narrator in *As I Lay Dying*. [87] He draws a distinction between the Bundren-family group narrator with the following speakers: Darl (19), Vardaman (10), Cash (5), Dewey Dell (4), Anse (3) and Addie (1)[88]; and the non-Bundrens group.[89] Bleikasten takes this further by examining carefully the way in which the family voices alternate with the voices of the outsiders-observers of the Bundrens' journey. Bleikasten compares *As I Lay Dying* to *The Sound and the Fury* – and compares their section organization on the basis of voice. Besides qualitative analysis, Bleikasten makes a quantitative analysis of voice in *As I Lay Dying*, coming to the conclusion that: "There are two long passages (of eight sections each) in which only Bundrens speak, one of which precedes and begins the journey and the other of which leads up to and includes the fire."[90] Additionally, there are multiple commentaries on the Bundrens and their journey by other members of public. I would like to suggest that Bleikasten's analysis may be further expanded by a division of the narrators outside the family into: episodic participants in the action (e.g. Vernon Tull (6), Cora Tull (3), Peabody (2), Whitefield (1), Samson (1), Armstid (1), Moseley (1), Mac-Gowan (1)) and mere witnesses-spectator narrators[91]

Laura Matthews argues that the main role of the non-Bundrens narrators in *As I Lay Dying* is to add credibility to the Bundrens' account. Matthews quotes Faulkner on the matter: "Mainly it [Peabody's monologue] was to give for a moment what may be called a nudge of credibility to a condition which was getting close to the realm of unbelief."[92] Peabody is the most intellectual and most empathetic point of view on the Bundrens. Nonetheless, he is also judgmental at times and painfully honest, even blunt. For example, he openly criticises Mr. Tull and Anse for being stingy (pp. 39 and 41). He is also self-critical and fully aware of his own character deficiencies. For example, in the passage quoted below, when Peabody has no choice but to climb a hill to get to the dying Addie, he speaks of his excessive compassion:

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[87] Cf. My concept of serial narrator as interlocutor multiple-narrator with no-fixed perspective to Herman equation of serial narration with episodic narrative. p. 193. in David Herman.

[88] Numbers in the brackets indicate the number of sections/pieces of monologue by characters.

[89] Reed, *Faulkner's Narrative,* p. 87.

[90] Ibidem.

[91] Bleikasten, p. 56.

[92] FU, pp. 113-14. See also Faulkner in Laura Matthews, 'Shaping the Life of Man: Darl Bundren as Supplementary Narrator in *As I Lay Dying*,' *The Journal of Narrative Technique,* Vol. 16, No. 3. (Fall 1986), 231-245 (p. 231).

> I'll be damned if I can see why I dont quit. A man seventy years old, weighting two hundred and odd pounds, being hauled up and down a damn mountain on a rope. I reckon it's because I must reach the fifty thousand dollar mark of dead accounts on my books before I can quit. 'What the hell does your wife mean,' I say, 'taking sick on top of a durn mountain? – Peabody (*As I Lay Dying*, 43).

As this suggests, another important aspect of Peabody's personality is that, in addition to being judgemental, he is also forgiving (pp. 43-44).

Bleikasten concludes his analysis of the serial vs. group narrator in *As I Lay Dying* as follows: "In *As I Lay Dying* non-Bundrens witnesses provide us with a collective objective vision of the outsider to set against the combined subjective of the family." [93] According to Bleikasten, the frequent change of speakers is, in addition, responsible for the overwhelming feeling of "flux" in *As I Lay Dying*.[94] Following Philip D. Collington, I would wish to draw attention to how the social diversity in *As I Lay Dying* corresponds to the Bakhtinian definition of 'dialogic discourse.' Bakhtin writes on this matter as follows: "[…] the investigator is confronted with several heterogenous stylistic unities, often located on different linguistic levels and subject to different stylistic controls."[95] Collington explains what Bakhtin has in mind when speaking of 'dialogic discourse:' "(…) dialogism presents a kind of interplay or 'struggle – not between individual wills (i.e. characters) – but between literary and cultural forms and systems of signification."[96]

3.9.   The techniques of heteroglossia in *As I Lay Dying*.

In the preceding sections, I have attempted to indicate the Bakhtinian concept of plot in *As I Lay Dying* and its multiple consequences for the entire narrative. The aim of the present section is to examine the dialogic principle as the foundation for heteroglossia in *As I Lay Dying*. In talking about heteroglossia, Bakhtin uses the phrase "the active reception of speech of the other" (aktivnoje vosprijatie chuzhoj rechi').[97] The main theoretical premise behind 'active reception' is that "quoting is never simply mechanical repetition."[98] This remains one

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[93] Reed,*Faulkner's Narrative*, pp. 87-88, and 94.
[94] Ibidem, pp. 88 and 94. See more on *As I Lay Dying* in terms of ther patterns of exchange: inside-outside; individual-group; participant-observer in Reed, p. 94.
[95] (DN) p. 261. Bakhtin in Philip Collington. "Sallets in the Lines to Make the Mater Savoury: Bakhtinian Speech Genres and Inserted Genres in Hamlet 2.2." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language,* Vol. 53, No. 3. (Fall 2011) 237-272. (p. 241).
[96] Ibidem. DN, p. 273.
[97] Ibidem. See Bakhtin in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language,* p. 115.
[98] Ibidem.

of the distinguishing characteristic of *As I Lay Dying* as a polyphonic novel with 'an interior monologue' enriched by extended patches of quoted dialogue; dialogue that took place in the past either among the Bundrens as a unit or between the Bundrens and other members of the community in the novel's present and past. The first example I want to consider is the following account of the conversation between Anse and the community people:

> Anse keeps on rubbing his knees. His overalls are faded; on one knee a serge patch cut out of a pair of Sunday pants, wore iron-slick. "No man mislikes it more than me,' he says.
> 'A fellow's got to guess ahead now and then,' I say. 'But, come long and short, it wont be no harm done neither way.'
> 'She'll want to get started right off,' he says. 'It's far enough to Jefferson at best.'
> 'But the roads is good now,' I say. It's fixing to rain tonight, too. His folks buries at New Hope, too, not three miles away. But it's just like him to marry a woman born a day's hard ride away and have her die on him.
> He looks out over the land, rubbing his knees. 'No man so mislikes it,' he says.
> 'They'll get back in plenty of time,' I say. 'I wouldn't worry none.'
> 'It means three dollars,' he says. 'Might be it wont be no need for them to rush back, no ways,' I say. 'I hope It.'" pp. 29-30, Tull

In this passage, quoted pieces of dialogue are incorporated into Tull's dialogue. The best example of the second type of the dialogue in the family is Anse's conversation with Addie as incorporated in Darl's dialogue (pp. 47-48).

3.10.   The hierarchy of first-person narrators in *As I Lay Dying*.

As I Lay Dying is a prime example of a narrative with multiple narrators.[99] However, being a polyphonic narrative with multiple narrators, *As I Lay Dying* does not abide by the rules of the hierarchization of narrators. In his *Narratology: The form and functioning of narrative,* Gerald Prince proposes: "Where there are two or more narrators in a narrative, it is possible to establish a hierarchy among them."[100] The polyphonic novel makes an exception to this rule. Further in his discussion of multiple narration, Prince describes what makes a so-called 'main narrator.' The main narrator is defined by Prince as: "The one who ultimately introduces the entire narrative (including all the mini-narratives comprising parts of it)." [101] The remaining narrator Prince calls 'secondary or tertiary' ones. It is impossible to establish the

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[99] See Gerald Prince's discussion of multiple narrators in *Narratology: The form and functioning of narrative* (Berlin, New York: Mouton, 1982), pp. 15-16.
[100] Ibidem, p. 16.
[101] Ibidem. See also Prince's definition of the main narrator in his *Dictionary of Narratology.* p. 49.

hierarchy of narrators in *As I Lay Dying* by a simple examination of their knowledge and the relevant superiority. We can tell which amongst the sixteen homodiegetic narrators speak more than others. Thus Bleikasten draws our attention to Darl as the main narrator in *As I Lay Dying* with his nineteen sections of the novel covered, making up one-third of the novel.[102] Bleikasten also notes: "[…] his point of view is beyond contest the richest and the most flexible, his gaze the sharpest, his language the most spellbinding."[103] However, Bleikasten also clearly questions Darl's reliability.[104] This observation also holds true for Vardaman, with particular emphasis on his role as the main narrator in the case of Darl's insanity:[105]

> 'Hadn't you rather have bananas? Hadn't you rather?' 'All right.' *My brother he went crazy and he went to Jackson too. Jackson is further away than crazy* 'It wont work?' I say. *He had to get on the train to go to Jackson. I have not been on the train, but Darl has been on the train. Darl. Darl is my brother. Darl. Darl."* Vardaman. (p. 252).

Even this quantitative measure is, perhaps, not robust enough to determine the 'main narrator.'

Donald Kartiganer describes Darl as an observer and "(…) the supreme agent of violation in the novel":"He invades the people around him, not for sex but secrets, that private interior world."[106] Marybeth Southard's discussion of Darl opens with the description of his first masturbation (p. 55), and draws on this to depict Darl in terms of his "repressed-single-uncertain-sexuality."[107] Darl, as depicted by Southard, becomes an intruder violating "the personal space of his relatives" and "exposing the artificiality of autonomy."[108] Southard writes:

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[102] Bleikasten, p. 56. See also Bleikasten, *The Ink of Melancholy: Faulkner's novels, from The Sound and the Fury to Light in August* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 188. See William H. Rueckert on Darl as a principal narrator in *As I Lay Dying* and for this reason the comparison of Darl to Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!* in *Faulkner from Within: Destructive and Generative Being in the Novels of William Faulkner* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Parlor Press, 2004), pp. 51 and 342-43.

[103] *The Ink of Melancholy*, p. 188. See also Marybeth Southard on Darl as the 'most prolific narrator' in *As I Lay Dying*. "'Aint None of Us Pure Crazy:' Queering Madness in *As I Lay Dying*," *The Faulkner Journal*, XXVII.1 (Spring 2013), pp. 47-64. (p.47)

[104] Ibidem. See also Darl as the main narrator in Richard Pearce, *The Politics of Narration: James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf* (New Brunswick and London Rutgers University Press, 1991), p. 91.

[105] See also Rueckert, *Faulkner from Within: Destructive and Generative Being in Novels of William Faulkner* (Parlor Press, 2004), p. 342. on Darl and Vardaman as the main alternating narrators in *As I Lay Dying*. See also Southard Marybeth on Vardaman replacing Darl as the main narrator in *As I Lay Dying*, " 'Aint None of Us Pure Crazy:' Queering Madness in *As I Lay Dying*," *The Faulkner Journal*. XXVII.1. (Spring 2013), pp. 47-64. (p. 60).

[106] See Donald Kartiganer in Southard Marybeth " 'Aint None of Us Pure Crazy:' Queering Madness in *As I Lay Dying*." *The Faulkner Journal*. XXVII.1. Spring 2013, pp. 47-64 (p. 56). Kartiganer, p. 373.

[107] Ibidem, p. 55.

[108] Ibidem, p. 56-57.

> Faulkner structured the novel based on divided, interdependent chapters narrated by each character, suggesting discrete, autonomous identities. But Darl's ability to invade the narration and consciousness of his family members reveals the falseness of their apparent autonomy; instead of being independent, their individual identities are under threat, as Darl in effect violates both the Bundren family and the novel's form.[109]

As Southard suggests, Darl is an intrusive narrator. An intrusive narrator by rule cannot be objective. Darl's insanity is another factor that we need to take into consideration when speaking about him as the main narrator in *As I Lay Dying.* We don't know the reasons behind Darl's insanity, whether it is a result of the adventures on the way to Jefferson, his family and personal history, or the fact that he took an active part in the war in France. However, this suggestion of insanity clearly raises questions about his reliability as narrator. At most , we can agree with Cora that Darl is the most sensitive among the Bundrens-narrators:

> Sometimes I lose faith in human nature for a time; I am assailed by doubt. But always the Lord restores my faith and reveals to me His bounteous love for His creatures. Not Jewel, the one she had always cherished, not him. He was after that three extra dollars. It was Darl, the one that folks say is queer, lazy, pottering about the place no better than Anse. Cora. (p. 24).

This aspect of personality inevitably draws attention to another, namely that he is empathetic and, therefore, a good and attentive observer of the feelings of others. For example, this empathy is revealed in the scene when Darl describes the difficult childhood and adolescence of his father, Anse, by telling the story of Anse's feet (pp. 11 and 12). Another instance is where Darl describes Jewel's affectionate relationship with his horse (p. 13). As narrator of much of the action of *As I Lay Dying*, Darl's holistic vision is reminiscent of that of Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!*

What is striking about the heteroglossic patterning in *As I Lay Dying* is that the narrators, similarly to those in *Absalom, Absalom!* and *The Snopes Trilogy*, give opinions on each other. For example, Cora speaks of Darl in comparison to the rest of the Bundrens (p. 240): "'Not one of them would have stopped her, with even the little one almost old enough now to be selfish and stone-hearted like the rest of them. (p. 23). In a similar way, Cora reports that Darl was begging Anse not to send them to work on the day when their mother died so they would have the chance to share Addie's last minutes (p. 22):

> It was the sweetest thing I ever saw. It was like he knew he would never see her again, that Anse Bundren was driving him from his

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[109] Ibidem, p. 56.

mother's death bed, never to see her in this world again. I always
said Darl was different from those others. I always
said he was the only one of them that had his mother's nature, had
any natural affection. Not that Jewel, the one she labored so to bear
and coddled and petted so and him flinging into tantrums or sulking
spells, inventing devilment to devil her until
I would have failed him time and time. Not him to come and tell her
goodbye. – Cora (*p.* 21).

As an observer of her family, Cora not only comments on the Bundrens but also has very strong opinions about them and provides insights into them. However, it is who Darl knows the family secrets. However, even Darl does not know his mother's biggest secret, i.e. that Jewel is not Anse's son: "I told them that's why ma always whipped him and petted him more. Because he was peakling around the house more. That's why she called him Jewel I told them."[110] In this case, we don't know if Darl is a naïve narrator or whether he simply does not suspect dishonesty from his mother.[111] There are many examples in the novel of Darl as the all-knower. However, it is Cash gets to know Jewel's secret before anybody else in the family (pp. 128-136), while Dewey Dell tells the reading audience her secret, not Darl. As this suggests, knowledge is dispersed among the members of the family.

One of the mysteries in the narrative occurs when Jewel shows signs of losing weight and is constantly tired. We are told that his mother was very worried about Jewel's tiredness and his continuing weight loss, despite the special meals she prepared for him in secret from others. She even paid Dewey Dell and Vardaman to do Jewel's jobs within the household so he could rest (pp. 330-331). Cash and Anse thought that Jewel must be having an affair with a married woman because he started vanishing from home at night. This period of Jewel's unusual behaviour lasts six months and ends with Jewel bringing home a horse. It emerges that Jewel was working at nights in Mr. Quick's field to make money to get a horse. Addie is in despair when she got to know the full truth. She felt guilty that she was not financially able to get him a horse. She is also unable to forgive herself that Jewel was working so hard:

That night I found ma sitting beside the bed where he was sleeping,
in the dark. She cried hard, maybe because she had to cry so quiet;
maybe because she felt the same way about tears she did about
deceit, hating herself for doing it, hating him because she had to.
And then I knew that I knew. I knew that as plain on that day as I
knew about Dewey Dell on that day. – Darl (p. 136).

Despite these lapses, as a family, there is a high probability of the Bundrens knowing each other's' best-kept secrets. This is also suggested by the way in which the novel places an

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[110] p. 18.
[111] p. 18.

emphasis on eyes and seeing. Darl, in particular, is an attentive observer of the Bundrens lives. Nevertheless, because of Darl's irrational behaviour, his family sends him to Jackson's mental hospital. We also know that in the Yoknapatawpha County Jail, Darl would pay for his crime with his life. Southard concludes: "(…) the other Bundrens are interested in performing and upholding the socially constructed norms and ideologies while Darl threatens to expose the instability of these constructions."[112] Patrick O'Donnell writes on *As I Lay Dying* in similar terms to Southard as "a narrative that progresses from private isolation to social integration"[113] but comes to a strikingly different conclusion on Darl. Contrary to Southard, O'Donnell blames the Bundrens and their practices on the way to Jackson for Darl's going insane. [114] John Pilkington draws a comparison between Darl and Anse and comes to the conclusion that Anse lies at the center of plot dynamics, whereas Darl – lies at the center of discourse. [115] Pilkington calls both the above-mentioned 'the motivating forces' in the narrative of *As I Lay Dying*.[116] In this context, Darl's mental state requires more attention.

3.12. Narrators and family secrets.

Fludernik has argued that close attention must be paid to any shifts in a pronominal usage that a narrator does when she or he refer to themselves.[117] Fludernik's attention to shifting pronominal usage shows the development of character. In particular, Fludernik's analysis sheds light on Darl's mental problems toward the end of the novel.[118] In his last section Darl refers to himself in the third person as if he was someone else:

> Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on the train, laughing,
> Down the long car laughing, the heads turning like the heads
> Of owls when he passed. 'What are you laughing at?' I said.
> 'Yes yes yes yes yes.'
> Two men put him on the train. The wore mismatched coats,
> bulging behind over their right hip pockets. Their necks were
> shaved to a hairline, as though the recent and simultaneous

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[112] Ibidem, p. 57.

[113] Patrick O'Donnell, "Between the Family and the State: Nomadism and Authority in *As I Lay Dying*," *The Faulkner Journal* 7.1-2. (1991/92), 83-94. (p. 84). O'Donnell in Anne Hirsch Moffitt "The City Speaker: William Faulkner and the Threat of Urban Encroachment," *The Faulkner Journal and the Metropolis,* XXVI.1 (Spring 2012), p. 27.

[114] Ibidem. O'Donnell, p. 84. O'Donnell in Moffitt, p.22.

[115] John Pilkington, *The Heart of Yoknapatawpha* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 198), p. 95. See also Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work,* p. 155. See what Minter writes on the same narrative dynamics in *Absalom, Absalom!*: "In *Absalom, Absalom!* He juxtaposes one character who instigates an action with several who try to narrate it."

[116] Ibidem.

[117] Monika Fludernik, *Towards a Natural Narratology* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996)*,* p. 242.

[118] Fludernik, pp. 226 and 242-43, for other examples of shifting pronominal usage by Fludernik. See Also Marybeth Southard, p. 58. on Darl going insane and unravelling into a multiple voices on the train to Jackson asylum in the last monologue of the novel.

barbers had had a chalk-line like Cash's. 'it is the pistols you're laughing at? I said. 'Why do you lough?' I said. 'Is it because you hate the sound of laughing?' they pulled two seats together so Darl could sit by the window to laugh. (pp. 253-54).

First of all, we should note the changes in Darl's behaviour after he sets fire to Mr. Gillespie's barn (p. 223). It becomes clear that something has happened to his mental state. At this point, Vardaman takes over as a leading voice. To begin with, Vardaman is trying to comfort the crying Darl. Meanwhile, the barn is still on fire. Next Vardaman says that when he went to see the vultures at night to check where they sleep, he saw something that Dewey Dell told him to keep secret. Now Dewey Dell, in turn, knows Darl's secret. She knows that Darl set fire to the barn: "The barn is still red. It used to be redder than this. Then it went swirling, making the stars run backward without falling. It hurt my heart like the train did. *When I went to find where they stay at night, I saw something that Dewey Dell says I mustn't tell nobody –* Vardaman (*p.* 225)." That is another secret in the Bundren family but this time Vardaman is the holder of the sensitive information.

Prince has argued that narrators in a multiple-person narrative differ from each other in many aspects: age, personality, intellectual and emotional levels, not to mention a moral level. Prince then introduces the term 'distance' and distinguishes four main types of possible distances between those narrators: physical, intellectual, emotional and moral.[119] Here we need to take into consideration the second kind of narrative progression in *As I Lay Dying* and the extra-plot relations between Addie and other characters, with particular emphasis on members of her family. Bleikasten writes: "If the narrative apparently follows the linear progression appropriate to a journey, the novel is ordered according to a circular scheme focussed on this figure."[120] The pronoun in the title holds out a promise of speech and, as Richard Pearce notes, unlike Caddy in *The Sound and the Fury,* Addie is allowed to speak for herself, even if Addie takes voice only once in the novel and paradoxically when she has already been dead for eight days or so.[121] At the same time, as John Pilkington suggests,

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[119] Ibidem.

[120] Bleikasten, p. 46. See also Olga Vickery, "The Dimensions of Consciousness: AILS," in *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* (Michigan State University Press, 1960)*,* p. 237. ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery. See also Catarina Edinger "Words That Don't Fit: *As I Lay Dying* and Graciliano Ramos's *Barren Lives.*" In *Teaching Faulkner: Approaches and Methods.* P.75. Ed. by Stephen Hahn and Robert W. Hamblin, Greenwood Press, 2001. Westport.

[121] See Pearce, *The Politics of Narration: James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1991), p. 89. See also Diana York Blaine, "The Abjection of Addie and Other Myths of the Material in *As I Lay Dying*," p. 102.

Addie's presence/absence has a haunting quality throughout As *I Lay Dying*: "Yet in a fashion at once very real but macabre and grotesque, she is an intensely present person throughout the novel, first as a dying woman and later as a putrefying corpse."[122]

3.13. The narrative qualities of a dead-narrator in *As I Lay Dying* – Addie Bundren.

According to Howe: "In *As I Lay Dying* the theme is death, death as it shapes life."[123] Almost one-third of *As I Lay Dying* depicts Addie on her deathbed, accompanied by her children and friends of the family. In *Narrative Discourse,* Genette observes: "[…] 'life is more quiet' around a narrator on the threshold of death."[124] This quiet does not happen on the pages of *As I Lay Dying*.[125] However, as Irene Visser points out: "Addie's death in *As I Lay Dying* is a process rather than a moment in time."[126] By this observation, Visser puts a substantial emphasis on the slow-down in the first third part of the novel.

Bakhtin writes on the meaning of the death of the hero in the polyphonic novel thus: "In Dostoevsky's world death does not finalize anything, because it does not destroy what is the most important in this world: consciousness for itself. In the world of Tolstoy death possesses known completing and resolving power."[127] When she finally speaks, Addie speaks of her life and the lives of her family and friends, which is a typical contrapuntal polyphonic technique. Bakhtin writes on this as follows: "This valuable architectonic disintegration of the world into 'I' and all others isn't for me passively – accidental, but alive and proper. This architectonic is given and set, because this is the architectonic of an event." [128] Bakhtin explains:

> The higher architectonic principle of the real world of act-deed is a concrete, an architectonically meaningful opposition of the 'I' and the other. Life knows two fully valid centers that are in principle different, but actually correlated, and around those centers are distributed and placed all concrete moments of existence. One and the same solemn content – the moment of existence, correlated with me or correlated

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[122] *The Heart of Yoknapatawpha,* p. 105*.* Blaine, p. 91. on the inconsistencies in the various accounts given by, for example, Vernon Tull, Samson, Moseley's clerk regarding the time of Addie's death and the time of the journey

[123] W*illiam Faulkner: A Critical Study,* p. 176.

[124] p. 167.

[125] *The Heart of Yoknapatawpha.* p. 105.

[126] Visser, "Getting Ready to Stay Dead: Rites of Passage in William Faulkner's Novels," *English Studies,* p. 471.

[127] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 215. "В мире Достоевского смерть ничего не завершает, потому что не задевает самого главного в этом мире: сознания для себя. В мире же Толстого смерть обладает известною завершающей и разрешающей силой."

[128] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 44. "Это ценностное архитектоническое распадение мира на я и всех других для меня не есть пассивно-случайное, а активное и должное. Эта архитектоника дана и задана, ибо это есть архитектоника события."

with the other looks differently, and the single world, correlated with me or with the other, presented with a quite other emotionally-wilful tone, differently valuably-meaningful in its most vivid, most essential sense. It does not violate the notional unity of the world, but rises to a degree of an eventful uniqueness.[129]

 in this section, I intend to demonstrate the Bakhtinian concept of 'hero', using the example of the novel's protagonist – Addie Bundren. In order to understand the Bakhtinian concept of 'the whole of the hero,' we need to consider all the events of Addie's life. What is important is the fact that, being a dead narrator, Addie paradoxically becomes a more reliable narrator. The dead Addie has no future and can speak openly about her past. Bakhtin argues: "that death is a sum, explaining all life, the optimum point for understanding and appraising an entire life."[130] As I noted earlier, Addie speaks only once in *As I Lay Dying*. She opens her section by confessing that she disliked her teaching job and children: "In the afternoon when school was out and the last one had left with his little dirty snuffing nose, instead of going home I would go down the hill to the spring where I could be quiet and hate them. I could just remember how my father used to say that the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time" (p. 169). This confession foregrounds the connection between life and death. It also raises the question of why she got married and how it happened that she ended up having five children. Addie's section depicts clearly the position of a woman in the patriarchal American South, namely, the expectation that a woman should become a wife and mother. Addie recalls the day when Anse simply came to her family house in Jefferson and asked Addie's father if he can marry Addie:

> He had a word, too. Love, he called it. But I had been used to words for a long time. I knew that that word was like the others: just a shape to fill a lack; that when the right time came, you wouldn't need a word for that anymore than for pride and fear. Cash did not need to say it

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[129] Ibidem. "Два принципиально различных, но соотнесённых между собой ценностных центра знает жизнь: себя и другого, и вокруг этих центров распределяются и размещаются все конкретные моменты бытия. Один и тот же содержательно тожественный предмет – момент бытия, соотнесённый со мной или соотнесённый с другим, ценностно по-разному выглядит, и весь содержательно единый мир, соотнесённый со мною или с другим, проникнут совершенно иным эмоционально-волевым тоном, по-разному ценностно-значим в своём самом живом, самом существенном смысле. Этим не нарушается смысловое единство мира, но возводится до степени событийной единственности." "The higher architectonic principle of the real world of act-deed is a concrete, an architectonically meaningful opposition of the 'I' and the other. Life knows two on principle different but correlated with fully valid centres, and around those centres are distributed and placed all concrete moments of existence. One and the same solemn content – moment of existence, correlated with me or correlated with the other looks differently, and single world, correlated with me or with the other, presented with a quite other emotionally-wilful tone, differently valuably-meaningful in its most vivid, most essential sense. It does not violate the notional unity of the world, but rises to a degree of an eventful uniqueness."

[130] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 217. "В данном случае смерть – итог, поясняющий всю жизнь, оптимальная точка для понимания и оценки всей жизни."

> to me nor I to him, and I would say, Let Anse use it, if he wants to. So that it was Anse or love; love or Anse: it didn't matter. – Addie (p. 172).

This passage gives the impression that, while Anse used the expected language of 'love', Addie was no more sentimental about love than she was about children. Seen from the perspective of the present, the dead narrator Addie also shows no remorse for betraying Anse with a priest and, even more, having a child with the priest. Jewel – Whitfield's child – is Addie's favourite. Moreover, Addie also shows her separation from the social ideology of religion. This she laughed at Cora, Whitfield's sister, when spoke of her affair with the priest as a sin: "One day I was talking to Cora. She prayed for me because I was blind to sin, wanting me to kneel and pray too, because people to whom sin is just a matter of words, to them salvation is just words too. – Addie (p. 176)." From Addie's post-death perspective, 'love' and 'sin' are both reduced to the status of words.

Paradoxically, with Addie on her deathbed, the lives of her immediate family go on as if unaffected. The Bundrens continue to keep busy and try to make ends meet. Women around Addie's bed talk about mundane stuff like, for example, baking and clothes:

> 'They turned out real nice,' I say. 'But not like the cakes Addie used to bake.' You can see that girl's washing and ironing in the pillow-slip, if ironed it ever was. Maybe it will reveal her blindness to her, laying there at the mercy and the ministration of four men and a tom-boy girl. 'There's not a woman in this section could ever bake with Addie Bundren,' I say. (*As I Lay Dying*, 8-9).

Irene Visser differentiates between three major stages in *As I Lay Dying*, in each of which Addie is the novel's centre: " 'the separation stage of Addie's death,' 'the limited stage of the journey to Jefferson,' and 'the third stage of the burial and the family's reintegration in society." [131] The action speeds up when Addie dies. The narrative focus is placed on the youngest child in the family and his emotions whilst he tries to cope with his loss. In the first stage, we get twenty-five pages of descriptions of Vardaman's despair. Vardaman goes through all the stages of mourning from outrage through anger to sadness, during barely one night. As we have seen, the child initially blames his mother's death on the doctor, Peabody, swearing at him at all times: " 'The fat son of a bitch. (…) 'He kilt her. He kilt her.' – Vardaman (54)." In addition, Vardaman's mourning takes place in a context of other family activities: in this stage, we discover Dewey Dell's secret and her wish to have an abortion as soon as she finds the right person to perform it. At the time, in the background, we hear Cash's saw and

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[131] Irene Visser, "Getting Ready to Stay Dead: Rites of Passage in William Faulkner's novels," *English Studies,* 93.4 (2012), 469-87 (p. 471).

the rain getting heavier and heavier (p. 75). Finally, Addie's coffin is placed on the wagon ready to take her to her final resting place (pp. 88-89), and the Bundrens finally set off towards Jefferson (p. 122).

In the first third of the novel, the homodiegetic narrators make an effort to show Addie on her deathbed, with Cash making her coffin so she can watch him working through her bedroom window and then die. After the slowed-down narrative of the deathbed scenes, the Bundrens at last get on their way to Jefferson, and the narrative speeds up. This middle part of *As I Lay Dying* provides the reader with very dynamic action in the novel's present, coupled with extended flashbacks, combined with side stories and brief digressions of a philosophical nature, for example, when Cora speaks in a quite complex way about Addie's affair with the priest (pp. 166, 168).

As suggested earlier, Cash sawing the coffin for his mother is a crucial element of the social landscape in the opening sections of the novel. This section presents Cash commenting on his work, and explaining in detail his craftsmanship:

> I made it on the bevel.
> 1. There is more surface for the nails to grip.
> 2. There is twice the gripping-surface to each seam.
> 3. The water will have to seep into it on a slant. Water moves easiest up and down or straight.
> 4. In a house people are upright two thirds of the time. So the seams and joints are made up-and-down. Because the stress is up-and-down. Cash (*As I Lay Dying*, 82-83).

This recalls a technical manual, providing guidance on how to construct a good coffin and how to avoid what Cash describes as 'animal magnetism.' At no point in the novel, however, from its outset up to the page where Addie's death is revealed, do we presume that 'the dead Addie' is going to present her secret thoughts to us.[132] We watch silent Addie waiting for Darl to see her for the last time and give her a goodbye kiss, but Addie remains silent in her pain. Homer B. Pettey argues that the distinguishing characteristic of Addie's narrative/monologue is 'self-reflection.'[133] Pettey mentions also 'self-recognition' and 'self-fulfilment' as the other main domains of Addie's thought. There is no present and no future since she is dead. Writing on Proustian narrative, Genette observes, "temporal distance between the story and the

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[132] See Laura Mathews on the structural impact of Addie's centrally located section in "Shaping the Life of Man: Darl Bundren as Supplementary Narrator in *As I Lay Dying*," *The Journal of Narrative Technique,* Vol. 16., No. 3. (Fall 1986), 231-245 (p. 234).
[133] Homer B. Pettey, "Perception and the Destruction of being in *As I Lay Dying*," *The Faulkner Journal,* (Fall 2003), p. 37.

narration instance involves no modal distance between the story and the narrative."[134] The same is true of Addie's section in *As I Lay Dying*. The past tense is a characteristic feature of Addie's narrative since she speaks from the perspective of a dead person.[135] Bleikasten observes that elsewhere in *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner decides on the extensive use of the present tense, which results in the immediacy of reporting and a lack of modal distance between the story and the narrative.[136] Like the figural novel as described by Stanzel, *Absalom, Absalom!* is characterized by: "scenic presentation, withdrawal of the narrating medium, and the predominant presentation of dialogue and process of consciousness."[137] In the case of *As I lay Dying,* Bleikasten enumerates several reminiscences, including that made by Cora, Whitfield, Dewey Dell's dream, and several of Darl's childhood memories and youth memories (for example, Jewel's acquisition of his horse).

Darl speaks of the events that are of minor importance as regards the Aristotelian plot but they take on meaning when considered in the Bakhtinian context of the 'whole of the hero and his/her lived experiences' (p. 11). Thus, early in the novel, Darl voices his most secret memories:

> And at night it is better still. I used to lie on the pallet in the hall,
> waiting until I could hear them all asleep, so I could get up and go
> back to the bucket. It would be black, the shelf black, the still
> surface of the water a round orifice in nothingness,
> where before I stirred it awake with the dipper I could see maybe a
> star or two in the bucket, and maybe in the dipper a star or two
> before I drank. After that I was bigger, older. Then I would wait until
> they all went to sleep so I could lie with my shirt-tail up, hearing
> them asleep, feeling myself without touching myself, feeling the
> cool silence blowing upon my parts and wondering if Cash was
> yonder in the darkness doing it too, had been doing it perhaps for
> the last two years before I could have wanted to or could have. –
> Darl. (*As I Lay Dying*, 11).

As noted earlier, this is probably one of the most intimate confessions by Darl. There are clearly no taboos in this novel; neither death nor sex nor self-pleasuring escape Darl's scrutiny. However, Addie's section is the only truly achronological piece of narrative in *As I Lay Dying*. The rest is mostly non-reflective and chronological.[138] In her section Addie recalls all her life. I have argued that the type of narrative that dominates the novel as a whole is characterized

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[134] Ibidem, pp. 167-8. See Richardson's on other types of unusual and rare narration.

[135] Pp. 169-176.

[136] Bleikasten also points out that present tense characterizes drama not novel as a genre. *Faulkner's As I Lay Dying,* p. 50*.*

[137] F. K. Stanzel, *Narrative Situations in the Novel: Tom Jones, Moby-Dick, The Ambassadors, Ulysses* (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 68.

[138] Bleikasten, *Ink of Melancholy,* p. 152.

by "utmost immediacy."[139] By contrast, Addie speaks unexpectedly and abruptly of her memory and the most vivid memories of her married life. Because of the power of this post-death narration, Bleikasten describes *As I Lay Dying* as Addie's "posthumous act of revenge" on her family.[140]

3.15. The Bakhtinian concept of carnival in *As I Lay Dying*.

I shall close this chapter by considering the Bakhtinian "carnivalized quality" in Faulkner's novel.[141] It should be clear from what I have said above that for Bakhtin language is 'alive' and 'alive' not only as a communicative representation of the speaker's intention but alive as "a system bearing the weight of centuries of intention, motivation, and implication."[142] The concept of 'verbal discourse' as a 'social phenomenon' is linked directly with "the phenomenon of carnival" in the polyphonic novel. Jeanne Campbell Reesman argues that: "[…] the novel carnivalizes through diversities of speech and voice reflected in structure."[143] What is ultimately important is the presentation of all types of 'idiolects,' from the almost illiterate Anse to his educated late wife, who used to be a teacher, and from Darl's mental disturbance to Peabody's voice as a doctor, with his affirmation of life.[144] The polyphonic novel, with its different idiolects becomes a social panorama. Greimas and Ricoeur speak of: "Carnival as the time when all social groups and classes join together in a wild Saturnalian celebration, which involves the fusion of each group's dialogical stratum into a parodic, ironic festival of languages."[145] Throughout the novel the reader listens to the Bundren family members and to other primary and secondary characters speaking ironically about the Bundren family. We can hear Darl's laughter at the end of book, but we are also conscious of this range of competing voices. Bakhtin describes the role of novelistic carnival as follows: "A novel should be a microcosm of heteroglossia."[146] Bakhtin points out: "The

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[139] Ibidem, p. 168.

[140] *Faulkner's As I Lay Dying,* p. 46.

[141] See also a unanimous point of view on Bakhtin in Reesman, Faulkner in *American Designs: The Late Novels,* p. 17.

[142] Bakhtin in Algirdas Julien Greimas, Paul Ricoeur, Paul Perrou, and Frank Collins "On Narrativity," *NLH* Vol. 20, No. 3 (1989), p. 767.

[143] Reesman, *American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner*, p. 17.

[144] Catriona Edinger, "Words That Don't Fit: *As I Lay Dying* and Graciliano Ramos's *Barren Lives,"* in *Teaching Faulkner: Approaches and Methods,* ed. Stephen Hahn and Robert W. Hamblin, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 81.

[145] Ibidem, p. 770.

[146] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 31. "роман должен быть микрокосмом разноречия."

Novel is built not on abstract-notional heteroglossia, not on sjuzhet collisions, but on a concrete social heteroglossia." [147] That is what *As I Lay Dying* presents.

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[147] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 109. "Роман строится не на отвлечённо-смысловых разногласиях и не на чисто сюжетных колизях, а на конкретной социальной разноречивости."

Chapter IV

Natural narrative, narrators and frames in Faulkner's polyphonic novel:

Absalom, Absalom!

David Minter calls attention to *Absalom, Absalom!* as a conversational narrative: "[Sutpen's] story comes to us as a series of recollected conversations about events, some remembered, some imagined."[1] Fludernik argues that "a conversational narrative is characterised above all by its framing."[2] Drawing on Fludernik's discussion of the category of frame in a conversational narrative, I will argue that Faulkner's originality in creating the narrative structure of *Absalom, Absalom!* comes, above all, from what Toolan defines as "co-ordinately combined stories" and "subordinately embedded stories."[3] I will point out the similarities between Fludernik's natural narratology and Bakhtin's novelistic polyphony. Accordingly, in this chapter, I will focus on narrators, natural narrative, the framing narratives and the embedded narratives *in Absalom, Absalom!* I want to begin, however, with the issue of architectonics and structure.

4.1. Architectonics and narrative structure.[4]

Bakhtin claims that: "It is the structure of the literary work that must be the object of poetics."[5] Elsewhere Bakhtin writes: "A work of art is an entity, in which every moment gains its meaning not in correlation with/relation to something outside of the work (…), but by its self-significant structure alone." For Bakhtin, this means that "every element of a work of art has a purely structural meaning in the work as in an independent self-contained structure."[6] Architectonics, to follow a Bakhtinian line of argument, is the general study of how entities relate to each other, whereas aesthetics concerns itself with how parts are put together into wholes. Bakhtin uses the term "consummation"

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[1] David Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1980), p. 22.

[2] Monika Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 63. Mary L. Pratt also highlighted this issue in her 1977-study.

[3] Michael J. Toolan, *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction* (London, New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 81.

[4] The term architectonics was coined (introduced) by the German theorist of Russian Formalism – Adolf Hildebrand. Bakhtin insisted on replacing the term architectonics with its simpler synonyms; i.e. form and construction. See Bakhtin cited in Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 38.

[5] Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle,* p. 38.

[6] "Произведение искусства является замкнутым в себе целым, каждый момент которого получает своё значение не в соотнесении с чём-либо вне произведения (...), а лишь в самозначимой структуре самого целого. Это значит, что каждый элемент художественного произведения имеет прежде всего чисто конструктивное значение а произведении, как в замкнутой самодовлеющей конструкции."

to define the latter. [7] Aesthetics is treated by Bakhtin as a subset of architectonics. However, there is another important component of architectonics.

Many critics share the view that, with its formal consistency, *Absalom, Absalom!* is a work of architectonics in the Kantian sense of the term.[8] Kant emphasizes the importance of the empirical account in the human mind in the processes of gaining knowledge and its systematization. Bakhtin argues: ""What Kant means by architectonics is the art of a creating of a system of human knowledge; the structure of this system, as a purposely built entity, can be best understood by an analogy with an alive organism, in which the human intellect plays the role of a creator. By its nature, human intellect is architectonic."[9] As this suggests, for Bakhtin as for Kant, architectonics does not only mean "systematization of knowledge" but also, or first of all, "the active, constructive role of the mind in perception." [10] In line with this, Bakhtin provides the following definition of architectonics in polyphonic narrative: "Architectonics – is a particular architectonics of the world as it is being experienced by an individual – the world of action or the world of an aesthetic vision; an experiencing human being is the defined centre (the point of origin for all opinions and deeds) of a given world, the structure of which is determined by taking its origins in this particular experiencing human being." [11] Because of this emphasis on the 'experiencing human being,' architectonics is intrinsic not only to Bakhtin's aesthetics but also to his ethics. As Bakhtin points out: "Architectonics can come into existence only in relation to an individual."[12] Thus, the Bakhtinian concept of architectonics can also be seen to anticipate Herman's cognitive approach to narrative, and Herman's emphasis on both the dynamics of narrative and the active role of mind in making sense of stories.[13] Herman identifies two approaches to analyzing stories: as a cognitive structure or

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[7] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle,* p. 33. M M. Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1990) p. x. The Introduction to *Art and Answerability.*

[8] See Karen McPherson, '*Absalom, Absalom!:* Telling Scratches,' *Modern Fiction Studies* 33 (1987), 431-50, (pp. 431 and 445). Also, see Frank K. Stanzel, *Theory of Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 63. And elsewhere, Stanzel, *Narrative Situations in the Novel: The Genealogical Imperative* (Princeton, New York: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 58. Stanzel claims the opposite and, therefore, contradicts himself, writing on *Absalom, Absalom!* as logically inconsistent and purely rhetorical.

[9] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 372. "Кант понимает под архитектоникой искусство построения системы всех человеческих знаний; структура системы, как целесообразно построенного целого, понимается по аналогии с живым организмом, а место строителя занимает человеческий разум, который по своей природе архитектоничен."

[10] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *The Dialogic Principle,* p. 33. Bakhtin cited in Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.33.

[11] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 372. "Архитектоника – это конкретная архитектоника переживаемого мира – мира поступка или мира эстетического видения; конкретным центром (центром исхождения оценок и поступков) данного мира является переживающий человек и структура этого мира определяется, исходя из переживающего человека."

[12] Ibidem. "М.М.Бахтин называет архитектоникой то, что может возникать и существовать только вокруг конкретного человеческого существа."

[13] David Herman, (2003:13).

a way of making sense of experience, and as a resource for communicative interaction.[14]

Accordingly, Herman suggests we need a new combination of cognitive, linguistic and contextual approaches to interpret narratives.[15] Indeed, Herman persuasively argues that only by synthesizing (socio) linguistic, narratological and cognitive models is it possible to overcome some of the limitations not only of the Labovian approach to stories but also of classical narratological models.[16]

I want to elaborate here on the limitations of classical narratological models and those of the natural narrative theory by Labov.[17] As Derrida wrote in his criticism of Jean Rousset's structuralist outlook in *Forme et signification*: "[I]n such work, the geometric or the morphologic is correlated only by mechanics, never by energetics."[18] This view is supported by Gibson, who similarly argues for reading narratives[19] beyond "geometrical" static schemata of structuralism and instead giving focus to the dynamics of narrative.[20] Gibson's *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* stirred a heated debate over the issue of structural narratological models and form as meaning as opposed to the ideas of form as a realization of content, its externalization or execution. Ryan, for example, concluded her line of argument against Gibson as follows: "Gibson seems to forget that force can be apprehended in its interaction with the form: we don't see the wind itself, we only see its effect on objects."[21] In the same article, Ryan reiterates: "To think of narrative and its movement in terms of force is to conceive of it as a constant folding and unfolding out of form."[22] It seems to me that Ryan misreads Gibson, by assuming that Gibson denies the importance of form in the critical analysis of literary texts, which is clearly not the case.[23] Gibson does not object to the

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[14] David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Oxford: Willey-Blackwell, 2009), p. 7.

[15] David Herman, *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp. 233 and 240.

[16] Herman (1999), *Narratologies,* p. 240.

[17] For further reading on Labov's oral narrative see Monika Fludernik, 'How Natural is 'Natural Narratology;' or, What is Unnatural about Unnatural Narratology?" *Narrative,* Vol. 20., No. 3 (October 2012), pp. 367-370. In Fludernik *Towards Natural Narratology,* pp. 57-58. For Labov's sociolinguist reading see William Labov, *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular (Conduct and Communication)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972).

[18] See, for instance, Derrida cited in Andrew Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 3 and 5.

[19] Andrew Gibson, *Reading Narrative Discourse: Studies in the Novel from Cervantes to Beckett* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), p. 1. Gibson points out that it is still unusual to find narrative texts that could be analyzed using a cognitive approach rather than a pure mimetic analysis. According to Gibson, here belong the novels of Conrad, Ford and Faulkner.

[20] Gibson (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative,* p. 21. See also Gibson cited in James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz, *A Companion to Narrative Theory* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 531.

[21] Ryan cited in Herman (1999), *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis,* pp. 137-38 and 165.

[22] Ibidem.

[23] Gibson's point of departure is, first of all, Barthes. According to Barthes, understanding narratives does not merely involve "the unfolding of the story." The reader is also required to recognize the "construction of narrative" and project "the horizontal concatenations of the narrative thread to an implicitly vertical axis." Barthes (1985: 87). Barthes cited in Gibson, (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative,* p. 4. In other words, any given narrative is a geometrical construction (construct), and the reader must reconstruct it as

existence of "spatial models" of structural narratology, but to "reducing all phenomena to the state of geometrical schemata."[24] I would argue that a spatial model of narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!* cannot be accomplished due to the fact that *Absalom, Absalom!* represents a conversational narrative that functions through heteroglossia, and has a very complex frame pattern on an intradiegetic level. Kartiganer, Brooks, McPherson and, surprisingly, Ryan all claim that to interpret *Absalom, Absalom!* we need critical approaches that can deal with the dynamics of texts.[25] Thus Kartiganer argues that "the supreme fiction that Faulkner is trying to create" is one that "claims both the precariousness and the relevance of forms, not as opposition but as dynamic whose terms feed and fuel each other," while Brooks (1984) goes as far as to suggest that "narrative transactions in *Absalom, Absalom!* might imply that the ultimate subject of any narrative is narrating."[26] Bleikasten calls *Absalom, Absalom!* 'the detour through orality' and writes of *Absalom, Absalom!* as an attempt at capturing 'the lost experience of living voices in their actual give-and-take context.'[27] Fludernik, for her part, focuses on the oral tradition and the narrating voice as an instance of mediating consciousness, emphasizing simultaneously that narrativity is not a quality inherent to the text, but instead a process in which a given text or discourse is interpreted as a story by the reader.[28] This process is called by Fludernik *narrativizing* the text.[29] From a different perspective, Stanzel observes that the personality of the narrator is connected with mediacy of narration since it manifests the dialogic unity of story and form.[30] Consequently, in evaluating the novel's structure, Stanzel focuses on narrative situations, where Fludernik focuses on framing and reader interpretation.

Herman notes that in order to capture the above-mentioned process some narrative scholars have developed the concept of tellability. Herman defines tellability as that which makes

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such in order to understand it. (Roland Barthes, S/Z 1970. Barthes cited in Gibson Ibidem). Building on Barthes, Gibson observes, this system is evident everywhere in narratology: in its discussions of levels, frames, embedding, and Chinese-box narration; in Propp's conception of spheres of action, Iser's Gestalten, Greimas's semiotic square and Eco's intertextual frames. [Refer to notes on p. 30 in Gibson (1996)]. For more on the above mentioned theorist and their concepts see Prop (1968), Iser (1974), Greimas (1996), and Eco (1979). Gibson (1996) argues: "For narratology, geometry is a kind of universal law. The universal forms of narrative are taken to be geometric in nature" (4-5).

[24] Gibson (1996), p. 5.

[25] Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 286. Kartiganer cited in Karen McPherson, *'Absalom, Absalom!: Telling Scratches,' Modern Fiction Studies,* 33 (1987), 431-450 (p. 449).

[26] Kartiganer cited in McPherson (1987), p. 447). Brooks (1984), p. 286. See also Brooks cited in McPherson (1987), p. 447.

[27] Andre Bleikasten, 'Faulkner from a European Perspective,' in *The Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner*, ed. by Philipp M. Weinstein (Pennsylvania: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 90.

[28] Fludernik cited in Herman (2009), *Basic Elements of Narrative,* p. 244. See also Herman (2009), p. 135. Herman (2009) based on: Fludernik (1996), Herman (2002), Prince (1999, 1987, 2000 and 2005). Herman uses the term narrativity.

[29] Ibidem.

[30] Stanzel (1984), *A Theory of Narrative,* pp. 21 and 63.

the event or configuration of events narratable in a given communicative situation.[31] Fludernik's theory of natural narrative, like Labov's theory of natural narrative, relies heavily on the notions of tellability and narrativity and not the concept of plot. In *Towards a Natural Narratology,* for example, Fludernik argues for an explanatory theory of narrative based on "spontaneous naturally occurring storytelling in the Labovian sense of the term."[32] Fludernik suggests that, when analyzing natural narratives, one can clearly distinguish between non-experiential narratives (action schemata) and experiential narratives.[33] Fludernik frequently cites a definition of a natural narrative by Labov and Waletzky as "one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequences of events which actually occurred."[34] Fludernik's theory of natural narratology clearly derives from Labovian natural narrative with its six distinctive aspects: an abstract, an orientation, an evaluation, a complication, a result or resolution, and a coda.[35] However, Fludernik also shows that Labovian natural narrative provides a valid explanation for narratives of personal experience rather than narratives of vicarious experience or witness narratives.

Like Stanzel, Fludernik argues for an analysis of the varying degrees of personal involvement of the teller.[36] According to Fludernik, the representation of human experience is the central aim of narrative.[37] This representation can be achieved by a combination of telling, viewing and experiencing patterns. Extending Labov's theory of natural narrative, Fludernik argues that, for the narrator, the experientiality of the story resides not merely in the events themselves but in their emotional significance to the narrator. The events become tellable precisely because they have started to mean something to the narrator on an emotional level. In other words, it is not the events on the story level but their experiential (emotional and intellectual) charge that matters to the narrator. It is in this context that the narrator constantly reviews, reorganizes and evaluates events on the story level.[38]

Absalom, Absalom! is a composite of three oral genres: the Labovian oral narrative of personal experience, the conversational narrative of vicarious experience, and witness accounts.

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[31] Herman (2009), p.135. Relying on Herman (2002), Prince (1987 and 2003) and Ryan (1991 and 2005).

[32] Fludernik cited in Herman (2003), p. 245. For a summary of Fludernik's theory of natural narrative as given in *Towards Natural Narratology*, see Herman (2003), pp. 246-47 and 252-57. Continuing in footnotes on p. 257, footnotes no. 7,8,9, and footnote 10 on pp. 258 and 261.

[33] Monika Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), p.247.

[34] Monika Fludernik, (2012), p. 360.Fludernik (1996), pp. 57-58.

[35] P. 360. See Labov pp. 359-360. See Labov in Fludernik "How Natural is 'Unnatural Narratology;' or, What is Unnatural about Natural Narratology,' p. 360. *Narrative,* Vol. 20, No. 3 (October 2012), 357-370 (p. 360).

[36] Stanzel (1984), *A Theory of Narrative,* pp. 21 and 63.

[37] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* pp. 49-51.

[38] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* pp. 49-51.

Approaching *Absalom, Absalom!* as a mixture of these three oral genres[39] explains and illuminates the occurrence of the Bakhtinian dialogic effect. The passage in Chapter V, in which Miss Rosa speaks of her attitude to Sutpen, is a prime example of a narrative of personal experience. For a narrative of personal experience, it is enough to read the passage in Chapter V, in which Miss Rosa speaks of her attitude to Sutpen. As Mary Paniccia Carden points out, Thomas Sutpen's pursuit (plot-events) concerns the events that occurred around the time of the American Civil War.[40] However, the novel focuses on Sutpen's story narrators – Miss Rosa, Mr. Compson, Quentin and Shreve – and is set in the novel's present; dated 1910.[41] In her narrative of personal experience, Miss Rosa's feelings towards Sutpen clearly remain untouched by the flow of time. Despite her disavowals, she still hates him in the same passionate way she did five decades ago: "*But I forgave him. They will tell you different, but I did. Why shouldn't I? I had nothing to forgive; I had not lost him because I never owned him a certain segment of rotten mud walked into my life, spoke that to me which I had never heard before and never shall again, and then walked out; that was all*" (p. 171). For an example of vicarious experience, the third person-narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* frequently offers access to Quentin's mind, as in the opening chapter of the novel, when depicting the way Quentin imagines Sutpen on his way to fulfilling his design while listening to Rosa's version of the dream of Sutpen Hundred. Indeed, the entire narrative technique in *Absalom, Absalom!*, with its telling-retelling pattern, focuses on vicarious experience. Thus, in Ch. III, Mr. Compson tells Quentin Sutpen's story and how Sutpen took pleasure from the fact the Jefferson townspeople feared him (p. 72). Similarly, in Ch. III, Mr. Compson tells Quentin how Grandfather Compson realized that Sutpen had no money when Sutpen refused to drink with the other men (p. 34). Witness narrative constitutes another type in *Absalom, Absalom!*:

> The women merely said that he had exhausted the possibilities of the families of the men with whom he had hunted and gambled and that he had now come to town to find a wife exactly as he would have gone to the Memphis market to buy livestock or slaves. But when they comprehended whom it was he had apparently come to town and into church to invest with his choice, the assurance of the women became one with the men's surprise and then even more than that: amazement. (Chapter II, p. 42, Mr. Compson as narrator).

Here, the Jefferson-town witness-focaliser, one of the main sources of information about Sutpen,

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[39] See Bakhtin for a distinction between simple oral genres (первичные – простые речевые жанры) like for example and compound oral genres (вторичные – сложные – речевые жанры) – novels, dramas, scientific works and academic papers.

[40] Mary Paniccia Carden. 'Fatherless children and post-patrilineal figures in William Faulkner's *Light in August, Absalom, Absalom! and Go Down, Moses', The Faulkner Journal* 27.2 (2013), 51-76 (p. 58.).

[41] Ibidem.

brings *Absalom, Absalom!* closer to the genre of witness narrative.[42] This accords with Bakhtin's theory of the genre of novel as genre mixture, we also understand how by putting together the three major types of oral narrative as described by Fludernik (1996), Faulkner creates the basis for a polyphonic novel. To develop this model further, we might note that Fludernik identifies three forms of mediating consciousness:[43]

    (a) Protagonist's consciousness (experiencing) – reflector-mode fiction.

    (b) Teller's consciousness (telling – reflecting) – self-reflective fiction.

    (c) Viewer's consciousness (viewing) – neutral narrative.[44]

As noted earlier, Fludernik identifies three types of natural narratives: narratives of personal experience; narratives of vicarious experience; and witness narratives.[45] Fludernik argues that both experiential types of narrative combine the telling and experiencing schemata since they have an "on-stage" narrator. Narratives of vicarious experience that are non-experiential combine the action with the telling schemata.[46] If we shift the focus from experience to experiencing, as Fludernik suggests, consciousness comprises both lived experience and intellectual attempts to deal with experience; it includes the comprehension of actancy just as it necessarily embraces an understanding of mental processes.[47] Bakhtin uses the term 'surplus of seeing' to denote the individual human experience and the cognitivist processes it involves.

4.2. Confession and mediating consciousness.

      Malcolm Cowley outlines the plot of *Absalom, Absalom!* as the events involved in Sutpen's design.[48] Cowley lays emphasis on the beginnings of Thomas Sutpen's design, depicting Sutpen as a mountain boy humiliated by being asked to enter the plantation mansion through the back door due to his low social status. In Cowley's reading, this event serves as instigation for the dream of a plantation and white sons. Subsequently, we see how Sutpen gains: a hundred square miles of land

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[42] The gossip focaliser as one of the main sources of knowledge in *Absalom, Absalom!* will be compared to the Jefferson town as a narrator in *The Snopes Trilogy* in Chapter VII of this thesis.

[43] Fludernik in Herman (2003: 247-252). Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* pp. 49-51. For a more extended level of the concept of consciousness in *Absalom, Absalom!* see Eric Casero, 'Designing Sutpen: Narrative and Its Relationship to Historical Consciousness in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!,*' *The Southern Literary Journal,* Vol. XLIV., No. 1. (Fall 2011), pp. 86-89 and 96. See also Caseero on *Absalom, Absalom!'s* three-dimensional model of consciousness – individual –social-historical which correlates to the Bakhtinian sociolinguistic.

[44] Here we include reflectivisation and Banfield's empty circle.

[45] Fludernik in Herman (2003: 252).

[46] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* p. 247.

[47] Fludernik (1996), pp. 49-51.

[48] Malcolm Cowley "Introduction to The Portable Faulkner," in *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism,* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Michigan State University Press, 1960), pp. 94-109 (in particular p. 100).

from the Chickasaws; the house of his dream with the aid of French architect and slaves; and, finally, reputation through marriage to Ellen Coldfield. In the end, however, we see Sutpen losing everything he achieved due to the fear of miscegenation by means of incest among his three children, and his white son killing his first-born possibly mixed-race son. In Ch. VII, the reader is offered the only chance to listen to the Thomas Sutpen himself, speaking about his design (p. 263):

> You see, I had a design in my mind. Whether it was a good or a bad design is beside the point; the question is, where did I make the mistake in it, what did I do or misdo in it, whom or what injure by it to the extent which this would indicate. I had a design. To accomplish it I should require money, a house, a plantation, slaves, a family – incidentally of course, a wife. I set out to acquire these, asking no favor of any man (Ch. VII, p. 263).

In this confession, it becomes evident that Sutpen is aware of the consequences of his actions and of the immoral dimension to them. Moreover, it is also clear that Sutpen trusts Grandfather Compson and knows that the latter will not attempt to impose any moral or ethical judgement on his deeds.[49] Indeed, throughout *Absalom, Absalom!*, examples are abundant of the friendship between Sutpen and Grandfather Compson.[50] Bakhtin emphasized the polyphonic nature of every confession,[51] laying emphasis on the contact between the two consciousnesses that is taking place:

> He depicts confession and others' confessional consciousnesses to reveal inner social structure, to show that confessions are nothing else but an event of interaction between consciousnesses, to show this interaction of consciousnesses is taking place during confession. I cannot do without the other, as I cannot become myself without the other, when I find the other in me (in this mutual-picturing and mutual-reflection).[52]

The polyphonic nature of confession is also suggested by the different ways in which Sutpen's story is reported in witness accounts. Thus Mr. Compson presents the Sutpen story in a linear way, abiding by the chronology in which the events in Sutpen's design occurred,[53] whereas Shreve makes a moral judgement on the racism that lies behind the reasons for the failure of Sutpen's design. It is Shreve who breaks the silence attributed to the neutral witness narrative, speaking of Sutpen's racism and Sutpen's wish to produce only white sons and the failure of his entire plan. By contrast, Mr. Compson

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[49] Cf. Wash Jones relationship with Sutpen.
[50] On page 274 in Ch. VII, Quentin confirms that Grandfather Compson was Sutpen's only friend.
[51] Bakhtin defines confessions as genre incorporated in polyphonic novel: "Исповедь как высшая окорма свободного самораскрытия человека изнутри (а не извне-завершающая)."
[52] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 213. "(…) чтобы раскрыть их внутренне социальную структуру, чтобы показать, что они (исповеди) не что иное, как событие взаимодействия сознаний, чтобы показать взаимозависимость сознаний, раскрывающуюся в исповеди. Я не могу обойтись без другого, не могу стать самим собою без другого; я должен найти себя в другом, найдя другого в себе (во взаимоотражении, во взаимоприятии)."
[53] Chapters 2-to-4, especially in Ch. III pp. 58 and 72.

depicts racism deeply rooted in the social structure of the South without commenting on it.[54] In Ch.VIII, Quentin and Shreve talk about the conversation on miscegenation and incest that took place between Bon and Henry, revealing the real reasons behind fratricide in *Absalom, Absalom!* The conversations between the two Sutpen sons get more serious after Bon's words – *"I'm the nigger that's going to sleep with your sister. Unless you stop me, Henry."* (358). This conversation results in Henry killing Bon. As William H. Rueckert observes, the Sutpen design was: "a circuit of great achievement accompanied and followed by total destruction."[55]

As this suggests, *Absalom, Absalom!* is a combination of all the above-mentioned types of natural narrative, where anthropomorphic consciousness and its reactions to the events are of more importance than plot. The Labovian concept of "natural narrative" employed by Fludernik corresponds to the Bakhtinian idea of 'primary speech genres.'[56] Bakhtin concludes that the novel belongs to the secondary speech genres that are compounds of the primary speech genres.[57] For Bakhtin, the novel is the highest genre*:* "[…] novels (…) arise in more complex and comparatively highly developed and organized cultural communication."[58] As I will show *Absalom, Absalom!*'s narrative is constituted of several mediating consciousnesses and the on-going dialogue between them. Since in *Absalom, Absalom!* the plot line is of minor importance,[59] I will focus in this chapter on characterising *Absalom, Absalom!* in terms of those forms of narrativity, tellability and experientiality than concentrate on the role of a mediating consciousness rather than the reconstruction of the plot. This is the kind of reading suggested for *Absalom, Absalom!* by Franz Stanzel**.**[60] As Brooks notes: "*Absalom,Absalom!* seems to pose with acute force problems in the

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[54] The ideological bias of the Jefferson as a town will be examined in more detail in the last chapter of this thesis, which is given entirely to the narratological analysis of *The Snopes Trilogy*.

[55] William H. Rueckert, *Faulkner from Within: Destructive and Generative Being in the Novels of William Faulkner* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Parlor Press, 2004), p. 118. See Rueckert (2004), p. 120 for further reading of Sutpen's design and its social dimension in the context of the Old American South.

[56] See Bakhtin 1953 (1986:60). See Bakhtin in David Herman (2009), *Basic Elements of Narrative*, p. 80.

[57] See Bakhtin cited in Herman ibidem. See also Bakhtin for examples of secondary complex speech genres 1953 (1986):62.

[58] Ibidem.

[59] For more on off-plot line and a plotline see Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* p. 63. See Christine van Boheemen, 'The Semiotics of Plot: Toward a Typology of Fictions.,' *Poetics Today,* Vol. 3., No. 4 (Autumn 1982), 89-96 (p. 95). On *Absalom, Absalom!* as on off-plot line narrative dependant on the issues of language and speech and the recurring patterns of repetition. Cf. "Incredulous Narration" in *Reading for the Plot.* Brooks confirmation of *Absalom, Absalom!* As an off-plot line and then devoting a chapter to the clear-cut demarcation of the plot in *Absalom, Absalom!* (pp. 286-312). See also Malcolm Cowley for the plot summary with the emphasis on the origin of Sutpen's design in childhood events of *Absalom, Absalom!* and with emphasis on the Sutpen's failure due to the fear of miscegenation by incest among his three children. Malcolm Cowley, "Introduction to the Portable Faulkner," in *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism,* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Michigan State University Press, 1960), pp. 94-109, in particular, p. 100.

[60] Stanzel *Narrative Situations in the Novel: Tom Jones, Moby-Dick, The Ambassadors, Ulysses.* (Bloomington/London: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 14.

epistemology of narrative and cognitive uses of plotting in a context of radical doubt about the validity of plot."[61] Thus, Stanzel maintains that the chronological line of the plot in *Absalom, Absalom!* is clearly affected by the point of view method, which results in repetition and imposes certain difficulties of reading the plot on the readers: "Only gradually does the reader recognize the proper position and significance of the events within the whole patterns of relationships."[62] John Pilkington makes a similar observation on the role of mediating consciousness and the nonchronological nature of the narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!*: "As any reader of *Absalom, Absalom!* knows, its plot is not developed chronologically in a straight line. Information reaches the reader through the narrators who often provide different versions of the same event, sometimes with additional details."[63] Phelan and Rabinowitz relate this non-chronological narrative practice to modernist narrative practices more generally: "Modernist authors such as Conrad, Proust, and Faulkner frequently produced work that was presented in an extremely nonlinear sequence but from which a consistent, linear story could be readily extracted."[64] As a result of this narrative practice, Booth argues for a cognitive approach to *Absalom, Absalom!*, but he then focuses on the analysis of *Absalom*, *Absalom!'s* plot, relying heavily on Barthes' dual classification of narrative codes.[65]

4.3. Homodiegetic narrators and off-plot-line narrative.

In this context, I want to consider the narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!* as a non-mimetic off-plot-line narrative. I will argue that "the speech and thought acts" of the four homodiegetic narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* – Miss Rosa, Mr. Compson, Quentin and Shreve – give *Absalom, Absalom!* a quasi-mimetic quality.[66] I would, however, also suggest that it is not necessary for the reader to attempt a reconstruction of the plot in *Absalom, Absalom!* in order to comprehend either the story

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[61] Brooks (1984), *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative,* pp. 286-88.

[62] Stanzel (1971), *Narrative Situations in the Novel: Tom Jones, Moby-Dick, The Ambassadors, Ulysses,* p. 14.

[63] John Pilkington, *The Heart of Yoknapatawpha* (University Press of Mississippi, 1981), p. 171. For the analysis of *Absalom, Absalom!* as a novel with a nonlinear plot, depicting, first of all, social relations and class/racial identity, see also Julia Leyda, 'Shifting Sands: The Myth of Classic Mobility,' in *A Companion to William Faulkner,* ed. by Richard C. Mooreland (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), pp. 165-80 and 173.

[64] David Herman, James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Brian Richardson, and Robyn Warhol, *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates,* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012), p. 77.

[65] For a reading of *Absalom, Absalom!* along the lines of Barthes' S/Z and the rules of the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy as a consequence of the rules of proairetic and hermeneutic codes the interested reader is referred to Brooks's, *Reading for the plot*; particularly, Ch. 11. entitled "Incredulous Narration: *Absalom, Absalom!*", in *The Dynamics of Narrative Form: Studies in Anglo-American Narratology,* ed. by John Pier, pp. 286-288 (p. 287). Also, Donald M. Kartiganer's, *The Fragile Thread: The Meaning of Form in Faulkner's Novel's* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1979).

[66] Monika Fludernik, *The Fictions of Languages and the Languages of Fiction. The Linguistic Representation of Speech and Consciousness* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993). Fludernik offers an extensive study of speech and thought representation.

of the novel's protagonist, Thomas Sutpen, or the personal stories of the four above-mentioned homodiegetic narrators.

In *The Fictions of Languages and the Languages of Fiction*, Fludernik builds up a convincing argument for an analysis of anti-mimetic narratives like *Absalom, Absalom!*[67] In a similar vein, Dirk Kuyk has written on the difference between plot in a monologic novel (as actions of the character) and the anti-mimetic plot in *Absalom, Absalom!* as based on the reader's search for the reasons behind characters' actions, motives and the consequences of these actions. For Kuyk, the fabula in *Absalom, Absalom!* is more important than the plot.[68] In her account, Fludernik productively refers to Genette's distinction between what he calls 'mimesis of words' and 'mimesis of events'.[69] Fludernik observes that: "Genette, in his discussion, concentrates on the medium of imitation as his primary concern, and he, therefore, excludes action from the realm of pure mimesis since only characters' discourse can be mimetically represented by a quotation in direct speech."[70] Fludernik further argues: "In fiction, mimesis of the fictional world is achieved by means of diegesis, but dramatic (properly mimetic) elements survive in the embedded (lower level) quotations of figural utterances and thoughts."[71] *Absalom, Absalom!* offers a prima facie example in support of Fludernik's hypothesis since as a conversational narrative the narrative pattern is that of telling and re-telling. Following Genette, Fludernik concludes: "[A]all we have and can have are degrees of diegesis."[72]

The dialogues and other acts of telling/re-telling take up approximately 80 percent of the narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!*[73]

In *Absalom, Absalom!,* as in a novel of a mixed homodiegetic-heterodiegetic type, we get dialogues uttered by homodiegetic narrators and commentaries made by an omniscient God-like narrator. However, the omniscient but suppressed narrator of *Absalom, Absalom!* does not

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[67] Fludernik's theory of natural narrative has stirred a heated discussion, based on accusations that her theory can be implemented only for the analyses of modernist narratives. See Fludernik's attempts to refute these arguments, Fludernik in Herman (2003: 257).

[68] Dirk Kuyk, *Sutpen's design: Interpreting Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p. 45.

[69] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 164. Genette cited in Fludernik (1993), *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction,* p.29.

[70] Genette cited in Fludernik (1993), pp. 22-29.

[71] Fludernik (1993), p. 29. Fludernik (2003:29).

[72] Genette cited in Fludernik (1993), p. 29. Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 164.

[73] Cf. Cleanth Brooks claims that despite the extensive dialogues and monologues by homodiegetic narrators, *Absalom, Absalom!* is an example of "the third person narrative by an omniscient author [sic]." In *William Faulkner: Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1978), p. 308.

correspond to the omniscient narrator of the Victorian novel.[74] Due to the conversational nature of narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!*, only about 20% of *Absalom, Absalom!* is taken up by commentaries given by an omniscient narrator. The rest of the narrative is occupied by the speech acts of the four homodiegetic narrators. As Diengott notes, classical narratologists agree to accept the heterodiegetic-homodiegetic distinction even though the model as a whole pulls into a non-mimetic direction." [75]

Dirk Kuyk in *Sutpen's design: interpreting Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!* who first noted that a substantial part of *Absalom, Absalom!* presents the homodiegetic narrators describing their personal experience.[76] A clear example of this is Chapter V, in which Miss Rosa speaks of her attitude to Sutpen (171). Minter writes on Rosa as a narrator: "As she evokes and elaborates, she also judges and dismembers."[77] As we have seen, Rosa's feelings towards Sutpen clearly remain untouched by the flow of time. She still hates him in the same passionate way she did five decades ago. Given that six decades lie between the Sutpen-related events of the plot and the year 1909-10 as the time of narration, we can see how Rosa makes an exception to the general rule on dissonant narration as the type of narration with decreased levels of emotionality in favour of objectivity. Usually feelings fade with time and therefore events might be expected to get objectivized over the course of time. This does not happen in the case of Miss Rosa Coldfield.

As noted earlier, the narrative technique in *Absalom, Absalom!*, with its telling-retelling pattern, focuses on vicarious experience. Thus, In Ch. III, Mr. Compson tells Quentin Sutpen's story and how Sutpen took pleasure from the fact the Jefferson townspeople feared him (72). Above all, he suggests, Sutpen wanted to elevate his social status by gaining respect. When this failed to happen, he ceased caring what others thought of him. Here, the Jefferson-town witness-focaliser, one of the main sources of information about Sutpen, brings *Absalom, Absalom!* closer to the genre of witness narrative. [78] As we can easily observe, faced with a lack of direct information all the homodiegetic narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* frequently have to resort to hearsay and gossip. Accordingly, Thomas Daniel Young argues that the Sutpen story has been "common knowledge

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[74] Kuyk seems not to mention the fact that, in *Absalom, Absalom!*, we have an omniscient but suppressed narrator, who definitely differs from the narrators in the Victorian novel because he refuses to manifest his knowledge *per se*. Sutpen's design: Interpreting Faulkner's '*Absalom, Absalom!,*' (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p. 35.

[75] Nilli Diengott, 'The Mimetic Language Game and Two Types of Narrators,' *Modern Fiction Studies* 33.3 (1987), 523-534 (p. 523-4). See Fludernik (1993), for Genette's and Chatman's models, pp. 22-29; Genette, p. 283; Lanser's model as discussed in footnote no 58 on p. 71.

[76] Kuyk (1990), *Sutpen's design: interpreting Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!*, p. 30.

[77] David Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1980), p. 22.

[78] The gossip focaliser as one of the main sources of knowledge in *Absalom, Absalom!* will be compared and contrasted to Jefferson town as a narrator in *The Snopes Trilogy* in Chapter V of this thesis below.

around Jefferson: "The truth is that Miss Rosa has little to tell Quentin that is not already common knowledge around town."[79] We can thus observe the mechanisms that are responsible for the novel's agon of narrative voices. As Robert Dale Parker suggest, reducing the argument on 'multiple-voiced narrative' to its simplest form, writing on *Absalom, Absalom!* as narrative of communal experience: "Mr. Compson and the town have pieced together his tale like patchwork quilt of scraps called across the social spectrum."[80]

In an earlier paragraph, I distinguished between Miss Rosa, Mr. Compson, Quentin and Shreve as vicarious narrators and the Jefferson town gossip and hearsay as a source of information. Sutpen, a stranger to Jefferson, was the main subject of gossip for over a month after his arrival:

> So that in the next four weeks (Jefferson was a village then: the Holston House, the courthouse, six stores, a blacksmith and livery stable, a saloon frequented by drovers and peddlers, three churches and perhaps thirty residents) the stranger's name went back and forth among the places of business and of idleness and among the residences in steady strophe and antistrophe: *Sutpen. Sutpen. Sutpen. Sutpen.* That was all that the town was to know about him for almost a month. He had apparently come into town from the south – a man of about twenty-five as the town learned later, because at the time his age could not have been guessed because he looked like a man who had been sick. (Ch. II, p. 32, l. 7-19).

The omniscient narrator emphasises that the townspeople did not know anything about Thomas Sutpen during the first few weeks after his move to Jefferson. For example, only Colonel Compson knew about Sutpen's poverty in the first two years after his arrival at Jefferson, and he did not tell a word.[81] By means of the community gossip, Sutpen and his slaves fast became a legend in Jefferson and surroundings:

> So the legend of the wild men came gradually back to town, brought by the men who would ride out to watch what was going on, who began to tell how Sutpen would take stand beside a game trail with the pistols and send the negroes in to drive the swamp like a pack of hounds; it was they who told how during that first summer and fall the negroes did not even have (or did not use) blankets to sleep in. (p.36).

At this point, it is important to differentiate between the story level and the discourse level. The Jefferson town focaliser as a witness belongs to the story level, whereas the four homodiegetic

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[79] Thomas Daniel Young, 'Narration as Creative Act: The Role of Quentin Compson in *Absalom, Absalom!*', in ed. by Evans Harrington and Ann J. Abadie (University Press Mississippi, 1979), pp. 88-89

[80] Robert Dale Parker, *Absalom, Absalom!: The Questioning of Fictions* (Twayne Publishers, Boston: A Division of G.K. Hall and Co., 1991), p. 34.

[81] *Absalom, Absalom!* Ch. II, p. 33, l. 14-33.

narrators belong to the discourse level as tellers.[82] Fludernik argues for a clear-cut distinction between the voices of narrators and the voices of characters.[83] Fludernik explains that the blending of voices of narrators and characters is frequently given as a proof of the Bakhtinian dialogic principle.[84] Heteroglossia is the effect of the ongoing dialogue of voices of the same hierarchy, i.e. voices present at the same narrative level (either story level or discourse level).[85] Thus, the blending of characters' voices with the voice of the omniscient narrator does not usually result in heteroglossia.[86] Consequently, the blending of the voices of narrators and focalisers does not, for Fludernik, corroborate the Bakhtinian dialogic principle. However, in a conversational narrative like that of *Absalom, Absalom!*, where we have a suppressed omniscient narrator and the four homodiegetic narrators, the blending of voices clearly results not only in heteroglossia but also in multivocality. At this point I want to consider the question of narrative voice.

4.4. The narrative voice and the narrator.

Genette was the first to point out that "every narrative resonates with voice."[87] For Genette, voice is the point of reference – "the ultimate 'fixed point' to which other aspects of narrative can be referred."[88] As Genette argues: "Voice is the source foundation that assures the coherence of narrative geometry itself." [89] Genette's category of voice corresponds to Stanzel's concept of mediacy. Stanzel builds on Scholes and Kellogg's (1966) definition of narrative as an act that requires a story and a storyteller.[90] Stanzel then goes on to suggest that whenever a piece of news is conveyed, whenever something is reported, there is a mediator. In short, the voice of a narrator is audible.

According to Genette, there are two undisputed criteria for determining the narrator's status in narrative; the first is narrative level (extradiegetic or intradiegetic) and the second the

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[82] For the Genettian distinction between narration (who speaks) and focalisation (who sees) see Genette (1980), pp. 185-89 and Genette cited in Andrew Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 145.

[83] Fludernik (1993), *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction,* p. 338. See also Gibson on the same matter (1996), p. 329 points 1 and 2.

[84] Fludernik (1993), p. 6.

[85] For an exception to this rule and Bakhtin's dual voice hypothesis, see Fludernik (1993), p. 350.

[86] Cf. Gibson (1996), p. 325, *Anna Karenina* provides an obvious example of an omniscient narrative.

[87] Genette (1980), *Narrative Discourse,* p. 213. Genette cited in Gibson (1996), p. 143.

[88] Genette cited in Gibson (1996), p. 145. For a more detailed discussion of voice, see Cohn's (1978) book publication *Transparent Minds* and Gibson's (1996) back notes on p. 177.

[89] Genette cited in Gibson (1996), p. 145. In Derridean terms, voice serves as "the center" whose role is to "orient, balance and organise the very structure of narrative. Derrida (1990: 278).

[90] Frank K. Stanzel, *A Theory of Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 4. Stanzel purports to provide a thesis that "mediacy of presentation is the generic characteristic of narratology

narrator's relationship to the story (hetero- or homo-diegetic).[91] For example, Genette defines an extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator as a narrator "in the first degree who tells a story he is absent from."[92] Gibson reminds us that in feminist and postcolonial narratologies the question of who speaks is suggestive of the power relations at work in narrative.[93] Gibson also emphasises that the concept of narrative is inseparable from the concept of subjectivity.[94] If we analyse the questions of narrative voice in *Absalom, Absalom!* on the bases of subjectivity and knowledge we may reach a preliminary conclusion that can be presented in the form of the diagram:

Heterodiegetic (omniscient but suppressed narrator) at extradiegetic level -> Shreve -> Quentin -> Mr. Compson -> Miss Rosa (at intradiegetic level)[95]

This agrees with Faulkner's own view on the question of narrative voice in *Absalom, Absalom!*.[96] However, due to the specific type of omniscient but suppressed heterodiegetic type of narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* - and the presence of the four equally informed and subjective homodiegetic voices of: Miss Rosa, Mr. Compson, Quentin and Shreve - the power relations in *Absalom, Absalom!* are difficult to clearly define.[97] By mixing third-person and first-person narrative Faulkner comes up with a solution to the fundamental problems of both types of narrative. As Hugh M. Ruppersburg observes: "Faulkner's third-person narratives often appear to be produced by a very concrete, discernible personality – a human personality, with frequently human limitations."[98] Elsewhere, however, Ruppersburg seems to deny this by claiming that *Absalom, Absalom!* is a point of view novel, ignoring the first-person and third-person categories and its consequences.[99] One needs to ask why Ruppersburg's attempt at analysis of *Absalom, Absalom!* as a point-of-view novel fails and why it has to fail. To give a brief answer, *Absalom, Absalom!* with its suppressed omniscient narrator cannot be encompassed by what we commonly have in mind when speaking of a point of view

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[91] Genette (1980), *Narrative Discourse,* p. 248. Genette (1987), p. 533. Genette's category of person in Phelan and Rabinowitz (2005: 38). Genette's approach is considerably extended by Herman. Thus, for a more extensive discussion of the typology of narrators the reader is referred to Herman (2009) pp. 65-67 and 187, 190; for instance: extradiegetic, intradiegetic, hypodiegetic types p. 65; autodiegetic, homodiegetic, heterodiegetic types pp. 66-67). See also Gibson (1996), pp. 319-320; on heterodiegetic narrative p. 319; homodiegetic and hypodiegetic narrative, p. 320. Stanzel (1986), pp. 48 and 58.

[92] Genette (1980), p. 248. See Bal and Rimmon-Kenan on this type of narrative in Paul Dawson, 'Types of Omniscience,' *Narrative,* Vol. 17., No. 2. (May 2009), 143-161 (p. 147).

[93] Gibson (1996), p. 329 point 3.

[94] Gibson (1996), p. 143.

[95] The arrows used in my diagram suggest that the extradiegetic narrator is higher in the hierarchy of the narrators in general. The rest will be complicated and explained when speaking of heteroglossia and its consequences for the narrative structure in *Absalom, Absalom!*

[96] Gibson (1996), p. 216.

[97] This argument needs further elucidation. See, page pf this chapter.

[98] Hugh M. Ruppersburg, *Voice and Eye in Faulkner's Fiction* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1983), p.10.

[99] Ruppersburg (1983), pp. 9-25.

method, which is restricted to homodiegetic narrators. *Absalom, Absalom!* is a mixed type of narrative, where we have an omniscient God-like heterodiegetic narrator at an extradiegetic level and four homodiegetic narrators at intradiegetic level, as schematised here:[100]

Both the above schemes are invalid, however, created only to facilitate the reader's mental picturing of the stratification of the power relations in *Absalom, Absalom!*, where the power is clearly on the side of an extradiegetic narrator who, nonetheless, refuses to assume and manifest his power. In "A Plea for a Narrator-Centered Narratology," Rene Rivara has remarked that "the only defining property of Genette's extradiegetic narrator is his outsideness."[101] However, since the omniscient narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* is also omnipresent, he is not only present at an extradiegetic level but at all levels. Here, following Brooks and Warren, we could describe this type on narration as "a kind of disembodied intelligence before whom the events are played out."[102] Rivara fails to mention several crucial consequences to the outsideness of the heterodiegetic narrator: e.g. objectivity and extended knowledge. Beyond doubt, the heterodiegetic narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* takes the highest place in the hierarchy of narrators because of his omnipresence and omnipotence. The lack of evaluative commentaries on the part of the omniscient narrator does not affect this status. At the same time, because of their embodiment (presence in the story) homodiegetic narrators do not have access to the privileges associated with the extradiegetic level: i.e. omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. Because the heterodiegetic narrator is not a character in the story but only a mediating voice, the degree of his embodiment is zero, and the extradiegetic level in *Absalom, Absalom!* is of the highest order in the stratification model of power relations.

At this point, a clear distinction is necessary between the narrative consequences of the choice of the homodiegetic and the heterodiegetic narrators. When we analyse the heterodiegetic narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!*, we can clearly observe omniscience-omnipresence mechanisms that lead to his superior position in the narrative as opposed to the specific niches of the several homodiegetic narrators:

> It was General Compson who knew that first about the Spanish coin being his last one, as it was Compson (so the town learned later) who offered to lend Sutpen the money to finish and furnish his house, and was reffused. So doubtless General Compson was the first man in the county to tell him-self

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[100] Compare my schemata to James H. Justus's narrative schemata, which presents General Compson as a narrator not a source of information as in my discussion. James H. Justus, 'The Epic Design of *Absalom, Absalom!*,' *Texas Studies in Literature and Language,* Vol. 4., No. 2. (Summer: 1962), 157-176 (p. 168).
[101] Rivara cited John Holmes Pier, ed. *The Dynamics of Narrative Form: Studies in Anglo-American Narratology* (Walter de Gruyter, 2004), p. 87.
[102] Ruppersburg (1983), p. 10.

that Sutpen did not need to borrow money with which to complete the house, supply what it yet lacked, because he intended to marry it. (heterodiegetic narrator, Chapter II, (p. 41).

Diengott emphasizes that, unlike Genette, Stanzel does not distinguish between narrative levels.[103] Stanzel's narrative model centres upon the category of the person and, as a result, on narrative situations. Using Stanzel's terminology, *Absalom, Absalom!* is a third-person narrative because of the power of the heterodiegetic narrator. This corresponds well with Stanzel's astute observation that a third-person narrative "indicates two discontinuous realms of existence."[104] I am wary of the use of the adjective "discontinuous" to define the narrative levels in *Absalom, Absalom!* due to its combination of the conversational type of natural narrative and the specific kind of suppressed omniscient narrator at an extradiegetic level. I agree with Fludernik, in her discussion of the omniscient heterodiegetic narrative, when she proposes "to treat omniscient third-person narrative as a blend, i.e. as a creative extension and combination of two frames, that of heterodiegetic narrative and that of first-person self-analysis."[105] This is, I would suggest, precisely the case in *Absalom, Absalom!*

By drawing on Fludernik and Stanzel, it is possible to challenge another of Rivara's arguments, when he claims that the third-person narrator is more difficult to analyse than the first-person.[106] Kuyk writes that very few literary theorists have undertaken the analysis of omniscient narration in relation to the domain of narratorial knowledge and the way it is manifested. In his analysis of *Absalom, Absalom!* in terms of an omniscient narrator, Kuyk relies on Richard Forrer and Hugh M. Ruppersburg.[107] By contrast, in her discussion of narratorial omniscience, Fludernik takes a cognitive stand, arguing that narratorial omniscience is impossible. However, Fludernik agrees with the foundational narrative theorists on the God-like quality of the third-person narrator as postulated by means of conventionalisation and naturalisation.[108] As we have seen, Stanzel and

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[103] Diengott (1987), p. 533.

[104] Stanzel cited in Diengott (1987), p. 530.

[105] Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 38. Also, Fludernik (2012), p. 367 and footnote no 6 on p. 368. For the blending of the first-person with the third-person narrative see also Stanzel (1986), p. 97 and Lodge in Herman (2009), p. 147.

[106] Rivara cited in Pier (2004), p. 95.

[107] See Forer cited in Kuyk (1990) on the narrator's "stabilizing and clarifying sense of reality" and Ruppersburg on the omniscient narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* as "a summarizing, unifying observer who both frames and visualizes." (p 35).

[108] Fludernik (1993), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* p. 453. Cf. Gibson (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative*, p. 325. For more on the existing general consensus that a key characteristic of a heterodiegetic narrator is omniscience see Kellog, Robert L. and Robert E. Scholes, *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 270, 272 and 274. The basis for my counter-argument to Rivara derives also from Stanzel's theory of narrative and his claim that only heterodiegetic narrators can be truly objective, since their narrating is of a purely literary-aesthetic rather than an existential – goal-oriented nature, as is the case with

Booth are unanimous that the unreliability of homodiegetic narrators is directly related to their level of embodiment.[109] Stanzel argues: "The unreliability of the first-person narrator is not, however, based on his personal qualities as a fictional figure, e.g. character, sincerity, love of truth, and so on, but on the ontological basis of the position of the first-person narrator."[110]

4.5. The frame narrative.

So far, I have provided only a brief characterisation of the mixed heterodiegetic/extradiegetic and homodiegetic/intradiegetic narrative. Gibson identifies two narratological phenomena responsible for the stratification of narrative: "hierarchical arrangement and the frame."[111] The hierarchical arrangement in this case relies heavily on narratorial knowledge. As Fludernik argues, "Frame narratives frequently thematise access to knowledge rather than highlighting thematic similarities and they also serve to authenticate the story, sometimes in the form of putative historical record which the frame narrator pretends to have found."[112] Exploring the concept of subordination in embedded narratives, Gibson builds on Genette and Rimmon-Kenan. According to Rimmon-Kenan, when "the hypodiegetic level offers an explanation of the diegetic level we speak of explicative function."[113] Rimmon-Kenan further elaborates that: "[T]hematic relations between hypodiegetic and diegetic levels are those of analogy (similarity and contrast)."[114] Here I would like to refer to Genette's discussion of John Barth's three types of thematic relation between narrative levels. The first type is zero type, meaning there is no thematic connection. Barth's second type is equal to Genette's first case of his type two and marks a full thematic connection between narrative levels. In other words, type one is a binary opposite of type two. The type I am most interested in here, however, is type three. Type three involves, as Barth claims, "a dramatical relation – that is, one in which the thematic relation, perceived by the narratee, has consequences in the first action." (This is the second case of Genette's type two).

One might argue that conversational narrative is characterised, first of all, by its frames.[115] The first to point to frame as a characteristic feature of a conversational narrative was Marry L.

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a homodiegetic narrator and his existential and psychological bias. Stanzel (1986: 93). Stanzel cited in Diengott (1987), p. 531.

[109] Booth in Herman, p. 16. Stanzel cited in Diengott (1987), pp. 529-53. Also, for Bal's appraisal of Booth's interpretation of narratorial authority in *Absalom, Absalom!* see Bal (1986), p. 559.

[110] Stanzel (1986), p. 89. For the unreliability of a homodiegetic narrator as directly related to his level of embodiment, see Booth in Herman (2003:16) and Booth cited in Diengott (1987), p. 529.

[111] Gibson (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative,* pp. 214-5.

[112] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural Narratology,* p. 343.

[113] Kenan cited in Gibson,

[114] Ibidem.

[115] Mieke Bal and Eve Tavor, 'Notes on Narrative Embedding,' *Poetics Today* 22 (1981), 41-59 (p. 63).

Pratty (1977). Writing on frame narratives, Fludernik refers to Harweg's (1975) findings on the way all background information (Harweg's exogenic situative) is related to the current story extension (Harweg's endogenic situative). As John Pilkington rightly observes: Fludernik argues for keeping a clear-cut distinction between the embedded levels in frame narratives and the embedding narrative.[116]

Herman (1991), suggests the boundaries that delimit embedded narratives can be of two types: either signalled by the change of the narrator, or involving spatio-temporal change.[117] But, as Prince (1992) demonstrates, the contact between embedded narratives can be a far more complex phenomenon. Prince has observed that, "Any narrative is made up of little narratives." [118] Accordingly, Prince uses the term 'window' to denote "a narrative unit delaminated by what can be shown of a textual word in one take."[119] The window shifts are the process by which narrative moves from one stand in the plot to another.[120] Similar to Herman, Prince comes to the conclusion that the window shifts are marked by changes in space or time or both. In the Quentin-Shreve chapters in *Absalom, Absalom!*, set in Quentin's room at Harvard, the spatio-temporal changes are indicated by varying temperature. For example, at the end of the next chapter, Shreve again urges Quentin to get to sleep so they do not have to stay in the cold: "'Come on,' Shreve said. 'Let's get out of this refrigerator and go to bed."[121]

In my analysis of *Absalom, Absalom!*, I rely on the structuralist theory of narrative levels, as proposed by Genette (1980 and 1988).[122] What we have in *Absalom, Absalom!*, is a fairly standard, almost typical, shift between embedded and embedding levels. Moreover, the shift in narrative levels is not only indicated by changes in time and space but also, as in the first example, by chapter division.

Many scholars have discussed at length the concept of a hierarchy of levels and a variety of functions of the Chinese-box narrative device.[123] Gibson points out that the concept of narrative

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[116] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* p. 342.
[117] See also Rimmon-Kenan cited in Bal and Tavor (1981), p. 56. Fludernik (1996), p. 341. Prince cited in Herman (1999), p. 121.
[118] Prince cited in Herman (1999), p. 121.
[119] Ibidem, p. 130.
[120] For a detailed discussion of 'the window types' and their management see ibidem, pp. 129-130.
[121] *Absalom, Absalom!* p. 359.
[122] In Gerad Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 84. Genette acknowledges the limitations of his earlier work 1972 (1980 - English translation) and revises selected aspects of this theory of narrative levels to point to its main drawbacks.
[123] Rimmon-Kenan cited n Gibson (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative,* p. 216. Serres cited in Gibson (1996), p. 221.

levels always implies the relations of subordination and domination.[124] Kenan introduces the term 'stratification' and formulates a rather obvious premise: "[E]ach inner narrative is subordinate to the narrative within which it is embedded."[125]Similarly to Rimmon-Kenan, Serres discusses the mechanisms of subordination in narrative, giving as an example Russian stacking dolls. Serres uses the term "logic of boxes" for the hierarchy of narrative levels. Firstly, Serres claims that the so-called "winner" (narrator) is always situated on the "top" in embedding narrative (the more external one).[126] Secondly, Serres' "logic of boxes" indicates "the first must always contain the second element, never the other way round."[127]

4.6. Narrative embedding, dialogue and dialogic diads

The difficulties of interpreting the patterns of embedding in *Absalom, Absalom!* comes from the combination of what Nelles calls horizontally chained stories and vertically embedded stories in one complex conversational narrative of a mixed hetero-homodiegetic type.[128] Nelles contrasts and compares the two types of relations and advances the following definition: "[V]ertical embedding, in which narratives at different diegetic levels are inserted within each other," and "horizontal embedding, in which at the same diegetic level different narrators follow one another."[129] In *Absalom, Absalom!* we have both horizontal and vertical embedding.

The embedded stories in *Absalom, Absalom!* belong to the same class, since all are represented by the homodiegetic narrators and encompassed by an extradiegetic level with a heterodiegetic narrator on the top level. In addition, Mr. Compson, Shreve and Quentin frequently think and talk about Rosa and their version of the Sutpen story. In this way Rosa's personal narrative is being embedded in the stories they tell. Similarly, Quentin and Shreve frequently speak of Mr. Compson as a narrator and discuss the scope of his knowledge of the Sutpen story. Furthermore, Shreve questions the objectivity and knowledge of all the Compsons. The embedding of stories also raises the issue of subjectivity. Quentin is the most knowledgeable, most self-conscious narrator and, as a consequence, he cannot be objective, as he admits in his final remark on the South in the closing lines of *Absalom, Absalom!*:

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[124] Ibidem, p. 216.
[125] Ibidem.
[126] Ibidem, p. 221.
[127] Ibidem.
[128] Bal is the first to make a reference to typology of narrative embedding by Katherine Galloway Young and William Nelles. Nelles cited in Brian Richardson, *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure and Frames* (Ohio State University Press, 2002), p. 329. Ch. 25. Entitled "Stories within stories: narrative levels and embedded narrative."
[129] Ibidem.

'Now I want you to tell me just one thing more. Why do you hate the South?' 'I dont hate it,' Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; 'I dont hate it,' he said.*I dont hate it* he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark; I dont. *I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!"* (Chapter IX, p. 378).

The Compsons share knowledge about, for example, Sutpen and Miss Rosa, the Sutpens and the Coldfields. However, their diegeses are juxtaposed since their points of view vary due to the changing levels of objectivity, which increase with the flow of time and lack of direct involvement in the events depicted on the story level. Quentin, it would seem, is able to speak most truly (from an informed and objectified perspective) of Sutpen and his design. Yet, Quentin remains silent most of the time, except for his frequently uttered Socratic "Yes" in the last two chapters of the novel.[130]

Bal and Tavor argue for a typology of narrative embedding that would be exhaustive, systematic and as simple as possible.[131] For the two diegetic levels connected by means of subordination Bal and Tavor use the term "dialogic diad."[132] Bal and Tavor further analyse the relations between these levels: information, commentary, question and order. Rosa and Mr. Compson's chapters in the first half of the novel are connected by an 'information-commentary'diad, and Shreve-Quentin chapters by a 'question-order' diad, which involves reaction of the addressee.[133] Bakhtin writes on the question and order formation as a formative process for a genuine polyphony: "*Question* and *answer* are not logical relations (categories); they cannot be placed in one consciousness (unified and closed in itself); any response gives rise to a new question. Question and answer presuppose mutual outsideness. If an answer does not give rise to a new question from it, it falls out of the dialogue and enters systemic cognition, which is essentially impersonal.[134]

Bakhtin gives the following account of dialogue: "The speaker finishes his utterance in order to communicate a word to another and give place to another's active responsive understanding. An utterance – is not a fixed unit but a real entity clearly limited by a change of the speaking subjects,

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[130] See Robert Scholes and Robert Kellog, *The Nature of Narrative (*New York, Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 262-263 and further reading pp. 265-66 and 270. See for the comparison of Marlow to Quentin as narrators-histors "seeking to find out the truth from the versions he is told. See also for a more general comparison of the multiple person narrative in Conrad and Faulkner, which still does not indicate polyphony of narrative voices in the slightest.
[131] Ibidem. 45. For Bal and Tavor's explanation of the mechanisms of a simple text, text with embedding and text with multiple embedding see ibidem.46.
[132] In section 2.3. of his 1981-article on "Narrative embedding,"[132] Bal and Tavor argue for a typology of narrative embedding that would be exhaustive, systematic and as simple as possible Ibidem.50.
[133] See also R. Rio-Jelliffe, '*Absalom, Absalom!* as Self-Reflexive Novel,' *The Journal of Narrative Technique,* Vol. 11., No. 2 (Spring 1981), 75-90 (p. 82).
[134] *The Problems of Speech Genres,* p. 168.

that ends by passing over to another speaker, as if by silenced, <dixi> sensed by other listeners as a sign that the speaker has finished."[135] Bal and Travor argue that the speakers must recognize each other as partners in conversations, and that this must be indicated in the text.[136] In *Absalom, Absalom!*, Mr. Compson, for whatever reason, does recognize the dead Miss Rosa as a partner in the dialogue: " 'Ah,' Mr. Compson said. 'Years ago we in the South made our women into ladies. Then the War came and made the ladies into ghosts. So what else we can do, being gentlemen, but listen to them being ghosts?'" (Chapter I, p. 12). So does Quentin. The structure of the novel, with its clear division into two parts (Ch. 1-5 vs. Ch. 6-9), indicates the break with Ch. 6 and the letter Mr. Compson sends to Harvard, announcing Rosa's death. In Ch. VI, it becomes clear what the omniscient narrator means when speaking of the transformation that occured in Quentin when he left Jefferson for his studies at Harvard (pp. 12-13). By moving to Harvard, Quentin loses the possibility of conversing with his father. However, contact between the Compsons continues by letters. As a narratological consequence, we have one diad. Bal and Tavor argue that two speakers are enough for a dialogue. However, they add that the appearance of a third speaker enables one of the two to withdraw from the dialogue, e.g. A.B./A.B.C./B.C.D./C.D.[137] Such a serial dialogue Bal and Tavor still define as a single dialogue.

In *Absalom, Absalom!* we have numerous weak and strong connections between diads. The major weak/strong division is marked by Mr. Compson's letter, which Quentin reads at the beginning of Chapter 6. David Krause writes on the importance of Mr. Compson's letter as follows: "Faulkner calls our attention ten times to Compson's letter, giving unusual emphasis on its physical description and to Quentin's physical and psychological relation to it, and framing the long second movement in *Absalom, Absalom!*"[138] As noted earlier, in the second half of the novel, while studying at Harvard, Quentin keeps in touch with his father via letters so that their contact is not broken. However, because of Quentin's participation in all the diads we have, in effect, a single compound dialogue in *Absalom, Absalom!* John T. Irwin writes on the synthesizing role of Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!* as follows:

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[135] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 106. "Говорящий кончает своё высказывание, чтобы передать слово другому или дать место его активно-ответному пониманию. Высказывание – это не условная единица, а единица реальная, чётко ограниченная сменой реяевых субъектов, кончающаяся передачей слова другому, как бы молчаливым «dixi», ощущаемым слушателями как знак, что говорящий кончил."

[136] Ibidem.

[137] Ibidem.

[138] David Krause, 'Opening Pandora's Box: Re-reading Compson's Letter and Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!,*' in *William Faulkner: Six Decades of Criticism*, ed. by Linda Wagner-Martin (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002), pp. 271 and 285. See also Stephen M. Ross for the comparison of Mr. Compson's letter to Marlow's packet and the letter's synthetic function between the primary stories in the first half of *Absalom, Absalom!* and the Quentin-Shreve part of the novel. in 'Conrad's Influence on Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!,*' *Studies in American Fiction,* vol. 2, no. 2 (Autumn, 1974), 199-209 (in particular p. 203).

> Quentin is the central narrator, not just because he ends up knowing more
> Of the story the do the other three, but because the other three only
> function as narrators in relation to Quentin. When Mr Compson or Shreve
> or Miss Rosa Coldfield tell what they know or conjecture of the Sutpen's
> story, they are talking, either actually or imaginatively, to Quentin.[139]

This single compound dialogue can be schematised as follows.

Ch. 1 R.Q. Ch.2 MrC.Q. Ch. 3 Mr C.Q. Ch.4 MrC.Q.Ch.5 R.Q.Ch.6 Q.S.Ch.7 Q.S.Ch.8 S.Q.Ch.9 S.Q.
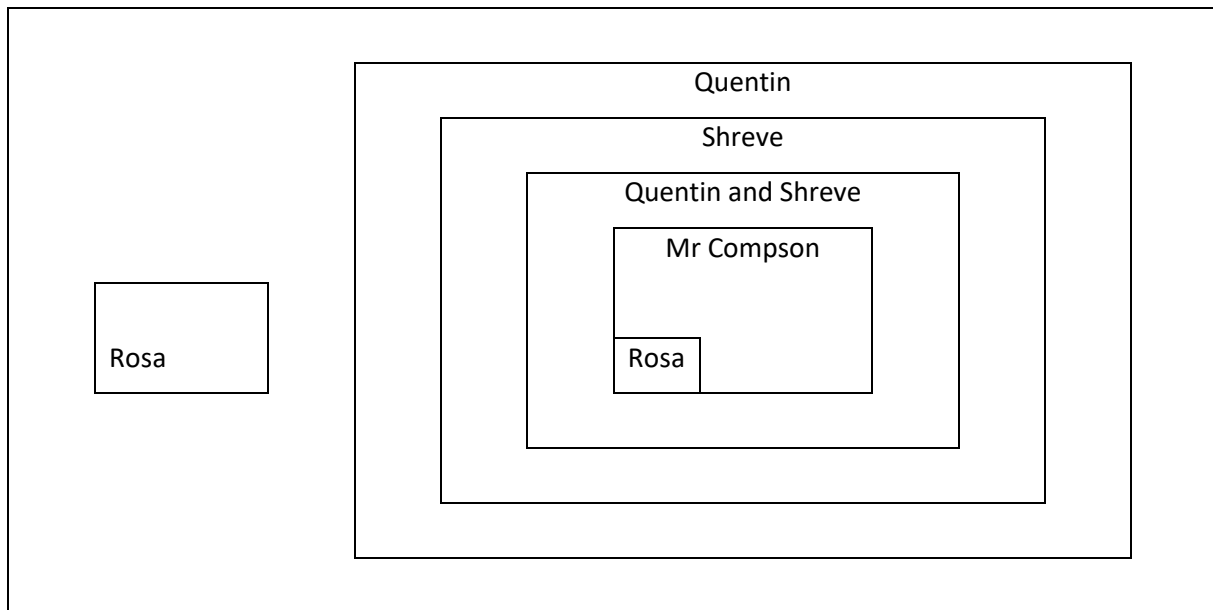

Figure 2.1. Multiple embedding in *Absalom, Absalom!*[140]

However, taking into consideration embedding/embedded relations in *Absalom, Absalom!*, there is

a serious drawback in the above outlined basic models as proposed by Serres and Rorty.[141] My figure

2.2. corresponds to Fludernik's Figure 2.3.of Chinese-box narrative type.[142]

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[139] Chapter entitled "Repetition and Revenge" on pages. 47 onward with particular attention given to page 48, in *William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!: A Casebook.,* ed. by Fred Hobson (Oxford University Press, 2003). See also James H. Justus, 'The Epic Design of *Absalom, Absalom!*,' *Texas Studies in Literature and Language,* Vol. 4., No. 2. (1962), 157-176 (p. 167). See also Albert Joseph Guérard, *Triumph of the novel: Dickens, Dostoevsky, Faulkner* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 326, 332-333, and 338. Guerard compares *Lord Jim* to *Absalom, Absalom!* the role of Marlow and Quentin in what he calls "narration by conjecture."

[140] The above graph of embedding/embedded relations in *Absalom, Absalom!* is composed only to facilitate the reader's mental picturing of the model of embedded/embedding relations in *Absalom, Absalom!*

[141] Serres and Rorty cited in Gibson (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative,* p. 215.

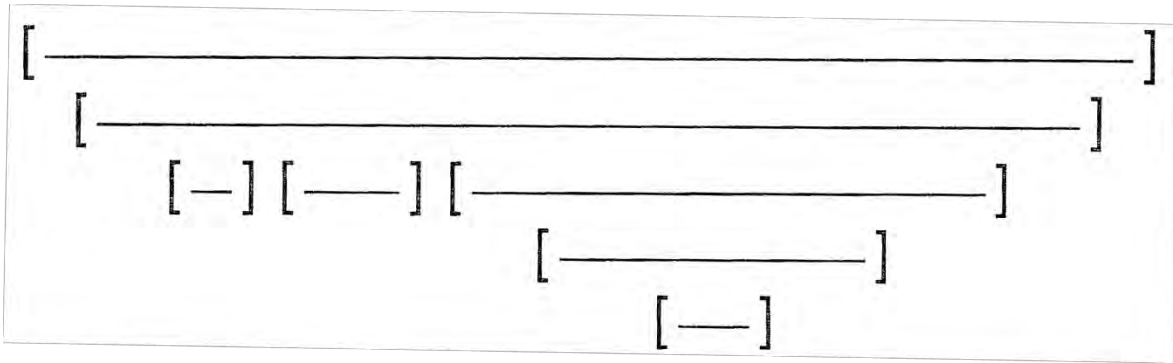[142] Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology,* p. 29.

Figure 2.2. Multiple framing according to Fludernik (2009).

Like Serres and Rorty, Fludernik compares her figure to the Chinese nested boxes and Russian stacking dolls. However, this model, too, is clearly not precise enough for *Absalom, Absalom!* Upon a closer analysis of *Absalom, Absalom!*'s multiple embedding, it becomes apparent that *recourse* is one of the major features of narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!* Stanzel makes an obvious but important observation in *Absalom, Absalom!* certain events are presented several times by manipulation of the narrative situation and by manipulation of knowledge and the chronology of the events in the plot line.[143] However, Stanzel's account needs to be further complicated via Genette. Genette offers a penetrating analysis of multiple perspectives, distinguishing between internal, variable, multiple, external, and zero focalisations.[144] Internal focalisation is a fixed perspective in cases when the story is told through the perspective of a homodiegetic narrator. Variable perspective consists of different perspectives adopted in turn to comment on different events. In multiple focalisation, different perspectives are adopted to comment on the same event. In external focalisation, presentation is limited to characters' words and actions but not thoughts and feelings. We speak of zero focalisation when there is no locatable focalisation. *Absalom, Absalom!* embodies a mixed variable-multiple type of focalisation. The four homodiegetic narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* comment many times on the same constituent events, while the same homodiegetic narrators comment once only on different supplementary events.

In Ch. I, for example, Rosa tells Quentin that all what Sutpen wanted from his marriage with her sister, Ellen, was to gain "respectability through a wife" (p. 28, pp. 9-15). In Chapter II, for example, Mr Compson tells Quentin the reasons behind Sutpen's marriage to Ellen Coldfield:

> It was the aunt who persuaded or cajoled Mr Coldfield into the big wedding. But Sutpen wanted it. He wanted, not the anonymous wife and the anonymous children, But the two names, the stainless wife and the unimpeachable father-in-law, on the License, the patent. Yes, patent, with a gold seal and red ribbons too if

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[143] Stanzel (1971), *Narrative Situations in the Novel,* p. 14.
[144] Ibidem, pp. 318-320.

that had been practicable. (pp. 50-51).

This is a typical Faulknerian narrative device for a-chronological and off-plot line narratives.[145]

In the previous subsections, I have concentrated on an analysis of multiple embedding as the source of polyvocality in *Absalom, Absalom!* It is appropriate to close this chapter with a brief consideration of polyphonic narrative. It has been frequently demonstrated that a polyphonic narrative is composed of the interactions of several voices, none of which is superior to, or privileged above, any other.[146] In other words, unlike a monologic narrative, the voice of the narrator is not taken as the single point of authority in the polyphonic narrative but as one contribution to knowledge among others.[147] As we have seen, this is precisely the case in *Absalom, Absalom!*, where the extradiegetic suppressed narrator and the four homodiegetic narrators contribute equally to the story of the dream of the Sutpen Hundred.

The unreliability of the homodiegetic narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* has been analyzed at length by many critics.[148] According to Robert Dale Parker the difference between Mr Compson's account of the Sutpen story and Shreve's is implied already in the personalities of the narrators themselves. Parker argues: "Shreve's storytelling is brash and irreverent, versus Mr. Compson's cynicism and patient luxuriance."[149] What I want to note at this point is the extradiegetic narrator's superior but suppressed knowledge and his avoidance of providing evaluating commentaries on the actions of the homodiegetic narrators. Fludernik argues that in a heterodiegetic narrative (either third or second person) "the projection of the narrator is primarily in terms of a *speaker* and *knower*" (Fludernik's emphasis).[150] I would suggest that the omniscient narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* is not presented in this way: he does not reveal more of the Sutpen story than the four homodiegetic narrators do. The omniscient narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* manifests his knowledge by emphasizing the lack of knowledge of other narrators or characters, or by highlighting the process by which they come into knowledge (frequently approached as a collective Jefferson-town focaliser). An example of this occurs when commenting on Sutpen's rise to power and wealth, and how the town got to know that Sutpen was poor on his first arrival in Jefferson in Ch. III (p. 35). In

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[145] See Katarzyna Nowak ('Narrator and narration in section one of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury'*, University of Gdansk, Poland) on Benjy's section of The Sound and the Fury, particularly, the conclusions about the issues of plot.

[146] Gibson (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative,* p. 317. Fludernik (1993), *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction,* p. 350.

[147] Ibidem.

[148] See, for instance, see Yacobi (1981), McPherson (1987) and Scholes and Kellog (1966).

[149] Parker (1991), *Absalom, Absalom! : The Questioning of Fictions,* p. 122. See also the Heraclitus concept of social consequentiality in David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative.* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackewell, 2009), p. 6.

[150] Fludernik (1993, p. 453.

Chapter II, the omniscient narrator indicates that the Compsons' grandfather knew more about Sutpen than anybody knew, more than the town knew (p. 32). The omniscient narrator then states explicitly that the town got to know about the fact of Sutpen's initial poverty only years after his arrival in the town (p. 32).[151] In addition, the omniscient narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* uses a typically Faulknerian narrative device, dividing the town focaliser into men and women. The narrator frequently emphasises that the women know more than the men because of their intuition. For example, in Ch. II, the omniscient narrator tells us that the women knew before the men that Sutpen's next step would be to take a respectable woman for his wife (p. 42). Moreover, the Jefferson women, unlike the men, knew exactly who Sutpen had chosen to be his wife. Frequent *Perhaps-commentaries* are also a highly original contribution to the question of the domain of knowledge of a heterodiegetic narrator, and, therefore, his leading authority in the narrative. The omniscient narrator frequently uses the commentaries beginning with the word perhaps to hide the domain of his knowledge, for example, when he explains that the town's hostility towards Sutpen grew after his second coming to Jefferson (p. 43). With his *Perhaps-commentaries*,[152] the omniscient heterodiegetic narrator simultaneously pretends to accumulate information while casting doubt on the certainty of that knowledge.[153] Faulkner's heterodiegetic narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* can be described as a suppressive omniscient narrator since he frequently holds back, either explicitly or permanently, information by means of elipses and paralipses.[154] This occurs, for example, in Chapter I, when the omniscient narrator refuses to reveal more information than the homodiegetic narrators do (pp. 20-33). Elsewhere, the narrator's frequent use of prolepses[155] and analepses in order to manifest his omniscience and omnipresence as, for example, in Chapter III, proves him to be a suppressed narrator (p. 31). The extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* uses frequent shifts in time, in the chronological order of events and syllepsis, as well as anachrony, prolepses, retrospection and flashbacks when comparing the fictional present to the fictional past in order to manifest his omnipresence and omnipotence, but without revealing more certain information about the Sutpen story than the four homodiegetic narrators do.[156] This narrator does display his omniscience in other ways, however. Thus, the third-person narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* is perfectly able to read the character's mind - for example, in the opening scene of the novel, when he reads Quentin's mind when he is sitting in Miss Rosa's parlour and listening to her

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[151] Jill C. Jones,
[152] For example, *Absalom, Absalom!* Ch. II pp. 40 (l. 25-32) and 41 (l.1-25).
[153] Scholes and Kellog (1996), pp. 265-66 and 274. Cf. Gibson (1996), p. 325, where Gibson argues that omnipresent narrators are indicative of narrative historiography.
[154] Sternberg cited in Genette (1983), p 78.
[155] See Genette (1980), pp. 40,48,83 on prolepsis, and pp. 197,248 on paralepsis.
[156] For more information on the extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator's use of paralepsis and analepsis see Gibson (1996), pp. 325-326). Genette (1983), p. 29 and footnote no 8 on p. 78.

version of the Sutpen story.[157] More important, the heterodiegetic narrator step by step reveals the cognitive processes of Quentin's coming into knowledge on this matter.[158] Another typically Faulknerian narrative device is the way in which the omniscient narrator plays with the senses, most of all, the sense of smell. In Chapter II, for example, the sense of smell triggers Quentin's memories (p. 32). In the same chapter, in the passage describing Quentin's search for the reason behind Rosa's invitation in Ch. II, prolepses and analepses occur simultaneously (p. 18). On the one hand, the omniscient narrator tells us what will happen in the next three hours, directing the narrative into the future. On the other hand, in the same passage, he compares the past (a Sunday morning in June 1833 when Sutpen came to Jefferson for the first time) and the present, which commences with Quentin listening to Rosa's version of the Sutpen story one afternoon in September 1909.

What deserves specific mention in connection with the omniscience of the extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* is his omnipresence. The heterodiegetic narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* manifests his omniscience and omnipresence by the ability to be present in several places at the same time.[159] In Ch. IV, the omniscient narrator describes the telling situation with Mr Compson and Quentin on the patio of the house[160] and simultaneously comments on Miss Rosa leaving her house for the town. These omniscience-omnipresence mechanisms lead to the superior position of the extradiegetic narrator. In other words, we know that the heterodiegetic narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* is omniscient without his voice being prevalent in revealing the Sutpen story.

Research to date has tended to focus on the scope of narratorial knowledge, attempting to establish the hierarchy of unreliable narrators,[161] rather than on the social relationships between the four homodiegetic narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* and their possible subjectivity. Therefore, the existing accounts of the unreliability of these narrators fail to resolve the contradictions between the Compsons' and Coldfield's reconstruction of Sutpen's story. In order to evaluate the degree of unreliability of the homodiegetic narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* one needs to consider two things: the domain of knowledge of the narrators and the sociological relationship between them. My first

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[157] *Absalom, Absalom!* Ch. I, p. 7.

[158] Ibidem. Ch. I, p. 9 and p. 11 (l.5-19) Ch. II, p. 31.

[159] See Nicholas Royle (1990) who relies on Genette (1985), Booth (1984) and Cohn (1978), and identifies the omniscient narrator with a form of telepathy, Royle in Gibson (1996), p. 325.

[160] This part of the argument is discussed in more detail in in section devoted to the analysis of the letters in *Absalom, Absalom!*

[161] See, for example, Dirk Kuyk (1990), *Sutpen's design,* pp. 28, 30, 33, 35 and 45. See also Reed cited in Jeanne Campbell Reesman, *American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), p. 19. For further narratological and philosophical reading on the 'concept of knowledge' see Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition in The Narrative Reader,* ed. by Martin McQuillan (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 158.

working hypothesis here is that, being born in Jefferson, all the narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* except for the Canadian, Shreve, are connected by the same spatio-temporal position, what Bakhtin would call the same chronotope.[162] My second working hypothesis is based on Fludernik's theory of the goal-oriented actions of anthropomorphic narrators. Joining this second working hypothesis to the first, we see how the narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* try to gain credibility by, consciously or subconsciously, disqualifying one another. Fred Hobson writes of the narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!* using the analogy of a 'struggle for power:' "Shreve and Quentin participate in the complicated actions of male struggle for narrative authority over Rosa's story."[163] My third working hypothesis is based on Herman's CAPA model, with emphasis on the Yoknapatawpha context by means of intertextuality with *The Sound and the Fury*.[164] Herman's model encompasses contexts for interpretation (including contexts afforded by knowledge about narrative genres and an author's previous works); storytelling actions performed within these contexts; persons who perform acts of telling as well as acts of interpretation, and ascriptions of intentions to performers of narrative acts.[165] Miss Rosa is the only alive-witness to the Sutpen events taking part in the narrative account. This is why Reed proposes that Rosa is a credible narrator.[166] Mr Compson frequently attempts to disqualify Miss Rosa using the *argumentum ad populum* and *argumentum ad hominem*. To take one example, in Ch.I, Mr Compson admits that Miss Rosa cannot be trusted since she is only a traumatized Southern lady, mourning the old South that is forever gone (p. 12). In Chapter III, Mr Compson tattempts to disqualify Miss Rosa using the *argumentum ad populum*: "That's all Miss Rosa knew. She could have known no more about it than the town knew because the ones who did know (Sutpen and Judith: not Ellen, who would have been told nothing in the first place and would have forgot, failed to assimilate, it if she had been told – Ellen the butterfly (…)" (p. 80). In the same way, Shreve is attempting to disqualify the Compsons, when he says that, in fact, grandfather Compson

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[162] *The Problems of Speech Genres*, p. 168.

[163] Fred Hobson, *William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!: A Casebook.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 170. Arnold Weinstein, *Recovering your story: Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner, Morrison: (Understanding the self through reading five great modern writers)* (New York: Random House, 2007), p. 394

[164] On page 79 in *The Sound and the Fury,* it is clearly stated that Mr. Compson's addiction to alcohol is so serious that if he does not break up with the bad habit, he will die.

[165] The CAPA model by Herman in Herman (2009), p. 203 in notes. Herman cited in James Phelan, *Living to Tell About It: A Rhethoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) (2005: 50). University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville and London, 1990. Ch. 2: "Designs of the Narrative: The Narration and The Fabula." Pp. 28, 30, 33, 35, 45 in particular. See also Joseph Reed cited in Jeanne Campbell Reesman, *American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner,* p. 19.

[166] Joseph Reed in Jeanne Campbell Reesman, *American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner,* p. 19.

knew only as much as the town knew (p. 209).[167]

Owen Robinson approaches the question of General Compson and Thomas Sutpen from a strikingly different angle, arguing that the Compsons' line of the Sutpens' story cannot be objective because Sutpen himself serves as a primary source of information.[168] During the epidemic the town did not know that it was Judith who took care of Sutpen till she fell ill herself. The town knew only what they saw with their own eyes. In Ch. II, Quentin admits that he was in the Sutpen Hundred (p. 30). Quentin is also attempting to disqualify the Compsons and his alter ego, Shreve, when he doubts the validity of his father's account and his own account, as he clearly sees striking similarities in their versions of the Sutpen story (pp. 262-2).[169]

Hugh M. Ruppersburg talks at length about the disadvantages of first-person narrators, pertaining to their lack of first-hand knowledge. Ruppersburg argues: "Characters lack the abilities of a true external narrator, and they inevitably rely upon fabricated, imagined information to create their pseudo-focal perspectives."[170] Ruppersburg supports his argument by evoking the scene in Ch. VII of *Absalom, Absalom!* where Mr. Compson re-tells the Sutpen's murder as seen through Wash Jones's eyes. Ruppersburg explains that Mr. Compson cannot know Jones's interpretation of the murder because Jones died shortly after killing Sutpen. Accordingly, he uses the verb 'fabricate' to describe Mr. Compson's description of the murder scene.[171] Similarly, there are problems about the extent of Miss Rosa's knowledge of Sutpen. Mr. Compson makes it clear that, even though Miss Rosa is the only living witness to the life of Sutpen in Chapters I-V, her encounters with Sutpen have been rather scarce (p. 62). In Ch.I, however, Miss Rosa tells Quentin that she had all her life to watch Sutpen ("for what reason Heaven has not seen fit to divulge"), while her sister Ellen (Sutpen's wife) had only five years (p. 18). According to Mr. Compson: "When he returned home in '66, Miss Rosa had not see him a hundred times in her whole life" (p. 62). The accounts of Mr. Compson and Miss

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[167] On the difference in narrative qualities of Shreve's mocking and Rosa's demonizing see Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study*. (Chicago: Elephant Paperback, 1991), p. 84.

[168] Robinson, Owen. 'Reflections on Language and Narrative,' in *A Companion to William Faulkner*, ed. By Richard C. Moreland (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 115-132 (p. 120). In "Reflections on Language and Narrative."

[169] See Marta Puxan for the analysis of Shreve as an unreliable narrator and Shreve as Quentin's double and therefore 'a non-individual narrator', 'Narrative Strategies on the Colour Line: The Unreliable Narrator Shreve and Racial Ambiguity in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*,' *The Mississippi Quarterly* 60.3 (2007), 529-559 (p. 529).

[170] Ruppersburg (1983), *Voice and Eye in Faulkner's Fiction,* p. 25. See also David Minter on *Absalom, Absalom!* as a novel built on narratological detection, assumption, and surmise and the power of rhetoric in *Absalom, Absalom!*. David Minter (1997), *William Faulkner: His Life and Work,* p. 159.

[171] Ibidem.

Coldfield clearly contradict one another.[172]

Writing on the concept of unreliability in *Absalom*, *Absalom!* Dirk Kuyk proposes the following hypothesis: "If narrators have taken part in the story they are telling, their own experience makes a most reliable source."[173] Kuyk's hypothesis is valid only in the case of narrators not involved directly in the events narrated. Thus, Miss Rosa is one of Mr. Compson's sources of information, for example, when she repeats gossip spread by the Jefferson women about Sutpen's plans (p. 41, l. 13-25). However, as we have seen, Rosa clearly reveals personal attachment to the Sutpen's story and, as Mr. Compson suggests, to the novel's protagonist himself. Mr. Compson wants Quentin to believe that Rosa had her reasons for inviting Quentin to her house and that she chose him for her listener because of the friendship between the Compson grandfather and Sutpen himself:[174]

> And she chose you because your grandfather was the nearest thing to a friend Sutpen ever had in this county, and she probably believes that Sutpen may have told your grandfather something about himself and her, about that engagement which did not engage, that troth which failed to plight (Chapter I, pp. 12-13).

As this shows, Faulkner's narrators frequently resort to speculation in recounting the plot-events. This is especially the case in point with Quentin and Shreve.[175] Indeed, speculation is one of the major means of narration in *Absalom, Absalom!* This is why Guerard proposes narration by speculation to be one of the distinctive features of Faulkner's narrative. Guerard compares Faulkner to Conrad in this respect and concludes: "[…] a difference from Conrad [to whom Faulkner is often closest in his recreation of the past] lies in Faulkner's ultimate refusal, on occasion, to define his cognitive authority or lack of it. All conjecture, even the most biased, can be credible."[176] Irwin concludes: "[…] since the story of the Sutpens contains numerous gaps that must be filled by conjecture on the parts of the narrators, it is not surprising that the narrative bears a striking

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[172] See also Diana York Blaine, 'The Abjection of Addie and Other Myths of the Material in AILD," in *William Faulkner: Six Decades of Criticism,* ed. Linda Wagner-Martin (2002), pp. 83-103 (p. 164).

[173] Kuyk (1990), p. 30.

[174] *Absalom, Absalom!* Ch. I. p. 12 (l. 1-33) and p. 13 (l. 1-14).

[175] On the role of speculation in Faulkner's narrative with emphasis on Quentin's narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!* see Guérard also cited in Carl E. Rollyson Jr., Ch3. "Recreation and Reinterpretation of the Past.," (International Scholars Publications, 2007), p. 68.

[176] Guérard in Caryl E. Rollyson, p. 68. Guérard, *The Triumph of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976)*,* p. 333. See for a comparison of Marlow – Kurtz in Conrad's *Lord Jim* to Shreve and Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!* as the novels aiming at "understanding the protagonist through an imaginative sharing of his experience." Robert Scholes and Robert Kellog, *The Nature of Narrative* New York, p. 261.

resemblance of Quentin's own personal history and that of his family."[177] Sonja Bašić provides a further perspective on a 'conjecture' at work in the narrative of *Absalom, Absalom!*: "it is also a story about how a story comes into existence out of the scraps of evidence, mysterious alchemies in the chamber of consciousness, out of despair and the wildest conjecturing."[178]

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[177] John T. Irwin, "Repetition and Revenge," in *Faulkner: New Perspectives.,* ed. by Richard H. Brodhead (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs), pp. 74-91 (p. 74). See also Hobson (2003), *William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!: A Casebook*, p. 48. onward.

[178] Sonja Basic, 'Faulkner's Narrative Discourse: Mediation and Mimesis*,'* in *New Directions in Faulkner's Studies: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1983*, ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984), pp. 302-321 (p. 318).

Chapter V

Bakhtinian sociopoetics and the speaking person in *Absalom, Absalom!*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in *Absalom, Absalom!* we are dealing with the Sutpen story as told by: Quentin, Mr Compson, Miss Rosa and Shreve. In this chapter, I want to focus on the Compsons. Irwin comments on the Compsons as narrators: "(…) since the story of the Sutpens contains numerous gaps that must be filled by conjecture on the parts of the narrators, it is not surprising that the narrative bears a striking resemblance to Quentin's own personal history and that of his family."[1] Sonja Bašić writes on this work of 'conjecture' in the narrative of *Absalom, Absalom!:* "it is also a story about how a story comes into existence out of the scraps of evidence, mysterious alchemies in the chamber of consciousness, out of despair and the wildest conjuring."[2] One of the ways in which the readers fill those gaps is through their prior knowledge of Faulkner's transtextual characters. Thus, in the broader Yoknapatawpha context, we are aware of the alcohol problems of Mr Compson,[3] of the incestuous feelings of Quentin towards his only sister, Caddy, and of Shreve's biased attitude to Caddy Compson. We are also aware of his vulgar behaviour towards Caddy in *The Sound and the Fury* because of his friendship with Quentin.[4]   One question I want to consider, at the outset, is whether Shreve, as Quentin's alter ego, can be objective towards the Compsons. Jeanne Campbell Reesman speaks critically of what she calls

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[1] John T. Irwin, 'Repetition and Revenge,' in *Faulkner: New Perspectives.,* ed. by Richard H. Brodhead (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs), pp. 74-91. See also Fred Hobson, *William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!: A Casebook.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 48 onward.

[2] Sonja Basic, 'Faulkner's Narrative Discourse: Mediation and Mimesis*,'* in *New Directions in Faulkner's Studies: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1983*, ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984), pp. 302-321 (p. 318).

[3] For an account of Mr Compson in *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!* see Joseph W. Reed, Jr. *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 163. Reed depicts Mr Compson as an "ironic moralist" with an over-developed sense of 'subtlety,' whose stories rely mostly on assumption. Reed cited in Michel Gresset, 'From Vignette to Vision: The Old, Fine Name of France or Faulkner's Western Front from 'Crevasse' to 'A Fable', in *Faulkner International Perspectives: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1982,* ed. by Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984), pp. 97-120 (.p. 108).

[4] On page 68 of *The Sound and the Fury,* Shreve speaks in a vulgar way about Quentin's sister; Caddy. Shreve insults Caddy also on pages: 87, 77 and twice on page 101. See also Peter Brooks on the intertextual relation to *The Sound and the Fury* and Quentin's incestuous desire for Caddy. Brooks uses the term "brother-seducer" in drawing an analogy between Bon and Henry. Brooks concludes: "Yet *Absalom, Absalom!* doesn't even mention Quentin's having a sister, and in any case using the intertext to explain, rather than enrich and extend the novel, seems reductive and impoverishing." Brooks, "Incredulous narration: *Absalom, Absalom!,*" in *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 307. On *Absalom, Absalom!*'s intertextuality with *The Sound and the Fury* and Quentin's suicide, see also Jessica Hurley, 'Ghost-written: Kinship and History in *Absalom, Absalom!,' The Faulkner Journal,* Vol. XXVI. No. 2. (Fall 2012)*,'* pp. 61-79 (in particular p. 62).

Shreve's "sensationalist view of the South."[5] However, it is precisely because of Shreve's Canadian origin that he might be the most reliable and the least ideologically biased of the narrators.[6] Anne Hirsch Moffitt writes: "Offering a counter to Quentin's melodramatic despair, Shreve's taunting reminds the reader of the humour and foolishness of Quentin's overblown racial anxiety."[7] I certainly disagree with Ruppersburg's view of Shreve as the least trustworthy narrator in the novel. Ruppersburg writes on Shreve: "His characterization of Sutpen seems the combination of three other mistaken perspectives – Rosa's, Mr. Compson's, and Quentin's – and it is compounded by his essential unfamiliarity with Southern history and customs."[8] On the other hand, Robert Scholles and Robert Kellog refer to Faulkner's own view on the matter: "We move from the least reliable narration, that of Rosa Coldfield, the eye-witness, to the most reliable narration, that of Shreve and Quentin, who imagine those events for which they have no empirical evidence."[9] On this issue of lack of empirical evidence, Philip M. Weinstein refers to the passage in *Absalom, Absalom!* where Quentin clearly emphasizes that he thinks himself a more reliable and objective teller of the Sutpen's story because he is distant in time from the events of the plot: "If I had been there I could not have seen it this plain."[10]

In this context, we need to consider Rabinowitz's established rule to trust the last narrator.[11] The last homodiegetic narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!* is Quentin Compson, whose answer to Shreve's question closes the novel. However, it has been already shown by reference to Herman's CAPA model and Searle's theory of indirect speech acts, that the reader of *Absalom, Absalom!* should be careful in giving trust to anyone in this crowd of subjective narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!*[12] Thus, Jeanne Campbell Reesman concludes her discussion

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[5] Jeanne Campbell Reesman, *American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), p. 85.

[6] See Waggoner cited in Reesman on Shreve as most objective among the homodiegetic narrators in *Absalom, Absalom! American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner,* p. 85.

[7] Anne Hirsch Moffitt, 'The City Spectre: William Faulkner and The Threat of Urban Encroachment,' *The Faulkner Journal,* Vol. XXVI., No. 1. (Spring, 2012), pp. 17-36 (p. 31).

[8] Hugh M. Ruppersburg, *Voice and Eye in Faulkner's Fiction* (Athens: The University of Virginia Press, 1983), p. 85.

[9] Robert L. Kellog and Robert E. Scholes, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 263.

[10] Philip M. Weinstein, 'No Longer at Ease Here.' *Teaching Faulkner: Approaches and Methods.*, ed. Stephen Hahn and Robert W. Hamblin (Westport: Greenwood Press, Westport, 2001), pp. 19-30 (p. 20).

[11] Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation.* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990), pp. 155-56. Especially Ch. V. "The austere similarity of fiction: rules of coherence." See also Dirk Kuyk's hypothesis on the domain of narratorial knowledge as based on 'inference;' "narration as inference." Dirk Kuyk, *Sutpen's design: Interpreting Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1990), pp. 33-34.

[12] See Hugh M. Ruppersburg (1983), *Voice and Eye in Faulkner's Fiction.*, p. 25. And Reesman, *American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner.* on the concept of the untrustworthy narrators in

of 'untrustworthy' narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* with the suggestion: "*Absalom, Absalom!* argues throughout for understanding of communal and not objective truth."[13]

5.1 Speaking person.

Philip Goldstein has made an attempt to differentiate between the various narrative voices in *Absalom, Absalom!* He suggests that: "To explain the dramatic rise and tragic fall of Sutpen and his family and heirs, the narratives of *Absalom, Absalom!* provide alternative visions or competing views, rather than a coherent account."[14] Fludernik and Gibson take this idea of 'competing views' further: they are unanimous about "an agon of voices" as the ultimate cause of dialogism (polyphony) in the genre of the novel.[15] Indeed, Gibson uses the neologism 'unfinalisability' to define this phenomenon.[16]

My typology of the subjective narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* consists of four types:

I.   The close-knit family-narrator (male descendants of the Compsons and Miss Rosa as the last descendant of the Coldfields)

II.   The gossip-narrator (Mr Compson and Miss Rosa) and the town as a gossip narrator[17]

III.   The alter-ego-narrator (Shreve)

IV.   The virgin-ego-narrator (American Gothic) (Miss Coldfield and Quentin)

These are the speaking persons in the novel that bring their own unique ideological discourse to the novel.[18] These are the contributions to the novel's 'agon of voices.'

Absalom, Absalom!., p. 86. David Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1980), p. 22. Richard Pearce, *Politics of Narration:* James, Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), pp. 85-86.

[13] Reesman, ibidem.

[14] Philip Goldstein, 'Black Feminism and the Canon: Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Morrison's *Beloved* as Gothic Romances.', *The Faulkner Journal,* Vol. 20, Issue. 1/2 (Fall 2004/Spring 2005), p. 135.

[15] Ibidem, pp. 151-52. Monika Fludernik, *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 36. See also Rimmon Kenan on the juxtaposition of serval voices in polyphony and the way the communicate by means of 'interrogation.' Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Glance Beyond Doubt: Narration, Representation, Subjectivity* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996), p. 115.

[16] Ibidem, p. 152. And, Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 7.

[17] Jill C. Jones, 'The Eye of a Needle: Morrison's *Paradise*, Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!,* and *The American Jeremiad.', Faulkner Journal,* ii (Spring 2002), 3-23 (pp. 16 and 18). Cf. Jones's point of view on gossip and hearsay in *Absalom, Absalom!* as the main source for the Sutpen myth to my discussion of gossip in Absalom, Absalom! on p. in this chapter.

[18] Bakhtin cited in Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 332.

As Bakhtin persuasively argues: "The fundamental object, specific to the novel as a genre, and the one that gives it stylistic originality, is a man speaking and his discourse."[19] Bakhtin adds: "But language, in order to become an artistic image, must be the utterance of speaking lips, joined to the image of a speaking person."[20] Consequently, as Bakhtin argues, it is not the image of a man himself that is characteristic of the genre of the novel, but the image of language.[21] It is therefore not a coincidence that Bakhtin lays emphasis on the social aspect of language, as does Fludernik with her natural narratology. In the following sections, I will discuss the image of the speaking persons in *Absalom, Absalom!* drawing on Bakhtin's theory of polyphony and Fludernik's natural narratology.

Bakhtin argues that "the language of the novel is inherently 'dialogic' – composed as the dramatic confrontation of different utterances, each bearing the imprint of its origin in a specific character's idiolect, a point of view, historical circumstances, etc." Given this dialogic nature of language, he goes on — "then the essential function of the Abject Hero is to foreground, and even to exacerbate, the sense of such a dialogue as an agon."[22] Following Bakhtin, Palmer argues that in the polyphonic novel, as opposed to the monologic novel, a succession of single focalisations becomes multiple when aggregated over the course of the novel.[23] Gibson similarly points out that all polyphonic novels are concerned with "an increasing and irresponsible quarrel between opposed voices, taking place on different narrative levels."[24] Gibson emphasises that all the voices are equally important: it is the "genuine polyphony of fully valid voices." This lays the foundation for the Bakhtinian theory of the polyphonic novel. Polyphonic novels function through heteroglossia, creating an on-going dialogue between opposed discourses.

Bakhtin defines heteroglossia as follows: "Heteroglossia is a situation of a subject surrounded by the myriad responses he or she makes at any particular point, but any of which must be

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[19] Ibidem, p.145. See also Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* p. 66.

[20] Bakhtin cited in Gary Saul Morson 'Tolstoy's Absolute Language' in extracts from 'The Problem of Speech Genres' in *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work.* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 123.

[21] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* pp. 66 and 332. Bakhtin cited in Lanser in Alber and Fludernik (2010: 189).

[22] Bakhtin cited in extracts from "The Problem of Speech Genres" in *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work.,* ed. Gary Saul Morson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 116.

[23] Palmer in Alber and Fludernik (2010:94).

[24] Andrew Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 152.

formed in a specific discourse selected from the teeming thousand available." [25] Thus, heteroglossia, according to Bakhtin, "is a way of conceiving the world as made up of a rolling mass of languages, each of which has its own distinct markers."[26] As this suggests, Bakhtin regards heteroglossia as "simultaneity of discourses in a broader sociological and historical context." [27] Bakhtin places particular emphasis on the fact that heteroglossia is a plurality of relations, not just a mass of unrelated voices. This situation of a subject surrounded by a myriad of possible discursive responses brings up another aspect of heteroglossia, described by Bakhtin as "the inherent heteroglossia of the shared spoken word."[28] As Reesman explains: "Heteroglossia addresses the ever-expandable multiplicity of meaning in language itself."[29] It is not difficult to demonstrate the idea of "many-voiced quality of a word" in *Absalom, Absalom!*. As a relevant example, Reesman gives the noun 'demon' frequently used in descriptions of Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!* and its multi-dimensional meaning depending on the teller or the listener.[30] More importantly for my argument, Maria Shvestova places emphasis on the social dimension of heteroglossia: "Heteroglossia is heterosocial."[31] She argues that heteroglossia as "a social polymorph is indispensable for dialogism": "It is heteroglossia that creates the synthesizing voice in a polyphonic novel, which is nothing else than the principle of aesthetic unity."[32]

5.2. Communication and the polyphonic novel.

Brooks has stated that, *Absalom, Absalom!* with its "truly Bakhtinian dialogic centreless transactions of voice" is "a polyphonic novel."[33] I will argue that *Absalom, Absalom!* is a polyphonic novel with a clearly demarcated centre. To support my line of argument I want to refer to Kristeva, who suggests that, by the very act of narrating, the subject of narration addresses the other.[34] Kristeva argues that it is this act of communication that lies at the heart of the polyphonic novel. All the narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* communicate their versions

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[25] Bakhtin cited in Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.69.
[26] Ibidem.
[27] Ibidem, pp. 69 and 89. Bakhtin cited in Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 2006), 63. Bakhtin in *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work,* ed. Gary Saul Morson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 73-80 (p.50).
[28] Bakhtin cited in Reesman *American Designs* (1991)*,* p. 88.
[29] Ibidem.
[30] Ibidem.
[31] Ibidem, p. 754.
[32] Maria Shvestova, 'Dialogism in the Novel and Bakhtin's Theory of Culture.', *New Literary History,* Vol., 23. No. 3 (Summer 1992), 747-763. (p. 753).
[33] Brooks (1984), *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (2003), pp. 303-4.
[34] Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984) p. 72).

of the Sutpen story to Quentin. The conclusion, therefore, suggests itself that Quentin is the centre since all communication is directed towards him. Kristeva closes her argument with Francis Ponge's modification of Descartes's *Cogito ergo sum*: "I speak and you hear me, therefore we are."[35] In this regard, we should consider Matthews's description of *Absalom, Absalom!* as a "marriage of speaking and hearing."[36] Matthews concludes his line of argument with the proposition: "(…) that the truth of a narrative arises from the way it is created and shared, and not strictly from its content."

It is important to keep in mind Kristeva's way of understanding the Bakhtinian concept of polyphony as we explore comparisons between the various narrative voices in *Absalom, Absalom!*. As John T. Irwin points out: "Quentin is the principal narrative consciousness in *Absalom*!"[37] In *Absalom, Absalom!* it is, accordingly, Quentin who constitutes the centre as the major addressee – the listener. However, this does not change the fact that his voice is only one among many. Thus, I cannot agree with Irwin when he argues that: "One reason that the voices of the different narrators sound so much alike is that we hear those voices filtered through the mind of a single listener."[38] Irwin further explains his line of thought: "Quentin's consciousness is the fixed point of view from which the reader overhears the various narrators, Quentin included."[39] As I shall discuss in more detail below, the consequence of Quentin as the main listener is the increase of his knowledge as one of narrators. It is frequently argued that Quentin – the major listener throughout the novel – knows more than any of the homodiegetic narrators since he does most of the listening and is also a Jeffersonian by birth. For example, in Chapter II, the extradiegetic narrator points out that Quentin has been listening to Thomas Sutpen's story all his life, not only in 1909, when Miss Rosa invites him to her house (p. 31). According to Irwin's interpretation, Quentin in the first half of the novel is a 'passive narrator.'[40] This is because, as Irwin explains: "The story seems to choose him. Rosa involves him in the narrative against his will, and he spends the first half of the book listening to Rosa and his father tell what they know or surmise."[41] In Chapter VI, Quentin admits that he has been listening about Thomas Sutpen and the story of the South long enough to decide that he does not want to hear it anymore (p. 207). This shows the extent to

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[35] Julia Kristeva (1984), *Revolution in Poetic Language*, p. 74.

[36] Matthews cited in Fred Hobson, *William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!: A casebook.*, p. 176.

[37] John T. Irwin, 'Repetition and Revenge,' in *Faulkner: New Perspectives.*, ed. by Richard H. Brodhead (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs), pp. 74-91 (p. 75). See also Warren Beck, *Faulkner: Essays.* (The University of Wisconsin Press), p. 185.

[38] Ibidem, pp. 74-75.

[39] Ibidem, p. 75.

[40] Ibidem, p. 87.

[41] Ibidem.

which this knowledge is a burden to Quentin, suffering from guilt for the sins of his ancestors. Indeed, later in Ch. VI, Shreve states that Quentin was not listening to him since he knows everything about Sutpen already (pp. 212-213).[42] However, to describe Quentin's knowledge of the Sutpen story, Shreve uses the phrase "the resonant string of remembering."This is very different from Irwin's notion of a "passive narrator": this presents Quentin's memory as active and discursive.

Arnold Weinstein writes on the Quentin-Shreve intellectual exchanges as follows: (…) the story these two roommates tell is dialogic, interwoven, and collective; it is "a marriage of speaking and hearing." [43] Todorov emphasizes that the most important feature of the utterance is its dialogism; i.e. its intertextual dimension. [44] Bakhtin further emphasizes that:"The structure of the utterance, just like that of expressible experience, is a social structure."[45] Bakhtin argues: "Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances." [46] In *Problems of Dostoevskys Poetics,* Bakhtin introduces the useful concept of double-discourse: he explains that double-discourse includes all discourse that has a twofold-direction. Similarly to ordinary discourse, it is oriented toward the object of speech. However, it is -also directed towards another's discourse; i.e. someone else's speech. [47] Bakhtin argues: "Discourse is oriented toward the person addressed, oriented toward what the person is."[48] The best example of this is again Quentin. If we accept, as Irwin suggests, that he is a passive narrator, he is certainly an active listener. In addition, as Irwin observes, with chapter VI, the focus is shifted away from Quentin – (as passive listener) to – Quentin as an active narrator: "in the second half, when he and Shreve begin their imaginative reconstruction of the story, Quentin seems to move from a passive role to an active role in the narrative repetition of the past."[49] In these exchanges, his discourse is double-discourse:

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[42] See Wesley Morris and Barbara Alverson Morris on n the matter of listening, hearing, not listening in regards Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!* Wesley Morris and Barbara Alverson Morris, *Reading Faulkner* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp. 197 and 202-203.

[43] Arnold Weinstein, *Recovering your story: Proust, Woolf, Faulkner, Morison: Understanding the self through reading five great modern writers* (New York: Random House, 2006), pp. 394-5. See also Reesman on 'the dialogic model' of tellers and hearers in *Absalom, Absalom! American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner,* p. 86.

[44] Ibidem.

[45] Bakhtin (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* p.34.

[46] In extracts from 'The Problem of Speech Genres,' in *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work.,* ed. Gary Saul Morson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 92.

[47] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* p. 185). Bakhtin cited in Fludernik (1993), *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction,* p. 325.

[48] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* p. 43.

[49] John T. Irwin, 'Repetition and Revenge,' p. 87.

oriented both towards the object and towards Shreve's speech.

Bakhtin particularly stresses the irreducible duality of the utterer and the receiver.[50] This is precisely the case with Shreve and Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!*. As Viktor Strandberg points out, both Quentin and Shreve are listeners whose interest grows as their narrative evolves. Both listen actively and both are ready to respond and contribute to a further development of the Sutpen story.[51] In this context, I am particularly interested in the Bakhtinian concept of active understanding[52] as the only real and integral understanding.[53] In this activity, the speaker is always oriented toward an actively responding understanding. The act of listening is nothing else but the preparation stage for a response. In turn, the speaker does not want passive understanding, which would be only a duplication of his own understanding. The speaker expects: response, agreement, sympathy, objection and so forth. The characteristic feature of active understanding is that it tends to take the form of a reply: "Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other."[54] Thus, all active understanding is dialogical. As Bakhtin argues: "With *explanation* there is only one consciousness, one subject; with *comprehension,* there are two consciousness and two subjects. There can be no dialogic relationship with an object, and therefore explanation has not dialogic aspects (except formal, rhetorical ones). Understanding is always dialogic to some degree."[55]

As suggested above, the desire to make one's own thoughts comprehensible to the listener is only one preparatory stage for a response. So is the listening on the part of the listener.[56] As Bakhtin phrases it: "Understanding is in search for another discourse to the discourse of the utterer."[57] Bakhtin further suggests: "The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his,

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[50] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* p. 43.

[51] *A Faulkner's Overview: Six Perspectives*, p. 76. Sternberg writes also on the 'mutual investment of emotion' on the part of the listener in Shreve and Quentin dialogical exchanges.

[52] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination,* p. 280. It is also referred to as 'responsive understanding'. Bakhtin argues that: "Responsive understanding is a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse (…)."

[53] Bakhtin cited in Morson (1986), *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work,* p. 92.

[54] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 282.

[55] Bakhtin, *The Problem of Speech Acts*, p. 111.

[56] Ibidem.

[57] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination,* p. 284. Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* p. 22.

the listener's, apperceptive background."[58] The language of the novel is similarly dialogical. It is the dramatic confrontation of different utterances. Each of the utterances bears the stigma of its origin in the specific idiolect of a speaker, i.e. a different point of view, culturally and historically biased.[59] As Susan Stewart observes, for Bakhtin consciousness is "a matter of dialogue and juxtaposition with a social other."[60] We have just such a "matter of dialogue and juxtaposition" in *Absalom, Absalom!* with Quentin and Shreve. In the first part of the novel (Chs. I-V), Quentin provides the active understanding for Miss Rosa and Mr Compson and the novel's protagonist, Thomas Sutpen. By means of questioning, in the second part of the novel, Shreve then provides the active understanding for all the above-mentioned and for Quentin as well. Bakhtin presents this orientation of dialogue towards question-and-answer as contact between the two consciousness as a crucial feature of dialogism.[61]

The frequently repeated words "Wait" and "Yes," as uttered by Quentin and Shreve throughout chapters VI to IX, show that both of them strive towards such an active understanding. Benjamin observes that the listener's naïve relationship to the storyteller is controlled by his interest in retaining what he is told.[62] Bakhtin gives three criteria that must be fulfilled for an active understanding to occur. These are:

(a) The semantic exhaustiveness of the theme.

(b) The speaker's intent or speech will.

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[58] Ibidem. Also, Bakhtin cited in Andrew Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 151-52. The Dialogic Imagination, "Thus an active understanding, one that assimilates the word under consideration into a new conceptual system, that of the one striving to understand, establishes a series of complex interrelationships, consonances and dissonances with the word and enriches it with new elements. It is precisely such an understanding that the speaker counts on. Therefore his orientation toward the listener is an orientation toward a specific conceptual horizon, toward the specific world of the listener; it introduces totally new elements into his discourse; it is in this way, after all, that various different points of view, conceptual horizons, systems for providing expressive accents, various social languages come to interact with one another. The speaker strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's, apperceptive background."
[59] Bakhtin cited in Morson (1986), *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work.,* pp. 92 and 116.
[60] Bakhtin cited in Morson (1986), *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work,* p. 43. Cf. Holquist in Gibson (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative,* p. 153, where Holquist expresses his view on the nature of the polyphonic novel, arguing that "all meaning is achieved through struggle." On the Bakhtinian dialogic model as a conflictual one, see Gibson ibidem. See also, Fludernik on Bakhtinian dialogism as agon in Fludernik (1993), *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction,* p. 350.
[61] Bakhtin, ibidem.
[62] Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nicolai Leskov,' in *The Narrative Reader.,* ed. Martin McQuillan (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2000), p. 50.

(c) The typical generic and compositional forms of finalisation.

All three criteria have been fulfilled on the pages of *Absalom, Absalom!*

5.3. The Shreve-Quentin dialogue.

Wesley Morris and Barbara Alverson Morris remark: "Hearing displaces listening as dialogue intrudes upon monologue."[63] The Morrises elaborate upon their claim by giving examples from *Absalom, Absalom!*. What is ultimately important is that the voices of all the narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* come together without ever merging into one voice. The Morrises call this dialogic situation in *Absalom, Absalom!* an 'interpretive hearing.' It implies that the listeners tend to hear rather than listen to the speakers because they have to get ready for response.

Reed describes the narrative relationship between Shreve and Quentin by analogy to what is generally understood by commensalism: "Quentin is the insider, supplying, and Shreve is the other, demanding information."[64] By contrast, Jessica Hurley argues that: "In the final section, where Quentin and Shreve jointly narrate and listen, the distinction between teller and listener vanishes."[65] Hurley backs up her argument on 'shared narration' in the final section with the following quotation from *Absalom, Absalom!*:

> It was Shreve speaking, though save for the slight difference
> which the intervening degrees of latitude had inculcated in them
> ... it might have been either of them and was in a sense both: both
> thinking as one, the voice which happened to be speaking the
> thought only the thinking become audible, vocal; the two of them
> creating between them, out of the rag-tag and bob-ends of old tales
> and talking, people who perhaps had never existed at all anywhere,
> who, shadows, were shadows not of flesh and blood which had lived
> and died but shadows in turn of what were (to one of them at least,
> to Shreve) shades too) quiet as the visible murmur of their
> vaporizing breath.

Phil Smith similarly argues that the central aspect of the Shreve-Quentin dialogical exchanges is "the merging of the two of them."[66] To back up his argument, Smith quotes the passage, which refers to "[…] the two of them of creating between them." Singal writes: "the

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[63] Wesley Morris and Barbara Alverson Morris (1989), *Reading Faulkner.* p. 203.

[64] Joseph W. Reed Jr., *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 170.

[65] Jessica Hurley (2012), 'Ghost-written: Kindship and History in *Absalom, Absalom!*.' p. 68.

[66] Phil Smith, 'The Megaphone's Bellowing and Bodiless Profanity: *If I Forget the Jerusalem* and the Culture of Cacophony.', *The Faulkner Journal,* (Faulkner and the Metropolis) Vol. XXVI., No. 1. (Spring 2012), 75-96 (p. 82).

two have merged, making possible a moment of supreme vision."[67] I would suggest that what Phil Smith and Signal describe as the 'merging' of the listener and the speaker is a crucial aspect of dialogism. However, I would argue that the conversations between Quentin and Shreve in Chapter VII have the purpose of Socratic questioning. By nature, the Socratic dialogue is discursive. It is a questioning and testing through speech. Bakhtin remarks that Socratic dialogue: "reflects the simultaneous birth of scientific thinking and of a new artistic model for the novels."[68] My aim in this section is to investigate the elements of Socratic dialogue in the second half of the novel and to show how Socratic dialogue strives for the objectification of narrative report, which is clearly the case in the Shreve-Quentin chapter VII of *Absalom, Absalom!* I will also suggest that Socratic dialogue in *Absalom, Absalom!* is interrupted. What needs to be mentioned in this connection is the fact that Quentin in the second half of the novel does not answer questions since he already knows all the answers. Toward the end of the novel, we hear only Shreve speaking. This corroborates the premise that the second half of the novel and the dialogue between Shreve and Quentin is an informed dialogue. In Socratic dialogue, discourse becomes the centre. Referring to Bakhtin's observations on the nature of Socratic dialogue, Kristeva writes: "Socratic truth (meaning) is the product of a dialogical relationship among speakers; it is correlation and its relativism appears by virtue of the observer's autonomous point of view."[69] Shreve in *Absalom, Absalom!* serves as such an unbiased point of reference for Quentin. This is the basic premise of dialogic listening. As noted earlier, on the last page of *Absalom, Absalom!*, Shreve asks Quentin why he hates the South, to which Quentin answers that he does not hate the South at all. I would suggest that the entire novel constitutes the question that Quentin answers in the last three lines of the novel.

Socratic dialogue arises as apomnemoneumata. I shall use the term apomnemoneumata to designate "a genre of the memoir type, as transcripts based on personal memories of real conversations among contemporaries."[70] Irving Howe has argued that: "*Absalom, Absalom!* is packed with the incongruities and complexities of consciousness, each sentence approaching, remembering, analysing and modifying the material that has preceded it."[71] This sounds like a precise description of the narrative situation in *Absalom,*

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[67] Singal cited in Phil Smith p. 82.
[68] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *The Dialogic Imagination,* p. 24. The essay I entitled "Epic and novel: toward a methodology for the study of the novel."
[69] Kristeva (1981),
[70] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 24.
[71] Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study*. (Chicago: Elephant Paperback, 1991), p. 226.

Absalom! after Rosa's death up to the end of first half of the novel. However, I would argue, Chapters. VII-IX constitute Socratic dialogue. In Socratic dialogue as an informed dialogue, Quentin's listening prevails over Shreve's talking.[72] The first characteristic of Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!* is that of 'a listener.' He is only secondarily a thinker and speaker. David Minter writes on Quentin as a major listener in *Absalom, Absalom!* as follows: "Quentin listens, of course, listens even when he does not appear to be listening, even when weariness and reluctance well up him (…) For him all knowing begins with remembering and depends upon talking."[73] This has far-reaching implications for the Socratic model in the second half of the novel.

5.4. Listening as talking: exotopy and understanding.

As we have seen, Bakhtin puts emphasis on discourse as an active interaction between the teller and the listener, arguing that: "[T]he utterance is not the business of the speaker alone, but the result of his or her interaction with a listener, whose reactions he or she integrates in advance (…) Discourse is oriented toward the person addressed, oriented toward what the person is."[74] It is also a salient feature of an utterance that the listener actively participates in the formation of meaning. Thus, the context of an utterance is social.[75] For Bakhtin, as for Benjamin, meaning (communication) implies community.[76] Minter comes up with a similar argument regarding *Absalom, Absalom!* when he writes: "What Quentin and Shreve come to is not only a kind of creative collaboration; it is also a sense, however fleeting (…) of a sense of community."[77] Bakhtin argues: "No utterance in general can be attributed to the speaker exclusively, it is the product of the interaction of the interlocutors, and, broadly speaking, the product of the whole complex situation in which it occurred."[78] Minter distinguishes between two types of a union in the second half of *Absalom, Absalom!*: one being "a union between Quentin and Shreve" and the second "a union between each of them

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[72] See David Minter, 'Family, Region and Myth in Faulkner's Fiction.,' in *Faulkner and the Southern Renaissance: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1981.,* ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie. (University Press Mississippi), p. 193. On Shreve's listening before he speaks in the second half of the novel as 'a form of apprentice.' On remembering-talking exchanges between the narrators pp. 192-195. On listening and talking between Quentin-Shreve pp. 195-196. And pp. 199-201, 248-249, 255, and 260 on remembering, talking and listening.
[73] David Minter, 'Family, Region and Myth in Faulkner's Fiction,' p. 198.
[74] Bakhtin, p. 43.
[75] Bakhtin, p. 30.
[76] Ibidem.
[77] David Minter, 'Family, Region and Myth.', p. 194 and p. 195 on the sense of community between Shreve-Quentin
[78] Bakhtin, ibidem.

and the story they tell."[79] The Bakhtinian definition of discourse is "interindividual"[80] and social: "No utterance, in general, can be attributed to the speaker exclusively; it is the product of the interaction of the interlocutors, and broadly speaking, the product of the whole complex social situation in which it has occurred."[81] The inescapable conclusion that suggests itself is that for Bakhtin society begins with the appearance of the second person.[82]

Pearce claims that: "In *Absalom, Absalom!* the action of storytelling dialogically transforms tellers into hearers and hearers into tellers."[83] As an example, Pearce gives Shreve and Quentin. Fludernik argues that the frame of telling can be extended to incorporate what she calls reflecting. Fludernik defines reflecting as: "[T]he mental activities outside utterance which turn an act of telling into a process of recollection and self-reflective introspection."[84] In addition, Fludernik makes the useful distinction between the telling frame that requires an addressee or listener, and the act of reflecting that projects a reflecting consciousness in the process of rumination.[85]

Contrary to Fludernik, Bakhtin argues that even the most personal act of becoming conscious of oneself always already implies an interlocutor – the other's glance upon us:

> The motivation of our action, the attainment of self-consciousness (and self-consciousness is always verbal; it always leads to the search for a specific verbal complex), is always a way of putting oneself in relation to a given social norm, it is, so to speak, a socialisation of the self and of its action. Becoming conscious of myself, I attempt to see myself through the eyes of another person, of another representative of my social group or of my class.[86]

In other words, according to Bakhtin, the other (meaning the listener) becomes my witness and my judge. It is because of perceiving myself through the eyes of a witness and judge – the other – that my auto-reflection is being enriched and objectified.[87] In short, Bakhtin argues that self-knowledge comes through the other.[88] Indeed Bakhtin develops the theory that it is impossible to conceive of any being outside of his or her relation to the other. Bakhtin argues

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[79] David Minter, 'Family, Region and Myth,' p. 194.
[80] Bakhtin, p. 52.
[81] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* p. 30.
[82] Ibidem. For more on this aspect of Bakhtinian ideology see pp: 30,32,34, and 43.
[83] Richard Pearce, *The Politics of Narration: James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf.* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), pp. 84-85.
[84] Monika Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 43-44.
[85] Ibidem, p. 44.
[86] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* p. 30.
[87] Bakhtin in Todorov (1984), p. 97.
[88] Bakhtin (1990), *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, p. xxxvii.

that: "In life, we do this at every moment: we appraise ourselves from the point of view of others, we attempt to understand the transgredient moments of our very consciousness and to take them into account through the other (…); in a word, constantly and intensely, we oversee and apprehend the reflections of our life in the plain consciousness of other men."[89]

Bakhtin clearly states that one can achieve self-consciousness only with another's help.[90] Bakhtin explains: "The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness (toward a *thou).* Moreover, Bakhtin suggests that even the tone of an utterance is not defined by the objective context of the utterance, nor by the experiences of the speaker, but by the relation of the speaker to the listener (his rank, his importance etc).[91] As Bakhtin argues: "I see myself as I conceive others might see it. In order to forge myself, I must do so from outside. In other words, I author myself."[92] This aspect of the aesthetic activity is referred to by Bakhtin as 'vnenakhodimost.'[93] Bakhtin argues that we constantly evaluate ourselves and our actions from the standpoint of others. Thus, we take into account the value of our outward appearance from the standpoint of the possible impression it may produce upon the other, although for ourselves this value does not exist in any immediacy.[94] Thus, according to Bakhtin, aesthetic objectivity points in a direction different to that of cognitive and ethical objectivity.[95] Cognitive and ethical objectivity is the impartial, dispassionate evaluation of a given person and a given event from the standpoint of an ethical and cognitive value, which is held to be universally valid or tends toward universal validity. By contrast, the centre of value for aesthetic objectivity is the sum of the hero's life experiences, and all the values that are ethical and cognitive must be subordinated to that whole:

> The mistaken tendency to reduce everything to a single consciousness, to dissolve in the other's consciousness (that one understands). The advantages, in principle of exotopy (spatial, temporal, national). Understanding cannot be understood as empathy [vchustvovanie] and setting of the self in another place (loss of one's place). That is required only of the marginal aspects of understanding. Understanding cannot be understood as the translation of a foreign language into one's tongue. Understanding as the transformation of the other into a 'self-other'. The principle of

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[89] Ibidem.
[90] Ibidem, p. 96.
[91] Ibidem, p. 52.
[92] Bakhtin cited in Holquist (1990), p. 28.
[93] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), p. 99.
[94] Bakhtin (1990), *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world.,* pp. 13 and 15.
[95] Ibidem, p. 13.

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exotopy.[96]

Following Bakhtin, I would like to emphasise that, on the one hand, 'exotopy' assumes a merging of the listener and the speaker at the initial stage. On the other hand, it ventures the separation of the listener and the speaker because of spatial, national, temporal and other differences. Bakhtin argues:

> To understand the other human being, I should see his whole world from within him as he sees it, to take his place, and then return again to my position; fill his worldview with this surplus of seeing, which opens from my position within the other, turns one's attention, create for him the finalizing environment from my surplus of seeing, my knowledge, my desire, my feelings.[97]

In this context, I would suggest, it is interesting that Donald Kartiganer describes the events taking place in the last chapter of *Absalom, Absalom!* as a "painful disintegration of [the] communion" between Quentin and Shreve as they re-construct the Sutpen-related events presented throughout the novel's preceding chapters.[98]

As we have seen, Bakhtin emphasizes that understanding is not the same as empathy ('vchustvovanie') [sic] (sochustvovanie).[99] Bakhtin also excludes the possibility of 'complete understanding' (vzhivainje):

> But pure vzhivainje (i.e. objectifying, losing oneself, understanding of the other) is not at all possible. If I really lose myself in the other (in place of two participants I would become one – a unification of life), i.e. I would cease to be the sole participant, then this moment of my not-being could never become the moment of my consciousness, not-being cannot become the moment of being of

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[96] Bakhtin cited in Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle.*, pp. 108-109. Bakhtin (28-410) and (38: 346). See also Bakhtin in Holquist (1990), *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world.*, p. 21. Ch.2. "The time and space of the self and other." On the process as the opposition of 'the I -for-myself and the not – I – as –in-me."

[97] M. M. Bakhtin, *The aesthetics of oral genres*, p. 27. "Я должен вчувствоваться в этого другого человека, ценностно увидеть изнутри его мир так, как он нго видит, стать на его место и затем, снова вернувшись на своё, восполнить его кругозор тем избытком видения, который открывается с этого моего места вне его, обрамить его, создать ему завершающее окружение из этого избытка моего видения, моего знания, моего желания и чувства. Пусть передо мною находится человек, переживающий страдание; кругозор его сознания запрлнен тем обстоятельством, которое заставляет его страдать, и теми предметами, которые он видит перед собой, эмоционально-волевые тона, объемлющие этот видимый и восполняемый предметный мир, - тона страдания. Я должен эстетически пережить и завершить его (этические поступки: помощь, спасение, утешение – здесь исключены).

[98] Donald Kartiganer cited in Eric Sundquist, *William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!: A Casebook.*, ed. by Fred Hobson (Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 143. Chapter on *Absalom, Absalom!* and the House Divided.

[99] Cf. To the philosophical concept of 'qualia' in David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 192.

the unconsciousness, i.e. being would simply not happen through me in that moment.[100]

Bakhtin's speaks of complete understanding as losing "one's own place." By comparison, for Bakhtin, aesthetics is a cooperation of two consciousnesses.[101] Bakhtin calls this 'vzhivanie.'[102]

> First moment of aesthetic activity – vzhivanje (understanding): I should experience – see and learn that which he experiences, to take his place, as if I coincide with him. I should comprehend his concrete mental-outlook on life, as he experiences it; in this mental horizon there will be no sequence of the moments that would be accessible to me from my place: as the suffering the sufferer does not experience the fullness of his external expression, experiencing it only partially, and from his perspective alone, he cannot see the suffering tension of his muscles, his whole plastic finalized pose of his body, the expression of the suffering on his face.[103]

This stage is followed by what Bakhtin calls – objectivization:

> Vzwivanje' (understanding) of the individual subject of vision is an essential (but not the only) moment of aesthetic contemplation; the vision of him from within in his own being. After this moment of 'vzhivanje' always comes the moment of objectivization, i.e. positioning in order to understand the individual merged within myself by way of 'vzhivanje', separating him from oneself and returning to my standpoint, and only this restored consciousness aesthetically shapes from within aesthetically understood personality of the other individuality as one, whole, qualitative, and unique entity.[104]

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[100] M. M Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 1, p. 12. автор и герой в эстетической деятельности. Проблема отношения автора к герою. Стр. 13-14. Но чистое вживание вообще не возможно, если бы я действительно потерял себя в другом (вместо двух участников стал бы один – обединение бытия), т.е. перестал быть единственным, то этот момент не-бытия моего никогда бы не мог стать моментом моего сознания, не-бытие не может стать моментом бытия сознания, его просто не было бы для меня, т.е. бытие не свершалось бы через меня в этот момент.

[101] Ibidem, pp. 99-100.

[102] Ibidem, p. 41.

[103] M. M. Bakhtin, *The aesthetics of oral genres*, p. 27. "Первый момент эстетической деятельности – вживание: я должен пережить – увидеть и узнать – то, что он переживает, стать на его место, как бы совпасть с ним (...) Я должен усвоить себе конкретный жизненный кругозор этого человека так, как он его переживает; в этом кругозоре не окажется целого ряда моментов, доступных мне с моего места: так, страдающий не переживает полноты своей внешней выраженности, переживает её лишь частично, и притом на языке внутренних самоощущений, он не видит страдальческого напряжения своих мышц, всей пластически законченной позы своего тела, экспрессии страдания на своём лице."

[104]M. M Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 1, p. 11. Существенным (но не единственным) моментом эстетического созерцания является вживание в индивидуальный предмет видения, видение его изнутри в его собственном существе. За этим моментом вживания всегда следует момент объективизации, т.е. положение понятой вживанием индивидуальности вне себя, отделение её от себя, возврат в себя, и только это возвращенное в себя сознание, со своего места, эстетически оформляет изнутри схваченную вживанием индивидуальность, как единую, целостную, качественно своеобразную."

Bakhtin adds that these two processes cannot be separated and are usually paralleled:

> Certainly, we cannot think, that behind this pure moment of 'vzhivanje' (understanding) chronically follows the moment of objectivization, shaping; both of these moments are really indivisible, pure vzhivanje is an abstract moment, one act of aesthetic activity, which we should not consider in terms of one temporal period: moments of 'vzhivanje' and objectivization mutually penetrate one another. I actively fuse with an individual, and consequently even for one second I do not lose myself entirely and my own unique place while trying to understand the other's experiences. The subject does not passively and unexpectedly takes the possession of me, but I actively fuse in him, merging is my act, and only in this lies its productivity and novelty.[105]

Elsewhere Bakhtin gives another account of the condition of successful exotopy: "'Vzhivanje' (understanding) should be followed by a 'return to oneself, to my own position, outside of the experiencing person, only from this place the material of vzhivanje can be comprehended: ethically, cognitively and aesthetically."[106]

5.6. Talking as listening.

Both Derrida and Bakhtin take the speaking person and his discourse as their point of reference. Derrida argues: "The true circle, the circle of the truth, is therefore always an effect of speech." However, the Derridean concept of a pure auto-affection excludes the other's involvement in the process of self-awareness. Derrida argues that, first of all, when one speaks one hears oneself speaking, and this lays the foundation for a pure auto-affection. [107] According to Derrida, only 'hearing oneself speak' is a pure auto-affection. The sense of touch and reflection in the mirror would mean connectedness with the external world. [108] By comparison, Bakhtin argues:

> For consciousness this holistic image is dissipated in life, finding itself in the

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[105] Ibidem. "Конечно, не нужно думать, что за чистым моментом вживания хронологически следует момент объективизации, оформления, оба этих момента реально неразделимы, чистое вживание – абстрактный момент единого акта эстетической деятельности, который и не должно мыслить в качестве временного периода: моменты вживания и объективизации взаимо проникают друг друга. Я активно вживаюсь в индивидуальность, а следовательно ни на один миг не теряю себя до конца и своего единственного места вне её. Не предмет мною пассивным неожиданно завладевает, а я активно вживаюсь в него, вживание мой акт, и только в этом продуктивность и новизна его."

[106] M. M Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 1, p. 71. "[За] вживанием должен следовать возврат в себя, на своё место вне страдающего, только с этого места материал вживания может быть осмыслен этически, познавательно или эстетически. "'Vzhivanje' (understanding) should be followed by a 'return to oneself, to my own position, outside of the experiencing person, only from this place the material of vzhivanje can be comprehended: ethically, cognitively and aesthetically."

[107] Jacques Derrida, from *Speech and Phenomenon* cited in Kamuf, p. 21.

[108] Ibidem.

field of vision of the outer world only in the form of accidental scraps, moreover there is not enough namely of this inner unity and continuity, and to collect oneself in some finalized form is not possible, while experiencing in terms of his 'I.' The point is not in the lack of material of vision from outside –even though this lack is extraordinary – but, first and foremost, the lack of one valuable approach from within the human being alone towards his outer expression: no mirror, photography, special observation of oneself will be of use here; in the best case scenario, he will obtain an aesthetically false product.[109]

Derrida claims that to speak to someone means to make him repeat immediately in his own thoughts what he has heard, unaffected by his own ego. As Derrida suggests, this would mean that the other immediately repeats his own auto-affection without the help of anything external. Bakhtin, on the contrary, notes that to speak to someone is to hear oneself but it also means to be heard by another.[110] The other becomes the mirror in which I can see myself.

5.7. Time-consciousness, experience and memory.

In *The Fictions of Languages and the Languages of Fiction*, Fludernik concentrates specifically on the question of (human) time consciousness and on its dependence on (narrative) experience and memory.[111] Fludernik based her theory of experientiality and narrativity on Ricouer's Mimesis I and II, as it is postulated in *Time and Narrative.* Ricoeur formulated his theory based on the Augustinian subsumption of human retention (recollection) and protention (expectation of the future.)[112] Ricoeur's theory arises from the observation that current experience cannot be objective since it alludes to past experience and therefore the conceptual grasp of the experience. In this sense, none of the three time dimensions can be comprehended separately but only as a whole in the dynamic process of "uni-directional flux."[113] Following Ricoeur, Fludernik argues that experientiality includes this sense of moving with time. However, Fludernik attributes evaluative factors to this dynamic

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[109] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 77. "Для самосознания этот целостный образ рассеян в жизни, попадая в поле видения внешнего мира лишь в виде случайных обрывков, причём не хватает именно внешнего единства и непрерывности, и собрать себя в сколько-нибудь законченное внешнее целое сам человек не может, переживая жизнь в категории своего *я.* Дело здесь не в недостатке материала внешнего видения – хотя и недостаток чрезвычайно велик, - а в чисто принципиальном отсутствии единого ценностного подхода изнутри самого человека к его внешней выраженности: никакое зеркало, фотография, специальное наблюдение над собой здесь не помогут; в лучшем случае мы получим эстетически фальшивый продукт (...)."
[110] Ibidem, p. 23.
[111] Ibidem, p. 53.
[112] Ibidem.
[113] Ibidem, p. 54.

movement in time. [114] Fludernik adduces Husserl's oft-referred example of an on-going melody which is perceived and progressively merged into retentional (primary) memory until it fades and disappears. Husserl illustrates his view of the human experience of temporality as follows: "When a temporal Object has expired, when its actual duration is over, the consciousness of the Object, now past, by no means fades away, although it no longer functions as perceptual consciousness, or better, perhaps, as impressional consciousness (…) To the impression, primary remembrance, or, we say, retention, is, joined." [115] In the recollected and represented past, the imagination provides an orientation point – the quasi-source-present that makes it the centre of perspective for its own retentions and pretentions.[116] Thus, narrative reproduces the primary experience, reproducing it and, at the same time, enabling its objective perception.[117] As Ricoeur argues, by reading the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end, we learn to read time backwards, as the recapitalising of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal consequences.[118] Consequentiality provides events with a temporal axis and a casual logic. In this context, Fludernik refers to Braningan's definition of narrative as: "perceptual activity that organises dates into a special pattern which represents and explain experience."[119] Fludernik's research concentrates on the social dimension given to human actions and reactions, attempting to answer the question "what to do and why to do it?" For Bakhtin, by comparison, the most crucial question to be answered is – "who am I?" I would suggest that, neither of the two questions could be answered individually.

Fludernik's experientiality is concerned with the questions of 'I' and identity formation by means of analysing the goal orientation inherited in actions undertaken by an individual and an objective re-evaluation of these actions and the reasons behind them. Fludernik's cognitivist model identifies four frames: action (with emphasis on goal-orientation and motivation factors), viewing, experiencing, telling and reflecting.[120] Level I in Fludernik's model is concerned with a real-life schemata of action and experience. Level II and Level III of natural frames include the two above-mentioned and telling with reflecting. Level IV

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[114] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* p. 29. This also accords with Husserl's theory, which shows that sensation is the basic unit of experience.
[115] Husserl (1964), p. 51.
[116] Husserl cited in Fludernik (1993), *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction,* p. 55.
[117] Ibidem, p. 56.
[118] Ricouer (1985), p. 32. Also, Ricoeur cited in Herman (1999), p. 198.
[119] Fludernik (1996), p. 26.
[120] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* pp. 355 and 371. Especially sections 1.3 and 8.6. Also, Herman (2003), p. 13.Cf. Chatman's and Walter Benjamin's definition of frames in experientiality in McQuillan (2000), *The Narrative Reader,* p. 8.

encompasses all three above-mentioned levels, being responsible for narrativising by means of the mediation through consciousness. In these schemata, the goal-orientation of acting subjects is combined with the narrator's after-the-fact evaluation of the narrative experience.[121] As Fludernik herself explains, her 4-level model comprises three categories of natural and cultural frames and a fourth, the process of narrativisation, explaining how narrativity emerges from an interpretative mediation through consciousness.[122] *Absalom, Absalom!'s* narrative accords with the above-described model by Fludernik, as is shown in the table below:

	Miss Rosa	Mr Compson	Quentin	Shreve
Level 1/Action	Yes	No	No	No
Level 1/ Direct experience	Yes	No	No	No
Level 1/ Indirect experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Level II/ Viewing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Level III/Telling vs. reflecting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Level IV/Mediation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

I have expanded Fludernik's cognitive model on level I since I thought it necessary for the interpretation of *Absalom, Absalom!'s* narrative to distinguish between the direct and indirect experience and being an eyewitness to Sutpen's life. The above table shows how the binary opposition of (a) acting, viewing and experiencing, one the one hand, and (b) thinking and reflecting, on the other, is one of the foundational characteristics of Fludernik's model. It seems that the three narrators are equally preoccupied with constructing and reconstructing Sutpen's story and their own processes of identity formation.[123] The above table also shows

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[121] Fludernik (1996), p. 43. Fludernik (1996), pp. 346, 355 and 371.
[122] Fludernik (1996), pp. 355-371.
[123] See McPherson and Brooks.

that individual experience is always 'I-bound' and therefore subjective.[124] It also shows the importance of the time factor in narrating such an experience. After-the-fact evaluation becomes important as a means of making narrative experience relevant to oneself and to the other. All experience is stored as emotionally charged remembrance, and it is reproduced in narrative since it has emotional meaning. Fludernik attributes importance to perception and consciousness as major aspects of her theory of experientiality.[125] So does Bakhtin. Bakhtin's level-4 in his 4-level model of "the concrete empirical act" addresses the problem of active and dialogical understanding through debate and agreement.[126] Bakhtin points out: "Understanding is already a very important relation (understanding is never a tautology or doubling) as it always requires a second, and potentially a third, party."[127] Bakhtin explains the difference between understanding and explaining as follows: "During explanations there is only one consciousness (the voice that explains), in the process of understanding – two; an explanation lacks dialogic moments (except for rhetorical ones and those addressed towards the listener)."[128] In this context, Bakhtin emphasizes that: "Overcoming the feeling of strangeness (outsideness) – is the first step to understanding."[129] As noted earlier, Bakhtin uses the term 'surplus of seeing' to designate how we perceive the world through the time/space of the self and through the time/space of the other.[130] In other words, dialogism argues that we make sense of existence by defining our specific place in it – an operation performed in cognitive time and space.[131] For Bakhtin, then, dialogism constitutes a theory of knowledge – 'an architectonics of perception.' In this way, Bakhtin points to the metalinguistic character of dialogism and an important feature of the polyphonic novel:

> In a polyphonic novel the meaning of language diversity and speech characteristics, is maintained, and this meaning begins to decrease and, most importantly, to change the artistic function of these phenomena. The matter is not only in the presence of definite

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[124] Fludernik (1993), *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction,* p. 56 . For more on the psychologies of characters see Rabinowitz (1987), p. 44. Ch.3. Rules of signification and rules of: source, morality, truth, realism and causation. Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ohio State University Press, 1987).

[125] Ibidem, pp. 346 and 355.

[126] For Bakhtin's 4-level model of "the concrete empirical act" see Todorov (1984), *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle,* p. 51.

[127] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 201. "Понимание есть уже очень важное отношение (понимание никогда не бывает тавтологией или дублированием, ибо здесь всегда двое и потенциальный третий."

[128] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 203. "При объяснении только одно сознание (объясняющее), при понимании – два; объяснение лишено диалогических моментов (кроме риторических или обращённых к слушателю)."

[129] Ibidem. "Преодоление чуждости (враждебности) – первый шаг понимания."

[130] Bakhtin cited in Holquist (1990), *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World,* p. 35.

[131] Bakhtin cited in Holquist (1990), *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World,* p. 35.

language styles, social dialects and similar, presence ascertained with the aid of purely linguistic criteria, the matter is, from which dialogic angle they are compared or contrasted with each other in a given literary work. But this dialogic angle as such cannot be determined with the aid of purely linguistic criteria, because dialogic relations even though they relate to the sphere of words, but not to the sphere of the linguistic study of it. Dialogic relations (in this sense also dialogic relations of the speaking person towards his own word) – are the subject of the metalinguistic.[132]

*You need to add a sentence hear which wraps this quotation into your argument.

5.8. Telling and retelling patterns in *Absalom, Absalom!*

As has been shown in the table above, with the four narrators telling the same story, relying on a mixture of both the same and different sources of information, we can conclude that the narrative structure of *Absalom, Absalom!* consists of 'verbal acts of someone retelling someone how something happens."[133] Thus, *Absalom, Absalom!* is "a narrative about narrative."[134] Within *Absalom, Absalom!*, there are many examples of the narrators' telling-retelling practices. Reed analyses in detail the complex repetition/revision-patterns in each consecutive chapter of *Absalom, Absalom!*.[135] Reed argues that frequent repetition creates the possibility of ellipses and other time dislocations (e.g. prolepses) necessary to withhold crucial information. As has been demonstrated in the table above, all the homodiegetic narrators but Shreve repeat and recollect information due to the fact that they are Jefferson-born. As we know, Miss Rosa, for example, has not always been an eyewitness to Sutpen's life, since it was her older sister, Ellen ("the butterfly"), who was married to Sutpen. Accordingly, Rosa frequently repeats what she was told by Ellen, aunt Coldfield and the

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[132] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 136. "В полифоническом романе значение языкового многообразия и речевых характеристик, правда, сохраняется, но это значение становится меньшим, а главное – меняются художественные функции этих явлений. Дело не в самом наличии определённых языковых стилей, социальных диалектов и т.п., наличии, установливаемом с помощью чисто лингвичтических критериев, дело в том, под каким диалогическим углом они сопоставлены или противопоставлены в произведении. Но этот диалогический угол как раз не может быть установлен с помощью чисто лингвистических критерев, потому что диалогические отношения хотя и относятся к области слова, но не к области чисто лингвистического его изучения. Диалогические отношения (в том числе и диалогические отношения говорящего к собственному слову) – предмет металингвистики."

[133] Cf. Definition of oral narrative as "acts of telling" as given by Barbara Herrnstein-Smith in Gibson (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative,* p. 262. For further reading of Herrstein-Smith, refer to "Narrative versions, narrative theories.", in *On Narrative*, ed. N.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago and London, 1980), p. 228.

[134] Joseph W. Reed, Jr. *Narrative Form as Design.* Reed in Dirk Kuyk, pp. 141-147. P. 126. On *Absalom, Absalom!* as a metafiction see also Reesman, *American Designs: The Late Novels of James and Faulkner.,* p. 84. Ch. 4 "Community v. Design in *Absalom, Absalom*."

[135] Reed, *Faulkner's Narrative,* pp. 148-89. See also David Minter on repetition, *Faulkner's Questioning Narratives,* p. 18.

townspeople. As Howe points out: "[…] repetition is everywhere in *Absalom, Absalom!*"[136] Hosam Aboul-Ela brings particular attention to the repetition of the beginning of Sutpen's story of his design in all four accounts by homodiegetic narrators: "The repetition of beginnings is one of the ways that the novel's narrative structure undercuts linearity and progressivism. The reader never really advances to another stage but, rather, always moves forward to another beginning. Similarly, endings in the novel do not offer any sort of culmination."[137] In Chapter VII, we listen to Sutpen himself, telling the Compson grandfather of the origins of his great design (p. 263). In fact, however, in this passage, it is not Sutpen but Shreve, the narrator in Ch. VII, who repeats to Quentin Sutpen's confession as given to the Compson grandfather some five decades earlier.[138] Shreve tells this story to Quentin. However, Quentin must have told Shreve this story first, since Quentin got to know the details of Sutpen's confession from Mr Compson. Throughout chapters VI to IX, Shreve attempts to reconstruct Sutpen's story. In these chapters, as I have suggested, Shreve and Quentin attempt to make sense not only of history, but also of Sutpen's saga and their own lives. In Ch. III, Mr Compson tells Quentin how Sutpen, after accomplishing the first two stages of his design, set upon finding a respectable wife to give him the sons he desired so much (p. 72). In Ch. VII, Shreve retells Quentin Thomas Sutpen's story as told by Mr Compson to Quentin in Ch. II-III-IV and then re-told by Quentin to Shreve in Ch. VI and VII, so Shreve can attempt to understand Sutpen's rise and fall (pp. 278-279). As Shreve notes, Sutpen's design was doomed to failure because of the conflict between his sons, which resulted in fratricide. In Ch. VII, Shreve tells Quentin how Sutpen, after returning from the war, and pressurised by the flow of time, insulted Milly, comparing her to a mare, and paid for this insult with his life when Wash Jones decided on revenge after several years of waiting (p. 286). Thus, the story of Sutpen's design is the story of Sutpen violating all the moral rules of conduct on the way to his dream. In this context, I would like to quote Kierkegaard, who points out: "Repetition and recollection are the same movement, only in opposite directions; for what is recollected has

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[136] Reed, *Faulkner's Narrative,* pp. 148-89. See also David Minter on repetition, *Faulkner's Questioning Narratives,* p. 18.

[137] Hosam Aboul-Ela, 'The poetics of Peripheralization: Faulkner and the Question of the Postcolonial.', *American Literature,* Vol. 77, No. 3 (September 2005), 483-509 (p. 493).

[138] See Christopher Paterson cited in Jessica Hurley on *Absalom, Absalom!* as a non-productive repetition in the Compsons'- Shreve line of storytelling due to the Hegelian dialectic characteristic to kinship. *The Faulkner Journal* Jessica Hurley "Ghostwritten: Kinship and history in *Absalom, Absalom!*.", 75-77. Paterson, Christopher. "The Haunted House of Kinship: Miscegenation, Homosexuality, and Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*", *New Centennial Review.,* Vol. 4, No. 1. (2004), 227-65. Peterson, *Kindred Specters: Death, Meaning, and American Affinity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

been, is repeated backwards, whereas repetition properly is repeated forwards."[139] Rimmon-Kenan proposes that as humans we reveal a tendency to "repeat either other or oneself, which is again repetition."[140] Rosa, for example, frequently repeats herself. Indeed, Kuyk observes that, within the opening scene of the novel, Rosa repeats the plot of *Absalom, Absalom!* three times.[141] And the plot of *Absalom, Absalom!* is repeated several times in the course of the novel. In her examination of patterns of repetition in *Absalom, Absalom!*, Rimmon-Kenan clearly distinguishes between two types of repetition: constructive and destructive.[142] Rimmon-Kenan concludes: "Constructive repetition emphasizes difference, destructive repetition emphasizes sameness (i.e. to repeat successfully is not to repeat)."[143] Patterns of repetition in *Absalom, Absalom!* are generally constructive and differ from one another, due to the fact that they mix sameness with a difference. As Reed observes: "Telling moments are visited and revisited, come back again and again like favourite songs. Yet the repetition is not primarily to save rhythmic or revelatory structures but to expose us to a sequence of narrators using the same raw material. The narrative advances (indirectly) in a linear chronology, but at the same time – by its beginning *in medias res* and by its overlapping – suggests layers of knowledge, of understanding, of meaning."[144] Accordingly, we can read *Absalom, Absalom!* through the lens of Bakhtin's concept of "active reception of speech of others" ("aktivnoe vosprijatie chuzhoi rechi")[145] as the prerequisite for dialogism and heteroglossia; or through Fludernik's concept of the re-evaluation of past experience from the perspective of time.

5.9. The importance of letters in *Absalom, Absalom!*

The narrative situation in *Absalom, Absalom!* becomes even more complex when one recognises the importance of the letters. Bakhtin writes on other genres frequently incorporated in the novel as follows:

> Moreover, there exists a separate group of genres, which play the most essential structural role in novels, and sometimes directly determine the structure of the whole novel, creating separate generic types of novels. These are: a confession, a diary, a travel

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[139] Kierkegaard cited in Brooks (2003), *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, pp. 124.
[140] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1983), p. 157.
[141] Dirk Kuyk, *Sutpen's design: Interpreting Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!"* (Charlottesville, London: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p. 45.
[142] Ibidem.
[143] Ibidem.
[144] Reed, *Faulkner's Narrative,* p. 148.
[145] Bakhtin cited in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language,* p.115. (eng. p. 117).

journal, a biography, a letter and some other genres. All these genres can be included in a novel not only as its qualitative essential structural part but they also determine the form of the novel as a whole (a novel-confession, a novel-diary, a novel in letters and similar). Each of these genres possesses its own meaningful speech-forms of mastering of representation of the various aspects of reality. A novel utilizes these genres exactly as such ready-made forms of verbose mastering the representation of reality.[146]

Mr Compson's letter to Quentin announcing Miss Rosa's death and its narratological consequences have been already discussed. In this section of the chapter, I want to focus on Bon's love letter to Judith.[147] The letter has been in the possession of Mr Compson for over five decades. It was given secretly by Judith to Quentin's grandmother for safekeeping, as is clearly stated by Mr Compson in Ch. VI (p. 207). Bon's letter has been archived by the Compsons and is still in their hands after all the Coldfields and Sutpens are dead. Sonja Bašić suggests that Bon's letter has less to do with the story level than with the narrative transmission.[148] Bašić calls Bon's letter "an experience in Southern rhetoric."[149] The letter (with no signature and no date) is all that is left after Bon, Judith and Henry are all gone. By comparison, Mr Compson's letter to Quentin is not only dated but also states the exact date of Miss Rosa's death, giving it simultaneously a historical and documentary dimension. As will be argued below it is the lack of date and signature on Bon's letter that makes the difference. Beyond doubt, both letters have narratological consequences for *Absalom, Absalom!*'s narrative. As we have seen in Chapter III, Mr Compson's letter facilitates the recognition of the coherence between the dialogic units and the transition from weak to strong diads.

Only one of Bon's love letters survives, as Mr Compson tells Quentin. This one letter stands for all Bon's letters that are gone and all the events between Henry, Bon and Judith that they signify. However, Mr Compson keeps Quentin in suspense before producing this latter and permitting him to read the contents. As Robert Dale Parker observes: "He [Faulkner]

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[146] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 136. "Более того, существует особая группа жанров, которые играют в романах существеннейшую конструктивную роль, а иногда прямо определяют собою конструкцию романного целого, создавая особые жанровые разновидности романа. Таковы: исповедь, дневник, описание путешествий, биография, письмо и некоторые другие жанры. Все эти жанры могут не только входить в роман в качестве существенной конструктивной части его, но и определять форму романа как целого (роман-исповедь, роман-дневник, роман в письмах и т.п.). Каждый из этих жанров обладает своими словесно-смысловыми формами овладения различными сторонами действительности. Роман и использует эти жанры именно как такие выработанные формы словесного овладения действительностью."

[147] *Absalom, Absalom!* Ch. IV. p. 129. Ls.9-17.

[148] Sonja Bašić, *Faulkner's Narrative Discourse.*, p. 319.

[149] Ibidem. For knowledge as 'a question of competence' see J.-F. Lyotard cited in McQuillan, pp. 158 and 160. Lyotard argues: "(…) knowledge is what makes someone capable of framing 'good' denotative utterances, but also 'good' prescriptive and 'good' evaluative utterances."

suspends Mr Compson's letter for over half of the book."[150] Thus, Mr Compson shows his son

Bon's letter (p. 89), but does not hand it to him for another 39 pages (pp. 128-129), when

Quentin reads it with interest (pp. 129-32). What deserves a special mention at this point is

the fact that in these 39 pages, before Quentin is given the letter, Mr Compson is able to

narrate all the story of the Sutpen children's love-and-death triangle. From the moment when

Mr Compson brings in the letter to Quentin in Ch. IV, we are set to get to know the story of

the Sutpen children; i.e. the story of the possibility of incest and miscegenation. Thus Mr

Compson speaks of the power of friendship between Bon and Henry, and the fact that this

had a positive impact on the bond between Judith and Bon (p. 96). Then, Mr Compson clearly

suggests that this friendship facilitated the growing romantic feelings between Bon and Judith

(p. 97). Finally, we get to know that Henry killed Bon to prevent miscegenation and incest.

Letters in *Absalom, Absalom!* constitute a new kind of historical writing. Bakhtin

differentiates clearly between the memory of our own life and the memory of others' lives,

with particular emphasis on the memory of the dead, as is the case with Miss Rosa, Sutpen,

Judith, Bon, Colonel Compson. Bakhtin argues:

> Memory of the other and his life is by essence different from
> contemplation and memories of one's own personal life: memory sees
> life and its contents formally in a different way, and only when it is
> aesthetically productive (contained moment, might, of course, give an
> observation and memory of one's own personal life, but not shaping and
> completing activity). The memory of a finished life of the other (and also
> the anticipation of the possible life-end) is a golden hen to aesthetic
> completion of an individual.[151]

Chapter VI of *Absalom, Absalom!* begins with the letter from Mr Compson to Quentin. The

letter is signed and dated – 10th of January 1910. Mr Compson clearly wants Quentin to

remember the date of Rosa's death. Bakhtin writes on the dialogic principle intrinsic to

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[150] *Absalom, Absalom!*, pp. 218-470. Robert Dale Parker, *Absalom, Absalom!: The Questioning of Forms.* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, A Division of G. K. Hall and Co, 1991), pp. 155-56. See also John T. Matthews, 'Faulkner's Narrative Frames,' in *Faulkner and the Craft of Fiction: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1987,* ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (University Press of Mississippi, 1989), pp. 71-91 (p. 73).

[151] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 77. "Память о другом и его жизни в корне отлична от созерцания и воспоминания своей собственной жизни: память видит жизнь и её содержание формально иначе, и только она эстетически продуктивна (содержательный момент может, конечно, доставить наблюдение и воспоминание своей собственной жизни, но не формирующую и завершающую активность). Память о законченной жизни другого (но возможна и антиципация конца) владеет золотым ключом эстетического завершения личности. (...) Память есть подход с точки зрения ценностной завершенности; в известном смысле память безнадежна, но зато только она умеет ценить цели и смысла уже законченную, сплошь наличную жизнь."

memory as follows: "In this sense we can speak about the absolute aesthetic need of one human being for another one; seeing, remembering, collecting and encompassing actions of the other, which can create his externally finalized personality. This personality will cease existing If the other does not create it: aesthetic memory is productive, it first gives birth to a human being perceived from the outside in a new plan of being."[152] With this date, Mr Compson lays emphasis on the fact that he is the witness to Rosa's death. Bakhtin argues: "Memory is an approach from the point of view of a valuable completion: in a known sense, memory is hopeless, but (in compensation) only it is able to value aims and sense of the already-finished life. In this sense, we can say, death – is a form of aesthetic completion of personality."[153] With this fictional fact of the date of Rosa's death, we are back to the meaning behind the date in Mr Compson's letter.[154] Hayden White puts forward the following argument: "The regularity of the calendar signals the 'realism' of the account, its intention to deal in real rather than imaginary events. The calendar locates events not in the time of eternity, not in kairotic time, but in chronological time, in time as it is humanly experienced."[155] The fact that the Compsons are in possession of Bon's letter puts them again in a privileged position of being almost eye-witnesses to the events on the story level[156] and to the events of Sutpen's life, for example. However, it seems that Mr Compson disqualifies himself by admitting that he does not know the contents of the letter in question. Again, this expressed lack of interest (for whatever reason) puts him in a reliable position as a narrator. It is another Faulknerian narrative tool used frequently to make an unreliable narrator seem reliable. In *Absalom, Absalom!* the Compsons seem to tell the truth about Sutpen's design since none of other narrators, either homodiegetic nor extradiegetic, proves them liars. The letter simply corroborates the fact of the existence of the Sutpen saga. Bakhtin concludes:

> There is neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future). Even *past* meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) – they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue. At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense,

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[152] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 77. "В этом смысле можно говорить об абсолютной эстетической нужде человека в другом, в видящей, помнящей, собирающей и объединяющей активности другого, которая одна может создать его внешне законченную личность, этой личности не будет, если другой её не создаст: эстетическая память продуктивна, она впервые рождает внешнего человека в новом плане бытия."

[153] "В этом смысле мы можем сказать, что смерть – форма эстетического завершения личности."

[154] Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,' in *On Narrative.,* ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press), p. 8.

[155] Ibidem.

[156] *Absalom, Absalom!* Ch. VI. L. 11-17. See also Dallenbach for the most thorough discussion of *mise en abyme.*

boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogue's subsequent development along the way they are recalled and invigorated in renewed form (in a new context). Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival.[157]

This single letter by Bon creates the possibility of an archive and serves as a signature; i.e. an authentication. Bon's letter expands the frame structure of narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!*, proving it a reflecting system of *mise en abyme*.

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[157] Bakhtin, *The Problems of Speech Genres,* p. 170.

Chapter VI

Plot and narratological dynamics in *The Snopes Trilogy.*

The Snopes Trilogy – *The Hamlet* (1940), *The Town* (1957), and *The Mansion* (1959) – stands at the heart of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels.[1] In an introduction to *The Mansion* Faulkner stated that he had already commenced writing the last part of the trilogy in 1925, emphasizing, therefore, that he had always planned for the three books to be joined together.[2] As Pasley Livingston suggests, one reason behind composing a trilogy is to "create various meaningful, implicit relations between the characters in the three novels."[3] Beaver Harold Lowther notes that, in *The Snopes Trilogy,* Faulkner is not interested in plot *per se.[4]* Faulkner is primarily interested in the relations between the characters and their progression across the three novels. However, plot retains its generic function and connects all three novels on the story level. The three novels can be read separately or together as the Snopes saga. In this chapter, I will examine more closely how these correlations are established. I will present *The Snopes Trilogy* as a continuous and sequential narrative – Flem Snopes's story of coming to riches.[5] However, there is another side to this story. As John Pilkington writes: "Flem has replaced the pursuit of happiness with the pursuit of material goods, and in the race he has lost his own soul."[6]

Early critics of *The Snopes Trilogy* were right in accusing the narrative of a loose, episodic and digressive nature.[7] One of the major limitations of this approach to the narrative in *The Snopes Trilogy,* however, is that it does not allow for an explanation of why and how the novels are linked together. I will be looking at how the episodic structures of *The Hamlet* and *The Mansion* paradoxically contribute to the great consistency of the entire trilogy. Reed was the first to discuss the striking similarities between the narrative techniques used in all three parts of *The Snopes Trilogy* as a narrative advantage rather than a flaw in the trilogy's structure and composition.[8] Reed makes the following observation

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[1] Cf. Andrew Hook, 'The Snopes Trilogy', in *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Fiction*, ed. by A. Robert Lee (New York: St. Andrews Press, 1990), p. 172. Hook does not consider the three Faulkner's novels in question in this chapter a trilogy.

[2] For further reading on the theory of trilogy in general and a trilogy as one novel in three parts in Faulkner's writing see Joseph W. Reed, Jr. *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 249.

[3] Livingston,

[4] Beaver Harold Lowther, *Faulkner's Cruse: The Tawn. The Times Literary Supplement* (London, England), Friday, February 07, 1958, Issue. 2919, p. 74.

[5] Compare. Michael Sprinker on 'the individual-centred novel in Faulkner, Dos Passos, Pynchon, Gaddis, Berger', as a coming to-an-end type of novel. Sprinker clearly does not see the 1930s novels by Faulkner as a polyphonic novel in genre. 'Fiction and Ideology: *Lord Jim* and the Problem of Literary History', in *Reading Narrative: Form, Ethics, Ideology,* ed. by James Phelan (Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 1989), p. 248.

[6] John Pilkington, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, 1981. P. 241.

[7] See Irving Howe on 'looseness of the novel' in Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1991), p. 243.

[8] Reed (1973), *Faulkner's narrative*. pp. 240-41.

on the narrative structure in *The Hamlet*: " We are free but directed by the gallery-group toward conclusions. As they watch the Snopes performance they are attempting to make sense of disparate facts, but also to make sense of the sense they make of them. The town is creating its consciousness."[9] Reed then compares *The Hamlet* and *The Town*: "In *The Town* Faulkner makes away from some of these freedoms by hardening or codifying some of the devices he had invented for *The Hamlet.*" In particular, Reed suggests, Faulkner "[retains codifying] the open-ended narrative flux and the movement toward the future."[10] However, I will argue that, by giving voice to the three selected homodiegetic narrators in the third-person narrative of *The Town,* Faulkner creates a strikingly different narrative structure and a new concept of the hero.

This chapter has been divided into three parts: 6.1. Plot dynamics in *The Snopes Trilogy*; 6.2. *The Snopes Trilogy* as a sequential narrative; 6.3. Bremondian situation-event-reaction schemata. To begin with, I will place the accent on the Aristotelian concept of plot and on Flem Snopes as the protagonist of all three novels. Drawing on Marie-Laure Ryan, I will then examine the category of person with respect to plot dynamics, and, focussing on the character's volition and the decisions characters decide to make, I will then discuss how these choices influence the shaping of the plot. Here, I will distinguish between the plot and narration in order to move on to the questions surrounding the narration and focalization in *The Snopes Trilogy* in my final chapter of the thesis.

6.1. Plot dynamics in *The Snopes Trilogy.*

Minter provides a useful definition of narrative for my analysis of *The Snopes Trilogy*.[11] Minter enters into the debate surrounding the Aristotelian category of plot and character by drawing attention to the fact that any narrative consists of three elements: time, place and characters. Minter then advances a convincing explanation for his emphasis on character by arguing that time and place in the narrative might change without altering the plot. However, as Minter argues, "to change the people [characters], (…) is to change the plot."[12] Minter can thus conclude that narrative may be best described as "a group of characters who live in a given place as time passes in succession."[13] This is precisely the case in *The Snopes Trilogy.*

The best starting point is the Aristotelian definition of plot as given in *Poetics.* Following Aristotle, Scholes and Kellog argue that the simple linear plot is unified by its protagonist's movement

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[9] Reed (1973), *Faulkner's Narrative*, pp. 240.

[10] Ibidem.

[11] Minter cited in Ken Ireland, *The Sequential Dynamics of Narrative: Energies at the Margins of Fiction* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2001), p. 26. David Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* (Baltimore; Madison; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 155.

[12] Minter cited in Ireland (2001), 26. Minter (1990), p. 149.

[13] Minter cited in Ireland (2001), 26. Minter (1990), pp. 149 and 155.

in time from one event to another – that is by the chronological order of the protagonist's deeds.[14] Flem Snopes is the protagonist of all three novels in *The Snopes Trilogy* and the protagonist persona is behind the plot dynamics. All the constituent events evolve around the figure of Flem Snopes. *The Snopes Trilogy* is thus nothing other than a summary of the Snopes's saga with Flem in the foreground and Eula, Linda, and Mink in the background. At the same time, it is clear that the choice of titles for the individual novels in *The Snopes Trilogy* suggests that the sociological progression of the narrative coincides with the development of Jefferson town itself. In *The Hamlet*, Jefferson is barely more than a village, whereas in *The Mansion* it has pavements. Herman introduces the notion of serial narrative as "narration across episodes."[15] What this means is that individual episodes in a serial narrative can be relatively autonomous, but individual episodes come together so that "a storyworld emerges incrementally, from episode to episode."[16] This is precisely the case in *The Hamlet* and *The Mansion,* where the personal stories of the main characters are clearly related to the story of the novels' protagonist – Flem Snopes, as illustrated in the table below.

The Hamlet	*The Town*	*The Mansion*
Flem -> Eula	Flem-> the Jefferson town	Flem -> Linda
Flem <- Mink ->Jack Houston	Flem -> Eula	Flem <-Mink
	Flem <- Mink (Mink in prison)	

The above diagram uses arrows to indicate the most important relations between the trilogy's protagonist and other characters. Briefly, it can be observed that all three novels are centered on confrontations, for example, the opposition between Flem and Mink, or the opposition between Flem and the Jeffersonians. Moreover, it must also be highlighted that *The Town* repeats some of the events described previously in greater detail in *The Hamlet.* Similarly, *The Mansion* repeats events from the previous two parts of the trilogy. Thus, to take an example from the opening paragraph of *The Mansion* (p. 681)*,* we have an exact quotation from the trial of Mink as it is described towards the end of *The Hamlet.* As Irving Howe observes: "*The Mansion* begins with a retracing of material that had largely appeared in *The Hamlet* but treats it in radically different terms."[17] In *The Hamlet*, the reader meets Flem Snopes at the beginning of his career in Jefferson. In *The Mansion*, the reader observes the downfall of Flem Snopes with retrospective references to his origins.

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[14] Ireland (2001), p. 29. Robert L. Kellog and Robert E. Scholes, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 209.

[15] David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative*. (Oxford: Willey-Blackwell, 2009), p. 193.

[16] David Herman (2009), *Basic Elements of Narrative,* p. 193.

[17] Howe (1991), *William Faulkner: A Critical Study,* p. 111.

The plot structure in *The Snopes Trilogy* corroborates Chekhov's dramatic principle of the gun.[18] Granted that Mink is going to kill the novel's protagonist in the last part of the trilogy, once Mink is introduced in *The Hamlet,* the suspense is maintained throughout the entire trilogy. At the start of the Trilogy, Mink has been sentenced to life in prison and vows revenge on his cousin – Flem Snopes – for not helping him while on trial. Mink's outrage at Flem is 'the motor of plot dynamics throughout *The Trilogy.* As Howe explains: "Imprisoned for Houston's murder, Mink assumes that cousin Flem will rescue him, since for Mink, as for all the Snopses, Flem is the agent, the connection between their clan and the outer world."[19] However, while Mink was in prison awaiting trial, Flem was on his honeymoon in Texas with Eula. Flem's honeymoon lasted over a year because he wanted to conceal the story behind his marriage: the fact that Eula was pregnant but Flem was not the father of her child. While Mink is imprisoned, Flem aimed at the realization of his dream of power, wealth, and respectability through this marriage. In the final part, when Flem is at the peak of his power and the height of his respectability; Mink is released from Parchman prison, still wanting to kill himfor not showing up at the trial. Thus *The Hamlet* and *The Mansion* are connected on a simple a/chronological plot line in *The Town* based on logical causal connection.[20]

6.2. *The Snopes Trilogy* as a sequential narrative.

Before I turn to the Aristotelian definition of narrative and its permutations in this section, I would like to refer again to Minter, who identifies four possible kinds of narrative units: the work as a whole; division into chapters or other parts; larger groupings of such chapters or parts; and subchapter units.[21] The author supplies the first two kinds and the latter two are a matter of the reader's interpretation.[22] As Barthes puts it: "a sense of narrative completeness cannot be a property of any action sequence; it is a function of reading, an interpretive fiction."[23] Barthes further explains: "The proairetic sequence is never more than the result of an artifice of reading: whoever reads the text amasses certain data under some generic titles for actions (stroll, murder, rendezvous), and this title embodies the sequence; the sequence exists when and because it can be given a name, it unfolds as this process of coming takes place, as a title is sought or confirmed."[24] Narrative is defined by Barthes

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[18] Chekhov, letter to Aleksandr Semenovich Lazarev, 1 November 1889.

[19] Howe (1991), *William Faulkner: A Critical Study,* p. 112.

[20] See also Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*. (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 5

[21] Minter cited in Ireland (2001), *The Sequential Dynamics of Narrative: Energies at the Margins of Fiction,* p. 32. Minter (1990), *William Faulkner: His Life and Work,* p. 179.

[22] Ibidem.

[23] Michal Peled Ginsburg, (review) 'Narrative as Theme: Studies in French Fiction by Gerald Prince; Narrative Exchanges by Ian Reid; Narratives of Transmission by Bernard Duyfhuizen,' *Poetics Today*, Vol. 18. No. 4. (Winter 1997), 571-588 (p. 580). See also Harvey (1965), p. 112. And Harvey cited in Ireland (2001), p. 29 Harvey claims: the reader's experience of fiction is inescapably sequential.'

[24] Barthes cited in Ginsburg (1997), 'Narrative as Theme,' p. 580. Roland Barthes, *S/Z.* (Blackwell Publishing: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., 1974), p. 19.

as "a sequential representation of a sequence of events."[25] Prince offers a more suggestive definition of narrative as "a representation of at least two events, or of a state and an event that alters it."[26] Thus, as Prince argues, the distinctive feature of narrative is change. What is important, according to Prince, is the correlation between the events and the change that the transformation from one event to another indicates. As Prince puts it, "narrative's most distinctive feature [is] that it represents a situation that from a given time to a later time undergoes change."[27] However, as Sternberg (like Barthes) emphasizes, it is necessary to make a distinction between the chronological nature of plot and the conceptual nature of the interpretative process as undertaken by the reader. First of all, Sternberg concentrates on the way in which the events are reported to have occurred, which readers (listeners, viewers) with narrative competence construct in response to the information they are given. Secondly, Sternberg shows how readers perceive incrementally, segment by segment. [28] Accordingly, to interpret the function of an event, one must either know something about its consequences or causes. [29] Narratives impart information sequentially and are perceived sequentially.[30] What is meant sequentially is the represented event in relation to specific prior or subsequent events. [31] Kafalenos usefully defines narrative as "a sequential representation of

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[25] Barthes (1974), S/Z, p. 6. Barthes cited in Kafalenos, p. 155.

[26] Prince cited in Emma Kafalenos, *Narrative Causalities.* (The Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 2006), p. 159. Gerard Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology* (University of Nebraska Press, 2003), pp. 58-59. Cf. also Prince "Revisiting Narrativity," p. 43. "Narrative has been defined as the representation of at least one event". Prince cited in Rudrum, p. 195. Also, Prince claims: "Narrative may be defined as the representation of real or fictive events and situations in a time sequence." Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative.* (Berlin, New York: Mouton, 1982), p. 1. And "Narrative is the representation of at least two real or fictive events in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other." Prince, *Narratology*, p. 4. See also Ireland (2001), p. 27. Prince (1989), p. 58.

[27] Prince cited in Kafalenos, p. 159. Prince (2003), *Dictionary of narratology,* pp. 58-59. Cf. Prince, "Revisiting Narrativity", p. 43. "Narrative has been defined as the representation of at least one event". Prince cited in Rudrum, And "Narrative may be defined as the representation of real or fictive events and situations in a time sequence." David Rudrum, "Narrative Representation to Narrative Use: Towards the Limits of Definition.", Narrative, Vol. 13, No. 2 (May 2005), 195-204 (p. 195). Prince, Narratology, p. 1. And "Narrative is the representation of at least two real or fictive events in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other." Narratology 4. For the latter definition by prince see also Ireland (2001), p. 27. And Prince (1989), p. 58.

[28] Kafalenos Emma, *Narrative Causalities.* (The Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 2006), p. 2. Ch. 1. "Reading Narrative Causalities: Functions and Functional Polyvalence." Sternberg cited in Kafalenos, p. 158. Meir Sternberg, "How Narrativity Makes a Difference," *Narrative* 9 (2001), 115-22 (p. 117).

[29] Sternberg cited in Kafalenos, p. 158.

[30] Ibidem, p. 146-7. Cf. Lévinas in "Losing Spirit: Hegel, Lévinas, and the Limits of Narrative," *Narrative,* Vol. 13. No. 2. (May 2005), 182-194. (p. 189). According to Lévinas, it is only by gathering the scattered moments of experience into the unity of a tale or story that the 'narrating' and 'thematizing' consciousness comes to know itself and the world. Or "Narrative captures the world in a global proposition, a said, a great present of synopsis in which Being shines in all its radiance." Emmanuel Lévinas*, Otherwise than Being, or, Beyond Essense.* (Kluwer Academic Publisher, 1999)*,* p. 134.

[31] Sternberg cited in Kafalenos, p. 159.

sequential events."[32] As readers, we construct narratives by chronologically ordering the events in the narrative.[33] Such a sequential ordering of events, as re-established by the reader, Kafalenos calls a 'fabula' in line with Russian formalist practice.[34] Bal defines a fabula as: "A series of logically and chronologically related events."[35] What is of most importance here is that sequence is a logical concept: [36] As this suggests, it is possible for a reader to establish the chronology of events – even if the order of events as represented is not at all sequential. [37] Thus, Richardson argues that chronological and causal connections are not always interrelated.[38] Similarly, Welsh contends that not every narrative shows indications of causality.

The assumption behind Welsh's theory is that if the reader's attempts to create fabula are unsuccessful, the reader will sooner or later (rather sooner than later) lose interest in the given narrative.[39] According to Prince, this can be explained by the fact that just as not every narrative includes indications of causality, not every narrative is high in narrativity.[40] What Prince means by narrativity is "the degree to which that narrative fulfills a receiver's desire."[41] Building on the work of Marie-Laure Ryan, for whom narrativity arises in a network of relations between the different parts of narrative, Prince argues that the concept of narrativity has to do with the dynamics of "general narrative configuration."[42] For Sternberg, narrativity is specifically "an effect of the interplay" between "the representation and the fabula."[43] Here Sternberg makes a clear distinction between the cognitive processes involved: "prospection," "retrospection," and "recognition." [44] Sternberg defines prospection as what is yet to happen in the narrative, and, retrospection and recognition as what has already happened in the narrative.[45] All three processes are indispensable to construct a chronology of the fabula.

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[32] Cf Genette cited in Rudrum, "Narrative Representation to Narrative Use: Towards the Limits of Definition.", 195. "One will define narrative without difficulty as the representation of an event or sequence of events., p. 127. See also Scholes cited in Rudrum, p.205.

[33] Emma Kafalenos, *Narrative causalities*. (Ohio State University Press, 2015), p. 15.

[34] Ibidem, pp. 15. and p. 27. Cf. definition of narrative by William Labov and Joshua Waletzky cited in William Nelles, *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative.* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 105. Waletzky and Labov, p. 28. "Only sequence of clauses which contains at least once temporal junction is a narrative." A minimal story thus is, "He made some money, then he spent some."

[35] Bal cited in Rudrum, p. 196. Bal, p. 5.

[36] Ibidem.

[37] Ibidem.

[38] *Narratology,* ed. By Susana Onega and Jose Angel-Garcia Landa (New York: Longman Publishing, 1996), p. 218.

[39] Ibidem.

[40] Prince cited in Kafalenos, *Narrative causalities*, p. 209. Prince, *Dictionary of narratology*, p. 65.

[41] Ibidem.

[42] Prince cited in Rudrum, p. 198. Prince, "Revising Narrativity," p. 48.

[43] Sternberg cited in Kafalenos, p. 209. Meir Sternberg, "How Narrativity Makes a Difference.", *Narrative* (2001), 115-22 (p. 117).

[44] Ibidem.

[45] Kafalenos, p. 209.

What is surprising in this accountis that a chronological fabula does not necessarily reveal causal relations.[46] As Kafalenos argues, one of the possible ways in which narratives satisfy the reader's need for narrativity is by revealing cause-and-effect relations.[47] In other words, any narrative should put forward an explanation of the way one event follows another.[48] However, in a sequential narrative as in life, some information is always yet to be obtained. Furthermore, some information will never be able to be obtained. As Kafalenos points out, in analyzing narrative a clear distinction needs to be drawn between 'temporarily deferred' and 'permanently suppressed' information.[49] Thus, in *The Snopes Trilogy,* the reader knows that Flem has married   an already pregnant Eula (and the child is definitely not his) in order to gain the Old Frenchman Place, the piece of land old Varner would have never got rid of otherwise. However, the reader cannot tell for sure whether Flem knows about Eula's affair with General de Spain and her use of sex to gain him positions, starting from superintendant of the power plant to a banker and a reverend. Kafalenos also shows very clearly that understanding fabula as a construct that readers make opens the possibility of comparing how we create causal sequences in response to narrative.[50] Because fabula (in this view) is conceived as finite ('a finite set of events'), it can be assumed to be available as a totality for analysis.[51]

Kafalenos's observations pertain to the various interpretative and formative processes that the reader undergoes while working on the text. The major presupposition here is that fabulae are developed in response to new information. Kafalenos's analysis of the sequential nature of narrative clearly takes origin in Mink's definition of comprehension and cognition as "an individual act of seeing-things-together."[52] To help to clarify this remark, Mink proposes another more precise definition of cognition, as "a grasping in a single act, or in a cumulative series of acts, the complicated relationships of parts which can be experienced only seriatim."[53] As Mink suggests, there are three fundamental modes of comprehension.[54] The mode that is most relevant to interpreting events in a narrative is configurational. What Mink successfully demonstrates with this fact is that "a number of things may be comprehended as elements in a single and concrete complex of relationships, for example, as 'a particular configuration of events."[55] Mink's philosophical conception of how we understand

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[46] Ibidem.

[47] Ibidem. Cf. Prince's definition of narrative as "the representation of at least two real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other." Prince cited in Peter J. Rabinowitz ,*Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation.,* Ch. 4. "The Black Cloud on the Horizon: Rules on Configuration." (Columbus: Ohio State University Press 1990), p. 117.

[48] Ibidem.

[49] Kafalenos, *Narrative causalities*, p. 127.

[50] Ibidem, p. 130

[51] Ibidem, p. 130

[52] Kafalenos, p 131. Mink, p. 548.

[53] Kafalenos, p 131. Mink, p. 548.

[54] Ibidem.

[55] Kafalenos, p. 131. Mink, p. 551.

sequentially perceived events as elements in a configuration has been investigated from a narratological perspective by Kafalenos. Kafalenos is primarily concerned with the question of how events are related to each other in a narrative. Following Barthes, Kafalenos suggests replacing the term 'event' with 'function.' Kafalenos then draws attention to the fact that the function of events is contextual. In other words, the function of events depends on which events are included in the configuration in relation to which it is interpreted.[56] Interpreting an event as a function requires making two decisions: that sets of events are related, and how a given event is related to the other events in the set. Kafalenos demonstrates that whether we are comparing two or more accounts of approximately the same events or comparing the information that the beginning of a narrative gives us with the information we have at a later stage in the process of perception, interpretations of an event depend on the configuration in which the event is perceived and may change in response to new information.[57]

As we move through a narrative, initially we interpret the function of a given event in relation to the configuration of events we know about at the moment that the event is revealed to us. Then when the configuration expands to include information we continue to receive, we reinterpret the function of the given event. Finally, when we reach the end of the narrative and construct a complete configuration – a final fabula – ideally we interpret the function of the given event once again, this time in relation to all the information we have amassed.[58]

6.3. Bremond's 'situation-event-reaction' schemata.

Having dealt with the sequential nature of narrative and sequence as an interpretive act, in this section I will concentrate on Claude Bremond's (1973) model of narrative, which at first glance might seem to be an antithesis to the 'event-in-succession' theory of narrative, as proposed by Aristotle and practised till E.M. Forster.[59] Fludernik suggests that we need to get beyond the 'events-in-succession'Aristotelian narrative schemata to understand the gist of a narrative. Fludernik's major tithesis revolves around the pioneering model developed by Claude Bremond.[60] Bremond examines in succession different stages of the alternative choices the protagonist and other characters make and the reasons behind these choices. In the traditional chronological model, we have a clear view of the starting-points and endpoints of the plot, with the description of logico-chronological development in the middle part of the narrative.[61] A serious limitation of this theory is that, as Fludernik notes, it does not take into consideration the alternative choices that the protagonist might

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[56] Ibidem.
[57] Ibidem.
[58] Ibidem p. 151.
[59] Monika Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 21.
[60] Ibidem.
[61] Ibidem.

take. Fludernik's concern here is to avoid the oversimplification of narrative that a sequential model of narrative might cause.[62] Accordingly, we need to consider the goal-oriented behaviour and activity of the character, and the character's reaction to obstacles encountered on the way to the fulfillment of his aims.[63]

If we adopt Bremond's line of argument for an analysis of *The Snopes Trilogy*, in the foreground of the narrative we clearly see Flem and Mink Snopes and their contradictory life-aims. On the one hand, we have Flem Snopes who consequently step-by-step pursues his goal of respectability and money. Pilkington characterizes Flem's progress in the following way: "He replaces the old Varner system of causal, haphazard bookeeping with a calculating efficiency (...) that never makes a mistake. He buys cheap and sells dear. He gives no credit. He counts the pennies and he takes advantage whenever he can."[64] This is exemplified in Chapter xxx : "He lent me five dollars over two years and all I does, every Saturday night I goes to the store and pays him a dime."[65] Cleanth Brooks writes on stamina and persistence as two characteristic features of Flem by defining Snopesism as "a parasitic vitality as of some low-grade, thoroughly stubborn organism which possesses an "almost selfless ability to keep up the pressure as if it were a kind of elemental force."[66] A similar stubbornness and persistence is shown by Mink Snopes who, while serving his forty-six-year-sentence in Parchmont Prison, concocts his plan to take revenge on Flem by killing him. Neither Flem nor Mink are noble and honest citizens of Jefferson. Flem will stop at nothing on his way to power. Mink seems similarly driven. . Writing about the Snopes family, Anne Hirsch Moffitt writes how Snopes is notorious for "ignoring and exploiting social conventions for the quick and easy profits of economic and personal expediency."[67] In *The Mansion*, we see Flem Snopes at the peak of his powers, having achieved a high social status and wealth:

> (...) at last even Flem seemed to be satisfied: setting now at last in the same chair the presidents of the Merchants and Farmers Bank had been setting in ever since the first one, Colonel Sartoris, started it twenty-odd years ago, and actively living in the very house the second one of it was born in, so that all he needed to do too after he had done locked up the money and went home was to live in solitary peace and quiet and contentment too. (p. 815).

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[62] Bremond cited in Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, p.29.
[63] Ibidem.
[64] Bremond cited in Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, p.29.
[65] P. 70.
[66] Brooks cited in Lance Langdon, "Commodifying Freedom: Horses in *The Hamlet.", The Faulkner Journal,* Vol. XXVI., No. 2. (Fall. 2012), 31-52. Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha County.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p. 222.
[67] Anne Hirsch Moffitt, 'The City Specter: William Faulkner and the Threat of Urban Encroachment.', *The Faulkner Journal. Faulkner and Metropolis.,* Vol. XXVI., No. 1. (Spring 2012), pp. 17-36 (p. 31). See also Lance Langdon, "Commodifying Freedom: Horses in *The Hamlet,*" p. 37.

As this suggests, frequently in *The Snopes Trilogy*, the reader cannot tell what Flem's next move will be since the reader does not know more than the homodiegetic narrators. The only thing the reader knows is that Flem and Mink have clear aims: the former, to build the Snopes' empire in Jefferson town, regardless of codes of moral conduct, and the latter, to kill Flem. The reader also knows that both of them are very persistent in reaching their life-aims.

In *The Mansion*, Charles Mallison describes in minute detail the stages of Flem's life-long enterprise. As Charles suggests, three monuments can symbolize these particular stages in Flem's career: the water tank, the gravestone and the mansion, which correspond accordingly to theft, larceny, fraud, deception, and hypocrisy (p. 859). Charles quotes the tombstone inscription carved in Eula's memory: 'A VIRTUOUS WIFE IS A CROWN TO HER HUSBAND HER CHILDREN RISE AND CALL HER BLESSED.' The pious inscription actually serves to emphasize that Flem lives a lie. On the other side, we have Mink, at the moment when the judge asks Mink to confess to murdering Jack Houston, Mink's thoughts are not on the court but with Flem:

> The jury said 'Guilty' and the Judge said 'Life' but he didn't hear them. He wasn't listening. In fact, he hadn't been able to listen since that first day when the Judge banged his little wooden hammer on the high desk until he, Mink, dragged his gaze back from the far door of the courtroom to see what in the world the man wanted, and he, the Judge, leaned down across the desk hollering: 'You, Snopes! Did you or didn't you kill Jack Houston?' and he, Mink, said, 'Dont bother me now. Cant you see I'm busy?' then turned his own head to look again toward the distant door at the back of the room, himself hollering into, against, across the wall of little wan faces hemming him in: 'Snopes! Flem Snopes! Anybody here that'll go and bring Flem Snopes! I'll pay you – Flem'll pay you!' (p. 681).

Mink gets sent to prison for murder and blames Flem for not showing up in court to help him. Mink then spends 43 years patiently planning revenge on Flem:

> And that was when the rage and the outrage and the injustice and the betrayal must a got unbearable to him, when he decided or realized or whatever it was, that Flem by now must a heard about the killing and was deliberately keeping away from Frenchman's Bend or maybe even all Mississippi so he wouldn't have to help him, get him out of it. Not even despair: just simple anger and outrage: to show Flem Snopes that he never give a durn about him neither. (p. 419).

Later, the reader gets to know that Mink has managed to buy a ten-dollar gun (p. 1028) and, we see Mink approaching Jefferson (p. 1030). In *The Town*, while Mink is awaiting trial, Flem and Eula spend their honeymoon in Texas. When, after a year in Texas, the newly-wed Flem and Eula finally come back to Jefferson, Mink is already in Parchman serving life for murder. Throughout *The Snopes Trilogy*, Mink's life in prison is narrated in parallel with Flem's life in Jefferson. In *The Hamlet,* we heard how Flem steadily makes his way in Jefferson:

Two months later Flem Snopes built a new blacksmith shop in the village. He hired it done, to be sure, but he was there most of the day, watching it going up. This was not only the first of his actions in the village which he was ever seen in physical juxtaposition to, but the first which he not only admitted but affirmed, stating calmly and flatly that he was doing it so that people could get decent work done again. He bought completely new equipment at cost price through the store and hired the young farmer who during the slack of planting and harvesting time had been Trumbull's apprentice. Within a month the new shop had got all the trade which Trumbull had had and three months after that Snopes had sold the new shop – smith clientele and good will and new equipment – to Varner, (…) at which point even Ratliff had lost count of what profit Snopes might have made. (pp. 66-67).

In *The* Town, Charles gives a similarly detailed account of how Flem was taking over most of the businesses in Jefferson, starting from Ratliff's. He repeats the conversation he overheard between Ratliff and Gavin Stevens regarding the events that took place earlier in *The Hamlet*. Accordingly, we hear Ratliff describing in detail the Flem Snopes-related events, starting from the very beginning with Snopes's arrival in Jefferson and his taking out a lease on the Old Frenchman's place (pp. 354-5). We hear Charles repeating what Ratliff had previously told Gavin Stevens about Flem getting married to Varner's already pregnant daughter, Eula, barely five years after Flem's arrival at Jefferson. One of the reasons behind Flem's marriage is finally revealed: Varner wanted to escape scandal at any price (p. 356). However, everybody in Jefferson knew the truth behind this marriage anyway:

That was what he found this time. One day, according to Ratliff, Frenchman's Bend learned that Flem Snopes and Eula Varner had driven across the line into the next county the night before and bought a license and got married; the same day, still according to Ratliff, Frenchman's Bend learned that three young men, three of Eula's old suitors, had left the country suddenly by night too, for Texas it was said, or anyway west, far enough west to be father than Uncle Billy or Jody Varner could have reached if they had needed to try. Then a month later Flem and Eula also departed for Texas (that bourne, Uncle Gavin said, in our time for the implicated, the insolvent or the merely hopeful), to return the next summer with a girl baby a little larger than you would have expected at only three months – (p. 356).

Similarly, it is at last clearly stated that Eula started an affair with de Spain, and how not so long afterward, Flem gained the post of 'the office of the power-plant superintendant:

So when we first saw Mrs. Snopes walking in the Square giving off that terrifying impression that in another second her flesh itself would burn her garments off, leaving not even a veil of ashes between her and the light of day, it seemed to us that we were watching Fate, a fate of which both she and Major de Spain were victims. We didn't know when they met, laid eyes for the first on each other. We didn't need to. In a way, we didn't

want to. We assumed of course that he was slipping her into his house by
some devious means or method at night, but we didn't know either. (…)
We didn't want to know. We were his allies, his confederates;
our whole town was accessory to that cuckolding (…) *The Town* (pp. 362-3).

The people of Jefferson knew the truth behind the marriage and the truth of Eula's affair with Major de Spain from the start. Later, we again are given the chance to listen to the conversation between Ratliff and Gavin Stevens as reported by Charles, and we get to understand that Flem also knew very well about Eula's affair with de Spain (p. 375). Indeed, Ratliff makes it clear that Flem was using his wife and sex to gain posts and power in Jefferson.

In *The Town*, we also see Gavin and Charles observing the thirteen-year-old Linda, Eula's daughter, walking in the town. Gavin hasn't seen Linda for eight years, since Gavin had left Jefferson in 1924 to help Europe recover from war. Gavin suspects that they are now selling Linda's sexual favours for connections. Towards the end of Chapter I , we get to know that Flem has resigned from the post of superintendant of the power plant (p. 375). However, it does not mean that he has withdrawn from the public life of Jefferson. Charles Mallison explains that Flem was taking a break before another stage in his design, having stolen what he wanted at the power plant. It becomes apparent that Flem was stealing copper, which as a superintendant it was his duty to watch (pp. 374-5).

As the next step in his plan, Flem chooses the position of a banker. We now see Flem at the top of the social and political ladder of Jefferson (p. 661). Flem lives in the former de Spain house. Flem is both a banker and a deacon at the Baptist church when Eula commits suicide. The episode of Eula's suicide closes with the Jefferson town attending Eula's funeral (p. 647) and with the town's contempt for de Spain, whose career in Jefferson came to an end because of scandal. Surprisingly, Flem's reputation has not suffered at all in this fatal triangle.

In the preceding paragraphs, I have attempted an application of Bremond's schemata to the analysis of the plot dynamics in *The Snopes Trilogy* through a focus on characters' choices. As a next step, I want to draw again on Fludernik's narratological analyses of the nature of narrative and the important complication to Bremond's schemata offered by Marie-Laure Ryan's (1987) essays on the window-structure of a narrative.[68] Ryan's essay places its accent on what Fludernik names "the dynamic factor in plot architecture."[69] Drawing on Ryan, Fludernik suggests an important idea about the characters' intentions and plans as well as their wishes and hopes, and the effect of these on possible plot development. Fludernik argues that Ryan's model provides a far more complex account

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[68] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* p. 56.
[69] Ibidem.

of a narrative in process than traditional plot analysis would allow: [70] "One of Ryan's many contributions to narrative theory is to show the major role of virtual events in narrative plots."[71] The domain of Ryan's theory is the 'private world' of a character. In this regard, Ryan distinguishes between four major modal types: K (knowledge) – world, W (wish) – world, O (Obligation) – world and I (Intention)- world.[72] In this context it is enough to point to Flem's private world to indicate the mechanisms responsible for plot dynamics in *The Snopes Trilogy* and the conflict at the very heart of the plot. In addition, time in *The Snopes Trilogy* focuses on the personal time of characters: the forty-something years of Flem's and Mink's lives. We can say with Ken Ireland that Faulkner's novels, like the novels of Proust, Joyce, Woolf, and Thomas Mann thematize time, thereby displacing plot, as well as emphasizing inwardness and the activity of individual consciousness.[73] Prince similarly observes that narratives "illuminate temporality and humans as temporal beings."[74] The same holds true for *The Snopes Trilogy*, where the narrative is no longer a question of the plot-development alone but a complex correlation of narratological dynamics and plot dynamics. Branigan defines narrative as: "a perceptual activity that organizes data into a special pattern which represents and explains experience."[75] For Branigan, "narrative is a way of organizing spatial and temporal data into a cause-effect chain of events with a beginning, middle and end that embodies a judgment about the nature of the events as well as demonstrates how it is possible to know, and hence, to narrate, the events."[76] This threefold characterization of narrative turns the Aristotelian concept of narrative into the correlation of plot and narratological dynamics.

In the final chapter, I shall carry out a detailed examination of discourse level, paying particular attention to narratological dynamics in *The Town*. *The Town* offers a good example of a literary text where the Genettian distinction between focalization and narration cannot be neglected. What is more, we should note that establishing the levels of focalization is indispensable for establishing the hierarchy of first-person narrators in *The Snopes Trilogy*.

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[70] Ibidem.

[71] Ryan cited in Hilary P. Dannenberg, 'Ontological Plotting: Narrative as a Multiplicity of Temporal Dimensions,' p. 164. Ryan (1991), p. 156.

[72] Ryan (1991), 110-123. Ryan is building on modal categories suggested by Todorov (1969, 1977) and Dolzezel (1966).

[73] Ken Ireland (2001), *The Sequential Dynamics of Narrative: Energies at the Margines of Fiction.*, pp. 23. and 29.

[74] Prince cited in Ireland, p. 27. Prince (1989), p. 60.

[75] Branigan cited in Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural Narratology.'*, p. 26. Branigan (1992), p. 3.

[76] Branigan (1992), p. 3.

Focalization vs. narration (seeing vs. telling) in   *The Snopes Trilogy.*

This final chapter considers the various strata of focalization in *The Town*, and its narratological consequences for the entire trilogy. The first part of the chapter considers the opposition of narration and focalization. The second part considers *The Snopes Trilogy* in terms of Fludernik's postulated 'we-narrative as a spoken interaction.'[1] This second part also considers the opposition between reflector-characters and teller-characters. The final stage of the analysis consists of a discussion of Ratliff as a focalizer in all three novels and Charles Mallison as a first-person narrator in *The Mansion* and *The Town.* The key aspect of this part of the argument is to establish the hierarchy of narrators in *The Snopes Trilogy*. However, I reserve for the end of this chapter the question of the ideological unity of the Jefferson-town narrator. The working hypothesis underlying the notion of 'we narrative as a spoken interaction' is rooted in the very nature of the collective Jefferson town narrator. In this chapter, In addressing the issue of seeing vs telling, I discuss at greater length witness narrative, dramatized witness narrative, the mechanisms of gossip, and the novelistic phenomena of catechism and carnival.

7.1. Focalization versus narration.

I want to begin, in the following paragraphs, with a historical overview of 'point of view' theories before the Genettian theory of focalization. First of all, I want to emphasize in what way the Genettian distinction between focalization and narration has been revolutionary.[2] Secondly, I want to demonstrate in what way Genette succeeded in making plausible his initial thesis that focalization and narration are two distinct narratological phenomena. Thirdly and lastly, Genette's argument will remain incomplete as long as we have not demonstrated how focalization influences narration.[3] It is crucial therefore to show in what way focalization and narration are interdependent.

Before considering the focalization versus narration opposition, I want to consider the point of view theories that existed before Genette and their limitations. I want to do this by

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[1] The most striking examples of this type of we-narrative can be found in Faulkner's short stories, for example, "That Evening Sun" and "A Rose for Emily."

[2] See John Pier, 'Gerad Genette's Evolving Narrative Poetics,' *Narrative,* 18.1 (2010), 8-18 (p. 9). On focalization see also Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan in Patrick O'Neill, *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory* (University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 84.

[3] See also Paul Dawson, 'The Return of Omniscience in Contemporary Fiction,' *Narrative,* 17.2 (2009), 143-161 (p. 147).

referring to the critics and theorists that Genette cites. As Manfred Jahn pointed out, the major drawback with the point of view approach to narrative is that it does not provide a clear distinction between a whole range of narrative features, such as: "narrational visibility, stance, knowledge, involvement, and rhetoric.' Another problem with these approaches is that they fail to take into account the absence or presence of one or several reflector-characters."[4] Genette considers the account provided by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren (1943) to be the most important among early point of view theories. Brooks and Warren replaced the term 'point of view' with the term "focus of narration."[5] Although focus of narration theory is more comprehensive than other early theories, it suffers from a number of flaws, as presented by Genette in the form of a table, as given below. Genette pointed out the oversimplifications and mistakes in Brook's and Warren's theory.[6]

	Internal analysis of events	Outside observation of events
Narrator a character in the story	Main character tells his story	Minor character tells the main character's story
Narrator not a character in the story	Analytic or omniscient author tells a story	Author tells a story as an observer

Another important early piece of work was by Booth. Booth's essay is devoted to the problems of voice. In this essay, Booth makes the distinction between an implied author and a narrator and divides narrators into dramatized and undramatized, and reliable and unreliable.[7] Genette also refers to Bertil Romberg's 1962-publication[8], in which Romberg proposes four types of narrative: a narrative with an omniscient author, a narrative with a point of view, an objective narrative, and a narrative in the first person. This can be compared with Grimes who distinguishes four basic categories: omniscient viewpoint (zero focalization), first-person participant viewpoint (homodiegetic narrative with internal focalization), third-person

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[4] Manfred Jahn, 'Windows of Focalization: Deconstructing and Reconstructing a Narratological Concept,'*Style,* 30.2 (1996), 241-267 (p. 243).

[5] Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 186. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Fiction* (Prentice-Hall, 1979), p. 589.

[6] See Brooks and Warren cited in Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* p. 186. See also Brooks and Warren cited in Gerald Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology* (University of Nebraska Press, 2003), p. 32.

[7] Booth cited in Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* p. 188.

[8] Bertil Romberg, *Studies in the Narrative Techniques of the First Person Novel* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962).

subjective viewpoint (heterodiegetic narrative with internal focalization), and third-person objective viewpoint (external focalization).[9]

In *Narrative Discourse,* Genette shows that we need to differentiate between who sees in the narrative and who speaks in the narrative[10]. Genette accordingly argues for a clear distinction between narration and focalization:

> [M]ost of the theoretical works on [point of view] suffer from a regrettable confusion between what I call here *mood* and *voice*, a confusion between the question *who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?* and the very different question *who is the narrator?* – or, more simply, the question *who sees?* and the question *who speaks?*[11]

The present stage of narratology owes an immense debt to Genette.[12] Since the publication of *Narrative Discourse*, a great deal of narratological research has been conducted on focalization.[13] Genette himself has remarked, "My study of focalizations has caused much ink

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[9] Grimes (1975) cited in Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology,* p. 102.

[10] Particularly ch-s. 4 and 5.

[11] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 185-56. See also Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 101. See also Genette cited in William Nelles, 'Getting Focalization into Focus,' *Poetics Today,* 2.2 (1990), p. 366. See also Genette cited in Manfred Jahn, 'Windows of Focalization: Deconstructing and Reconstructing a Narratological Concept,' *Style,* 30.2 (1996), p. 243.

In *Narrative Discourse Revisited* Genette puts the emphasis on cognitive processes involved in focalization and replaces who sees with who perceives. Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 64. See also Genette cited in Manfred Jahn, 'Focalization,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. by David Herman (Cambridge: University Printing House, 2007), p. 97. See also Genette cited in David Herman, *Story Logic,* 'Retrospectives,' *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 301. Cf. Bal, *Narratology*, p. 101. Genette cited in James Phelan, *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 111. Genette cited in Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction* to *Narratology* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 37.

[12] Genette cited in Monika Fludernik, 'Histories of Narrative Theory (II): From Structuralism to the Present,' in *A Companion to Narrative Theory,* ed. by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 36-60 (p. 40). Cf. Bronzwaer who mistakenly attributes this revolutionary achievement to both Genette and Bal. W. Bronzwaer, 'Mieke Bal's Concept of Focalization: A Critical Note,' *Poetics Today,* 2.2 (1981), 193-201 (p. 195). Genette first used the term focalization in his essay "Stendhal" reprinted in *Figures II.* See also Seymour Chatman, 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' *Poetics Today,* 7.2 (1986), 189-204 (p. 192).

[13] Monika Fludernik, 'Mediacy, Mediation, and Focalization: the Squaring of Terminological Circles', in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses,* ed. by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik (The Ohio State University, 2010), 105-36 (p. 105). See the list of publications on focalization in Nelles (1990), 'Getting Focalization into Focus.'

Comprehensive treatments of the concept have been undertaken by Genette (1972, 1983), Mieke Bal (1977, 1981a), Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (1983), Raquel Gutiérrez (1986) and Seymour Chatman (1986). The work of Genette and Bal, in particular, has also lead to several more specifically focused articles which propose theoretical refinements: Bronzwaer (1981), Vitoux (1982), Jost (1983), Briosi (1986), and Edminston (1989). Nelles notes that Genette's interest was mainly in describing two aspects of narrating, with emphasis on the agent who sees. Chatman emphasizes that in Genette's theory of focalization and Bal's and Rimmon-Kenan's modifications to it, there is an insistence that somebody always sees the story.[13]

to flow – no doubt, a little too much."[14] However, in the light of the achievements of recent cognitivist narratology, Genette's theory of focalization seems insufficiently developed. In *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Genette accordingly expresses his regret for not having been clear on the cognitive processes involved in focalization. Interestingly, Seymour Chatman is less critical of Genette's theory of focalization:

> Genette has always seemed to mean more by *focalization* than the mere power of sight. He obviously refers to the whole spectrum of perception: hearing, tasting, smelling, and so on. What is not so clear is the extent to which he means it to refer to other mental activity, like cognition, and to functions other than mental.[15]

Chatman suggests that in English the terms 'focus' and 'focalization' have no specific visual connotations.[16] Here Chatman refers to Rimmon-Kenan's argument that focalization is no longer a question of the visual metaphor alone but of the cognitive, emotive and ideological processes.[17] Nonetheless, Genette's famous distinction between 'who speaks' (the narrator) and 'who sees' (a character) helped to promote narratology as a science, striving for precision of classification.[18]

What remains to be explored is the question of who is the narrator and who is the focalizer in *The Snopes Trilogy*. In the episodic narrative of *The Hamlet*, we have the third person omniscient narrator with all the privileges commonly attributed to an external narrator.[19] For instance, the fact that the third person narrator has free access to the characters thoughts proves his ubiquitous qualities:

> 'I can get along with anybody,' the other said. 'I been getting along with fifteen or twenty different landlords since I started farming. When I cant get

[14] Genette cited in Nelles, 'Getting Focalization into Focus', p. 365. Genette (1988), *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* p. 65. For the most up-to-date discussion see Richard Welsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (The Ohio State University Press, 2007), pp. 175-56. Welsh refers to Fludernik's discussion of the relation between voice and focalization (2001), p 35.

[15] Chatman cited in Nelles (1990), 'Getting Focalization into Focus', p. 366. Chatman in 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' *Poetics Today* 7.2 (1986), p. 192.

[16] Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus', pp. 189-204. For the same opinion see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1983), p. 71.

[17] Rimmon-Kenan cited in Nelles (1990), 'Getting Focalization into Focus', p. 366. Rimmon-Kenan (1983), *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics,* p. 71. Rimmon-Kenan makes the same point in *Narrative Fiction*: "It seems to me that the term 'focalization' is not free of optical-photographic connotations, and like a point of view its purely visual sense has to be broadened to include cognitive, emotive and ideological orientation."

[18] Genette in Monika Fludernik, 'Histories of Narrative Theory (III): From Structuralism to the Present,' in *A Companion to Narrative Theory,* ed. by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz, p. 40. Also refers to Bal's introduced term 'focalizer' in Bal (1997), pp. 146-9.

[19] See also Owen Robinson, 'Reflections on Language and Narrative' in *A Companion to William Faulkner,* ed. by Richard C. Mooreland (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 115-32 (p. 123).

along with them, I leave. That all you wanted?' All, Varner thought. All. He rode back across the yard; the littered grassless desolation scarred with the ashes and charred stick-ends and blackened bricks where pots for washing clothes and scalding hogs had sat. I wish I never had to have but just the little I do want now, he thought. He had been hearing the well-pulley again (p. 152).

Here the omniscient narrator knows what Varner's thoughts are. Similarly, the omniscient narrator manifests his power by allowing the reader access to what Varner thinks of Flem. Alternatively, to take another example, the third person omniscient narrator permits the reader access to Ratcliff's feeling of surprise upon receiving information about Varner selling the Old Frenchman's place, something that he would have never considered before:

The horse came up and stopped, apparently of its own accord, beside the buckboard in which Ratliff sat neat, decorous, and gave like a caller in a house of death. 'You must have been desperate,' he said quietly. He meant no insult. He was even not thinking of Varner's daughter's shame or of his daughter at all. He meant the land, the Old Frenchman place. He had never for one moment believed that it had no value. He might haver believed this if anyone else had owned it. But the very fact that Varner had ever come into possession of it and still kept it, apparently making no effort to sell it or do anything else with it, apparently making no effort to sell it or do anything else with it, was proof enough for him. He declined to believe that Varner ever had been or ever would be stuck with anything; that he acquired it, he got cheaper than anyone else could have, and if he kept it, it was too valuable to sell. In the case of the Old Frenchman place he could not see why this was so, but the fact that Varner had brought it and still had it was sufficient. So when Varner finally did let it go, Ratliff believed it was because Varner had at last got the price for which he had been holding it for twenty years, or at least some sufficient price (…) (p. 151).

From the opening pages of the trilogy, however, the third-person omniscient narrator also builds the tension by withholding information regarding Flem – the newcomer to Jefferson. First, we get a description of the Old Frenchman's Place. Then, we get a detailed description of its past and present owners, with the emphasis on its first owner, a foreigner commonly known by the nickname Frenchman, and its exact location and description as a pre-war plantation. Like the omniscient narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!,* the omniscient narrator in *The Hamlet* also frequently simultaneously offers and withholds information by pretending uncertainty: "Perhaps he did not comprehend that she was in her stable, in any stable, but only that she had stopped at last, ceased to flee at last, because at once he stopped the alarmed and urgent moaning and followed her into the shed, speaking to her again, murmurous, drooling, and touched her with his hand" (p. 161). The main weakness of the

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many previous accounts of the homodiegetic narrators in *The Town* stems from lack of discrimination between focalization and narration. Thus, for example, David H. Evans gives Ratliff as the primary narrator, not Charles Mallison.[20] I share the view of David Minter on the role of Ratliff, which he sums up succinctly as: "Flem the principal actor and Ratliff, the principal watcher."[21] For example, at one point we hear Charles repeating what Gavin told him and what the latter knew from Ratliff (*The* Town, p. 367). Here Ratliff uses gossip as the source of information. As in many of Faulkner's narratives, Ratliff uses gossip as his source of information, and Charles uses Ratliff as the primary source of his information on Flem. Focalization involves cognition and evaluation and all the processes connected with the two. Ratliff who is the focalizer in *The Town* is a secondary narrator in *The Town* and *The Mansion*. Thus, in *The Town,* we hear Ratliff telling the Snopes family story:

> Ratliff was how we first began to learn about Snopes. Or rather, Snopses. No, that's wrong: there had been a Snopes in Colonel Sartoris's
> cavalry command in 1861 in that part of it whose occupation had been raiding Yankee picket-lines for horses. Only this time it was a Confederate picket which caught him – that Snopes – raiding a Confederate horse-line and, it was believed, hung him. Which was evidently wrong too, since (Ratliff told Uncle Gavin) about ten years ago
> Flem and an old man who seemed to be his father appeared suddenly from nowhere one day and rented a little farm from Mr Will Varner who just about owned the whole settlement and district called Frenchman's Bend (…) (pp. 354-5).

The breadth of Ratliff's knowledge regarding Jefferson town and Yoknapatawpha county stories has no equal. It is through Ratliff's eyes we see how Flem Snopes climbs the social ladder of Jefferson. Because the primary narrator of *The Snopes Trilogy* – Charles Mallison – has not been born when the events described in *The Hamlet* take place, we have Ratliff as a primary focalizer in all three novels. Charles has no other choice but to rely on Ratliff's account. In *The Town,* the events that took place in *The Hamlet* are described again in detail. However, in *The Town,* the third-person omniscient narrator gives way to the three homodiegetic narrators: Charles, Ratliff, and Gavin Stevens. We can compare their use with Bakhtin's account of Dostoevsky's narrators:

> They engage in polemics with characters, they learn from them, their opinions they try to further to an accomplished system of thoughts. The character is ideologically autocratic and independent, he is perceived as the author of his fully valid ideologue and not as an object of a finalized vision of Dostoevsky.

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[20] David H. Evans, 'Reading Faulkner Pragmatically: *The Hamlet*', in *Teaching Faulkner: Approaches and Methods,* ed. by Stephen Hahn and Robert W. Hamblin (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), pp. 127-128.

[21] David Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 181.

> For literary critic primary fully-valid intentions of character's words destroy the monologic plane of the novel and calls for a direct response as if a character would no longer be an object of an authorial word, but a bearer of his fully-valid own word, having equal rights in the narrative as the authorial voice does.[22]

The three homodiegetic narrators take their turn to describe the events relating to Flem Snopes, with Charles as the primary homodiegetic narrator. More to the point, all three narrators are also focalizers. However, focalization and narration never happen simultaneously.

Fludernik explains that focalization on the story level – i.e., one character observing another – does not properly belong to macro-focalization. Fludernik explains that: "Macro-level focalization is the focalization of an entire text; micro-focalization is the small-scale management of the plot function."[23] If we want to make sense of *The Snopes Trilogy* as a sequential and continuous narrative, we have to admit the Genettian concept of focalization as a foundation for narration and an indispensable part of it. However, to do so, we also need to differentiate between focalization and narration as two phenomena. Herman observes that in the broadly structural tradition of narrative poetics that can be traced back to Barthes, Bremond, Todorov, and Genette, and through the more recent work of Bal and Rimmon-Kenan, the concept of 'focalization' has figured as an important tool for narratological analysis. For the researchers just named, focalization, historically and conceptually related to earlier terms like 'point of view,' and 'perspective,' pertains to the elaboration of the narrative as opposed to the contents of the narrated; the form of the discourse as opposed to the substance of the story.[24]

7.2. Focalization: definition and classification.

As we have already noted in the preceding chapters, Genette identifies three levels of narrative: narration, discourse, and story. Analogous to these, he postulates three categories in which the relation between the three levels can be classified: voice, tense and mode.[25]

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[22] "С героями полемизируют, у героев учатся, их воззрения пытаются доразвить до законченной системы. Герой идеологически авторитарен и самостоятелен, он воспринимается как автор собственной полновесной идеологемы. А не как объект завершающего художественного видения Достоевского. Для сознания критиков прямая полновесная интернациональность слов героя размыкает монологическую плоскость романа и вызывает на непосредственный ответ как если бы герой был не объектом авторского слова, а полноценным и полноправным носителем собственного слова."

[23] Monika Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology.,* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 344.

[24] David Herman, 'Hypothetical Focalization,' *Narrative*, Vol. 2., No. 3. (October 1994), 230-253 (p. 230).

[25] Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 98.

Genette makes the first distinction between voice and mode[26]: Voice is concerned with 'who speaks' and the mode with 'who sees.'[27] I agree with Fludernik that, in the classical models of Genette and Bal, focalization is somehow positioned as a process applying between the story and discourse level of narrative.[28] Genette himself explains that, in narratology, the terms focalization and narration separate two processes that appear compounded. Accordingly, Genette defines focalization as the perspective from which the narrated events are presented; this perspective is typically that of one or more individuals located at a particular point in space.[29] More helpfully, Kafalenos points out that the voice is the source of the words we read (a narrator); the focalization is the source of the perceptions and conceptions (the character whose perceptions and resulting conceptions the voice reports).[30] Kafalenos here refers to Gerald Prince's definition of focalization as "[T]h perspective in terms of which the narrated situations and events are presented; the perceptual or conceptual position in terms of which the narrated situations and events are rendered."[31] Kafelenos then argues that Genette's idea of subdividing perspective into its components, voice, and focalization, is particularly useful in two narrative situations:

(1) in narratives like "The Assignation," in which the words (the voice) and the perceptions and conceptions (the focalization) are those of the same character (the narrator) but at different times in his lifespan;

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[26] Cf. Stanzel's model and the comparison of his model to Genette's model in Frank K. Stanzel, *A Theory of Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 114. Ch.5. 'The opposition perspective: internal perspective – external perspective.' For Stanzel, the Genettian distinction between focalization and the question 'who sees' and narration as 'who speaks' in narrative concerns rather voice and mood than anything else. Stanzel's most recognized student and narratologist compares and contrasts Stanzel's and Genette's models. Fludernik comes to several conclusions. Firstly, theoretically, focalization and mediacy clash in their role as representatives of Genette's versus Stanzel's models. Focalization is a term invented by Genette, whereas Stanzel's three narrative situations combine different types of storytelling (or narration) with varying kinds of focalization (perspective). Stanzel also distinguishes between perspective and mode, both of which have affinities with the point of view or focalization. Fludernik, in *Postclassical* Narratology: Approaches and Methods, ed. by Alber and Fludernik, p. 105.

[27] Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology.* Ch. 9. Narrative Typologies. p.98.

[28] Fludernik in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses,* p. 105. Fludernik refers to Chatman (1986), p. 22 and Bal (1985), p. 50.

[29] Genette (1980), *Narrative Discourse,* p. 108.

[30] Emma Kafalenos, *Narrative Causalities* (The Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 2006), pp. 210-211.

[31] Prince cited in Kafaleonos (2006), *Narrative Causalities,* p. 211. Prince (2003), *Dictionary of Narratology,* p. 31. Prince cited in David Herman (1984), *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative,* p. 409.

(2) in narratives like many of Henry James's in which one character's perceptions and conceptions (focalization) are represented in the words of someone else – in James's case, a narrator who is not the focalizer.[32]

Genette claims that focalization is essentially a restriction.[33] He explains:

> So by focalization I certainly mean a restriction of 'field' – actually, that is a selection of narrative information. The instrument of this possible selection is a *situated focus,* a sort of information – a conveying pipe that allows passage only of information that is authorized by the situation. In internal focalization, the focus coincides with a character that then becomes the fictive 'subject' of all the perception, including those that concern himself as an object.[34]

This means that, in an internally focalized passage of text, our access to the fictional world is limited in a particular way. To put this in another way, in an internally focalized narrative, the reader's access to the fictional world occurs through the focalizer's point of view.[35] Revealing the reasons behind these restrictions, Genette gives the "focalizer's spatiotemporal position" in the narrative and "personal characteristics that guide them to attend more closely to some events than to others."[36] This observation can be associated in turn with the restriction imposed on a homodiegetic narrator by the degree of his/her/its embodiment. Here we need to take into consideration the three kinds of focalization as defined by Genette: zero or non-focalization, internal and external focalization.[37] As Genette puts it: "The only question to be resolved in the determination of focalization is how much the narrator tells the narratee about the story in relation to the characters' knowledge about the story." This is why Genette speaks of focalization as the "relation between the narrator's report and the characters' knowledge." Consequently, we need to take into consideration three types of narrative. The first type is a narrative with an omniscient narrator. Pouillon and Todorov have symbolized this type of narrative by the formula Narrator > Character.[38] In this type of narrative, the narrator knows more than the character, or, more precisely, says more than any of the characters knows. In

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[32] Ibidem.

[33] Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* p. 192. Genette cited in Tobias Klauk, Tilmann Koeppe, and Edgar Onega, 'The Pragmatics of Internal Focalization,' *Style,* Vol. 46., No. 2. (Summer 2012), 229-246 (p. 230).

[34] Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* p. 74. Genette in Tobias Klauk, Tilman Köeppe, and Edgar Onega, 'The Pragmatics of Internal Focalization,' p. 230.

[35] Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* p. 74. Genette in Tobias Klauk, Tilman Köeppe, and Edgar Onega, 'The Pragmatics of Internal Focalization,' p. 230.

[36] Emma Kafelanos, *Narrative Causalities,* p. 147.

[37] See Genette cited in Dorrit Cohn, 'The Encirclement of Narrative: On Franz Stanzel's *Theorie des Erzahlens,' Poetics Today,* Vol. 2, No. 2. Narratology III: Narration and Perspective in Fiction (Winter, 1981), 157-182 (p. 175). See Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* pp. 188-9. See Genette cited in Nelles (1990), 'Getting Focalization into Focus,' p. 366. See also Genette cited in Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration,* p. 111. See also Genette cited in Herman (1984), *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative,* Ch. 8 "Perspectives," p. 304.

[38] Ibidem.

the second type of narrative, the narrator says only what a given character knows. Pouillon and Todorov use in this case the equation, Narrator = Character. This is the narrative with 'point of view' or with 'restricted field.' In the third type of narrative, the narrator says less then the character knows, as denoted by the formula Narrator < Character. This is the 'objective' or 'behaviorist' narrative, what Pouillon calls 'vision from without.'[39]

Focalization is the perspective from which the narrated events are presented. As suggested above, this perspective is typically that of one or more characters located at a particular point in space.[40] Genette writes of the first type of narrative as non-focalized narrative, or narrative with zero focalization, represented by the classical narrative. Genette divides the second type – narrative with internal focalization – into three subcategories:

(1) the fixed canonical type, e.g., *The Ambassadors,* where everything passes through Strether

(2) the variable, as in *Madame Bovary,* where the focal character is first Charles, then Emma, then again Charles

(3) the multiple – as in epistolary novels, where the same event may be evoked several times, e.g. Robert Browning's narrative poem *The Ring and the Book.*[41]

According to the definition inherited from Todorov, internal focalization concerns "what the character knows."[42] Accordingly, in Genette, internal focalization includes the character's thoughts and perceptions.[43] Other narratologists went further, including also attitude and cultural, moral, and ideological orientation.[44] Rimmon-Kenan broadens the debate to include perceptual (spatial and temporal), psychological (cognitive and emotive) and ideological facets, which may concur, but may also belong to different focalizers.[45] In fact, as Genette argues, it is difficult to find entirely pure examples of any of the three types of focalization.[46]

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[39] Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* pp. 188-89. See Genette cited in Nelles (1990), 'Getting Focalization into Focus,' p. 367. See Genette (1980), *Narrative Discourse,* pp. 206-7. See also Genette cited in Cohn (1981), 'The Encirclement of Narrative,' p. 175.

[40] David Herman, 'Narrative Worlds: Space, Setting, Perspective.' in Herman, James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Brian Richardson, and Robyn Warhol, *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates.* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012), pp. 98-103 (p. 108). Also, Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology,* p. 98.

[41] Gennette, *Narrative Discourse,* p. 189-90. Genette cited in Jahn, 'Windows of Focalization: Deconstructing and Reconstructing a Narratological Concept,' p. 244.

[42] Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* p. 189. Genette cited in Jahn, 'Windows of Focalization,' p. 244.

[43] Genette, Narrative Discourse, p. 192. Genette cited in Jahn, 'Windows of Focalization,' p. 244.

[44] Rimmon-Kenan (1983), *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics,* p. 71. Rimmon-Kenan cited in Jahn, 'Windows of Focalization,' p. 244. Rimmon-Kenan cited in Ken Ireland, *The Sequential Dynamics of Narrative: Energies at the Margins of Fiction.* (London: Associated University Press, 2001), pp. 77-78. Kennan (1983), *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics,* pp. 77-82.

[45] Ibidem.

[46] Genette cited in Nelles (1990), 'Getting Focalization into Focus,' p. 371. Genette (1988), *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* p. 74. Genette (1983), *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method,* p. 49.

Genette has explicitly recognized this regarding the category of zero (free) focalization: "[T]he right formula would be: zero focalization = variable, and sometimes zero, focalization. Here as elsewhere, the choice is purely operational."[47] Nelles notes that despite his occasional lapses into the visual metaphor, Genette has consistently maintained this analysis:

> It was never anything but a reformulation, whose main advantage was to draw together and systematize such standard ideas as 'narrative with an omniscient narrator' or 'vision from behind' (zero focalization); 'narrative with point of view, reflector, selective omniscience, restriction of field' or 'vision with' (internal focalization); or, 'objective, behaviourist technique' or 'vision from without' (external focalization).[48]

Phelan contends that, although Genette's taxonomy maintains the separation between 'who sees' and 'who speaks,' it involves a different conflation than between 'who sees' and 'what (or how much) is seen.'[49] Accordingly, Phelan argues that Genette would have done better by working out a typology of possible relations between speaker and perceiver.[50] Phelan notes that some narratologists, including Seymour Chatman and Gerald Prince, resist the idea that both characters and narrators can be focalizers because that idea violates the logic of the story/discourse distinction, which locates characters in story and narrators in discourse.[51] More specifically, the distinction says that characters perceive, think, act, and feel but narrators only report. [52] The major weakness of this argument is the failure to address how the narrator's account becomes influenced by focalization and the focalizer's perspective. More to the point, the narrator may comment on the focalizer's perspective. For example, in *The Town,* Charles reports the conversations that took place between Gavin and Ratliff (pp. 362-64). In this way, Ratliff and Gavin become focalizers and Charles, a primary first-person narrator. It must be conceded, then, that Charles is a primary narrator because he never acts as a focalizer in another homodiegetic narrator's account but the omniscient narrator's.

In what I have said so far, the distinction between the narrator and focalizer is crucial.[53] Bal, however, uses the term 'focalizer' to refer to the character, not to the narrator.

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[47] Ibidem. Genette cited in Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology*., p. 38. See also Genette cited in Nelles, 'Getting Focaliztion into Focus,' p. 371. Genette (1988), *Narrative Discourse Revisited ,* *p.74.* Genette (1983), *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method,* p. 49.

[48] Genette cited in Nelles (1990), 'Getting Focalization into Focus,' p. 367. Genette (1988), *Narrative Discourse Revisited.,*pp. 65-66 and Genette, (1983), *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* p. 44. Also, Genette cited in Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology*, pp. 37-38, p. 153.

[49] Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration,* p. 111.

[50] Ibidem.

[51] Ibidem, pp. 111-12.

[52] Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration,* p. 111-112.

[53] Mieke Bal (2009), *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative,* p. 19.

For him, 'a focalizer' is 'an instrument or device for focalizing.'[54] Bal purports to explain his contribution to the Genettian theory of focalization on the premise that "narration tends to imply focalization is related to the notion that language shapes vision and worldview, rather than the other way around."[55] For Bal, the focalizer is an aspect of the story the narrator tells.[56] In the following sections, I will look at focalization as an indispensable component of narration. Indeed, I will argue that focalization helps to establish the hierarchy of homodiegetic narrators in *The Snopes Trilogy*. I will, accordingly, develop a complementary thesis to Bal's principle, namely that, the "focalizer is frequently a major informant that the narrator has at his disposal and therefore a primary source of knowledge of the story world." In Bal's theory, focalization does not only refer to the actual process of seeing or observing, which can only take place in a situation of spatiotemporal proximity of focalized and focalized object, but also to such processes as thinking, deliberating, judging and in particular, remembering.[57] Bronzwaer names these two types of narration: physical and psychological.[58]

7.3. Levels of Focalization.

In this section, I would like to examine in its own right Bal's concept of 'a narrator-focalizer.' Much of the current debate on focalization revolves around Bal's introduced term of 'a narrator-focalizer' as a narrator who sees and all the questions underlying it.[59] Bal is even more committed than Genette to the idea that focalization always occurs, that someone always sees the events in the story.[60] One question that needs to be asked, however, is what happens in the case of narratives in which none of the characters act as a focalizer. Bal comes up with a solution to this narratological paradox, arguing that in these cases the function of focalizer must be performed by the narrator. Ball calls this type of a narrator the 'focalisateur – narrateur.'[61] However, such an explanation seems to overlook the fact that the narrator

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[54] Bal cited in Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 199.

[55] Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative,* p. 18.

[56] Ibidem.

[57] Bal cited in Bronzwaer, 'Mieke Bals's Concept of Focalization: A Critical Note,' pp. 196-67. Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative,* p. 37.

[58] Bronzawaer, 'Mieke Bals's Concept of Focalization: A Critical Note,' p. 197.

[59] Bal cited in Phelan and Rabinowitz (2005), *A Companion to Narrative Theory,* pp. 40-42. Bal (1997), pp. 146-9. For examples of analyses of the narratives where the narrator who tells the story is also the focalizer, the character whose perceptions and resulting conceptions readers are permitted to know see Emma Kafalenos (2006), *Narrative Causalities,* Ch. 3. "Nonchronological narration: Poe's 'The Assignation' and Browning's 'My Last Duchess.' Cf. Stanzel's category of the reflector mode protagonist. Stanzel cited in Fludernik, p. 105. In Alber and Fludernik. See also Jahn (1996), 'Windows of Focalization,' p. 241.

[60] For Fludernik's discussion of Genette's and Bal's models see Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology.* p. 102.

[61] Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 195.

resides in the discourse, while the characters reside in the story.[62] The main theoretical premise behind this is that only the characters' 'perspective' is 'from a position within the represented world.' It is clear from the above that the narrator cannot perceive or conceive things in that world. He can only tell or show what happened there, since for him the story world is already 'past' and 'elsewhere.' Chatman has challenged Bal's claim because the narrator reports events in the story world and comments on them *ex-post facto.*[63] Bal also fails to fully acknowledge the significance of the longstanding consequences of the embodiment of the first-person narrator. As Chatman suggests, the narrator's comments are not perceptions of the same order as a character's and should not be confused with them.[64] Even if the narrator is the only focalizer, the moment of focalization and the telling stanza cannot ever be simultaneous since time never stops or regresses and narration as telling a story in time must always be retrospective.[65] The logic of narrative prevents him from inhabiting the story world at the moment that he narrates.[66] Only the characters' 'perspective' is immanent to that world. Accordingly, only they can be filters.[67]

Relying on the logic of narrative, Genette gives the following definition of a focalizer: "Focalized can only be applied to the narrative itself,' and "If focalizer applied to anyone, it could only be the person who focalizes the narrative – that is, the narrator."[68] Accordingly, Genette develops the claim that the only focalization logically implied to the homodiegetic narrator is focalization through this narrator.[69] Charles Mallison and the focalization structure

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[62] Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 195.

[63] Seymour B. Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film.* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 146. Also, Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 194.

[64] Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 194.

[65] Chatman (1990), *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film,* p. 146. Also, Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 194.

[66] Ibidem.

[67] Chatman (1990), *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film,* p. 146.

[68] Genette cited in Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 194 and Genette (1980), *Narrative Discourse.,* p. 205. Genette cited in Chatman (1990), *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, Ch.9. "A New Point of View on 'Point of View,'p . 145. Genette cited in Nelles (1990), 'Getting Focalization into Focus,' p. 368. Genette (1988), *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* p. 73. Phelan argues that Genette's initial taxonomy of focalization, while helpful in many respects, is also flawed, especially in its ability to account for focalization in character narration. Phelan proposes a revised taxonomy, emphasizing, however, that he does not attempt to develop a comprehensive theory of focalization, see Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration,* Ch. III, 'Dual Focalization, Discourse as Story, and Ethics – Lolita,' p. 110.

[69] Genette cited in Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 194 and Genette (1980), *Narrative Discourse,* p. 205. Genette cited in Chatman (1990), *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film,* Ch.9. "A New Point of View on 'Point of View,' p. 145. Genette cited in Nelles (1990), 'Getting Focalization into Focus,' p. 368. Genette (1988), *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* p. 73. Phelan argues that Genette's initial taxonomy of focalization, while helpful in many respects, is also flawed, especially in its ability to account for focalization in character narration.

in *The Snopes Trilogy* is a good example here: Charles as a narrator encompasses all the embedded positions of the other focalizers and himself as a focalizer. However, in order to analyze focalization in *The Snopes Trilogy*, one needs to draw on Bal's innovation to the Genettian theory of focalization.

The debate between Genette and Bal is about the usefulness of expanding the theory, as Bal suggests, to include the following:

(1) a category not just of the 'focalizer' but also of 'the focalized' (the object perceived by the focalizer)

(2) degrees or levels of focalization (in which one character's focalization would be embedded within another's).[70]

Thus, there are three main arguments that can be advanced to support the analysis of focalizations. These are as follows:

(1) What does the character focalize: what is it aimed at?

(2) With what attitude does it view things?

(3) Who focalizes it?[71]

Bal draws two conclusions. Firstly, it appears that various focalization levels can be distinguished. Secondly, where the focalization level is concerned, there is no fundamental difference between a 'first-person narrative' and a 'third-person narrative.' Thus, Bal explains: "When EF [external focalization] seems to 'yield' focalization to a CF [character focalization], what is really happening is that the vision of the CF is being given within the all-encompassing vision of EF. The latter always keeps the focalization in which the focalization of a CF may be embedded as an object."[72] Further, Bal points out that in the so-called 'first-person narrative,' usually the 'I,' grown older, gives the vision of a fabula in which it participated earlier as an actor. At some moments it can present the vision of its younger self so that a CF is focalizing on the second level.[73] Bal argues, therefore the first level of focalization (F1) has the focalizer

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Phelan proposes a revised taxonomy, emphasizing, however, that he does not attempt to develop a comprehensive theory of focalization, see Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It – A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, Ch. 3. "Dual Focalization, Discourse as Story, and Ethics – Lolita," p. 110.

[70] Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It – A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration,* Ch. 3. 'Dual Focalization, Discourse as Story, and Ethics – Lolita,' p. 110. In footnote no 6, Phelan writes that his own views are closer to Bal than Genette's though in practice he finds much more use of the category of focalizer than that of the focalized. Phelan refers the interested reader to Manfred Jahn's excellent essay on Genette's and Bal's concepts of focalization from a cognitivist perspective entitled "Windows of Focalization." Another useful comprehensive account of focalization is offered by David Fitzsimmon's in his 2003-dissertation; "I See, He Says, Perhaps, On Time: Vision, Voice, Hypothetical Narration, and Temporality in William Faulkner's Fiction."

[71] Mieke Bal (2009), *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative,* p. 106.

[72] Ibidem, pp. 111-12.

[73] Ibidem, p. 111.

as external. This external focalizer delegates focalization to an internal focalizer, the focalizer on the second level (F2). In principle, there are more levels possible. There are signs of these levels; Bal gives the name - 'coupling signs' – to these indications of the shift from one level to another, e.g., the verb 'saw.' Signs can be implicit or not.[74]

This is precisely the case in *The Snopes Trilogy* with the narrators/focalizers watching each other. Irving Howe offers a hierarchy of focalizers-narrators in *The Snopes Trilogy:* "For while Gavin is restricted by his own participation in the action, Ratliff's view encompasses him as well. In his turn, Charles broadens to include his observation of both other narrators."[75] Ken Ireland also discusses the link between focalization and narration. Ireland refers to Cohan and Shires (1988), arguing that nowadays focalization has been defined as 'the triadic relation formed by the narrating agent (who narrates), the focalizer (who sees), and the focalized (what is being seen and, thus, narrated).'[76] Ireland points out that the relationship itself is based on 'contiguity (the degree of proximity of narrator to focalizer to focalized), which, in turn, establishes relations of similarity (closeness or consonance) or opposition (distance or dissonance) between those elements, at different points in narration.[77]

What remains to be explored is the time of focalization as opposed to the time of narration. What I want to add comes from Genette, who makes it clear that any narrative involves two time spans: that of the events being reported, and that of the activity of narrating these events.[78] In *Narrative Discourse,* Genette undertakes the analysis of narrative tense, studying such temporal aspects as 'order,' 'duration,' and 'frequency.'[79] For Genette, time of narration versus narrated time is subsumed under duration.[80] Following Margolin, I want to suggest that we need to use these distinctions to get beyond the Genettian distinction between perspective (who sees) and voice (who speaks).[81] Here we need to take into consideration, as Margolin persuasively argues, the distinction between viewing time and speaking time with

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[74] Ibidem.

[75] NB. Howe does not distinguish between homodiegetic narrators and focalizers in *The Snopes Trilogy*. *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (Chicago: Elephant Paperback, 1991), p. 184.

[76] Ibidem.

[77] Cohan and Shires (1988), p. 95. Cohan and Shires in Ken Ireland (2001), *The Sequential Dynamics of Narrative: Energies at the Margins of Fiction*, p. 77.

[78] Uri Margolin, 'Shifted (Displaced) Temporal Perspective in Narrative,' *Narrative,* Vol. 9., No. 2 (May, 2001), 195-202 (p. 195).

[79] Genette cited in *Narratology,* ed. By Susana Onega and Jose Angel-Garcia Landa (New York: Longman Publishing, 1996), p. 173. For a comprehensive analysis of Genette's major categories (i.e. voice: person, time of narration, narrative level; tense: order, duration, frequency; mode) see Figure 9.3 in Fludernik (2009), *Introduction to Narratology,* p. 98.

[80] Genette cited in Fludernik, Ch. 4., *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses,* ed. by Alber and Fludernik, p. 118 ed. See Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* p. 11.

[81] Uri Margolin (2001), 'Shifted (Displaced) Temporal Perspective in Narrative,' *Narrative,* p. 195.

respect to a given event. Margolin insists that we need to differentiate between moments: "when one sees (mentally) and when one says, even when seer and sayer coincide."[82] Margolin uses the term 'center of awareness' or 'focalization' to denote the narrator's act of shifting the temporal perspective.[83] It is at this point that we come to the problem of the narrator not exclusively as a teller but as a specific consciousness also. Margolin argues: "the narrator-focalizer giving rise to the shifted perspective cannot remain a mere source of narrative statements, but must acquire the same feature of an active mediating consciousness." In other words, "shifts of temporal perspective contribute to the personalization of the narratorial speech position."[84] Margolin reminds us that narratology has long noticed the gap in knowledge, values, and attitudes between the narrating self and the experiencing self or acting self in first-person retrospective narration.[85] It has also noticed the narrator's ability to switch back and forth between his knowledge and values on a given event at the time of its occurrence and the time of telling.[86] This shifting focalization is both enabled by a temporal shift and serves as one of its best manifestations.[87] For Chatman, what is true of a non-character (or heterodiegetic) narrator is ultimately true of character (or homodiegetic) narrators as well. Chatman explains: "The heterodiegetic narrator never saw the events because he/she/it never occupied the story world. The homodiegetic or first-person narrator did see the events and objects at an earlier moment in the story, but his recounting is after the fact and thus a matter of memory, not of perception."[88] Chatman points out that even if the same person narrates events that he/she saw 'back then,' there are two separate narrative beings moving under the same name: the narrator, who previously inhabited discourse time and space; and another, the character, who inhabits story-time-space.[89] Chatman furnishes an explanation for this by drawing on an example from Dickens's *Great Expectations.*[90] The difference between Pip the character and Pip as a narrator is crucial. Only Pip-the-character saw those things out on the marsh, 'back then.' However, it is Pip the narrator, a different order of narrative being, who 'now' recounts those events in a posterior

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[82] Uri Margolin.
[83] Ibidem, p. 198.
[84] Ibidem, p. 198.
[85] Ibidem, p. 199.
[86] Ibidem, pp.199-200.
[87] Ibidem, p. 200.
[88] Chatman, p. 145. Chatman cited in Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, p. 112.
[89] Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 194. Cf. Stanzel's 'here-and-now' of the narrator however minimal is its removal from the 'here-and-now' of the story. In Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, and Interest-Focus,' p. 195.
[90] Ibidem.

discourse. Following Chatman, I should like to suggest that what the narrator expresses are not perceptions and conceptions but the memories of the focalizer's thoughts. In that later moment and place, what the narrator expresses can only be memories of perception and conceptions inherent in the story, not the perceptions and conceptions themselves.[91] In other words, in first-person narration, what the narrator recounts is not a current or discourse experience, but an experience 'back then,' in story-time. This is the case, I would argue, even in so-called 'simultaneous' narration where the 'narrative is contemporaneous with the action."[92]

Chatman has further contributed to the studies of focalization by drawing a useful distinction between narrational slant and character-related filter to denote limitations of perspective.[93] Accordingly, Chatman suggests replacing the Genettian term 'focalization' and Bal's term 'focalized' with 'filtration' and 'filtered.'[94] 'Filter' designates a character's perceptions and 'slant' describes the narrator's angle of reporting.[95] As Chatman explains: "If we are to preserve the vital distinction between discourse and story, we cannot lump together the separate behaviours of narrator and character under a single term."[96] Chatman adds that, while characters perceive events and existents in the story world, narrators may join them in having attitudes about things in that world. Chatman proposes that we name this attitudinal function 'slant.'[97] Chatman argues that slant may be expressed implicitly or explicitly. When

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[91] Ibidem.

[92] Genette cited in Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 195. Genette (1980), *Narrative Discourse.*, p. 217. Genette distinguishes four types of narrating: subsequent, prior, simultaneous, and interpolated. Genette cited in Monika Fludernik, "New Wine in Old Bottles? Voice, Focalization, and New Writing, *New Literary History,* Vol. 32., No. 3. (Summer, 2001), 619-638 (p. 620).

[93] This distinction has been influential also in studies of unreliability. See *A Companion to Narrative Theory* ed. By Phelan and Rabinowitz, p. 42. See also Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film,* Ch. 9. 'A New Point of View on 'Point of View,' p. 149. The distinction between filter and slant is important, as Chatman emphasizes, for a proper understanding of reliability, particularly it helps to clarify certain confusion about the locus of unreliability. See also Chatman cited in Richard Walsh, 'Who is the Narrator,' *Poetics Today,* Vol. 18, No.4 (Winter, 1997) pp. 495-513 (p. 500). See Chatman cited in Herman (1984), *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*, pp. 409-10. Chatman (1990), *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film,* p. 143.

[94] William Nelles, *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative.* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 80. Genette objects to Bal's theory, saying: "there is no focalizing or focalized character." Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* p. 73. And Genette cited in Nelles, *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative.,* p. 80. Chatman cited in Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration.*, p. 112.

[95] In Phelan, *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, p. 112. Seymour Chatman, 'Narratological Empowerment,'*Narrative,* Vol. 1, No. 1. (1993), 59-65 (p. 61).

[96] Chatman, p. 145. Chatman cited in Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, p.113.

[97] Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 197. Chatman emphasizes that he uses the term in a totally non-pejorative sense; 'angle' would work just well.

the narrator's slant is explicit, we call it commentary, even 'judgemental commentary.' Such commentary should not be confused with the character's seeing, thinking, and judging events and existents in the story-world from an observational post within that world.[98] Chatman has usefully elaborated on the proposed use of the term 'filter' to designate the character involved in focalization.[99] Chatman writes: "The narrator can elect to tell a part of the whole story neutrally or 'from or through one or another character's consciousness."[100] He goes on: "This function should I think to be called 'filter:' a character who serves as a filter may be central (the protagonist) or not (the witness.)"[101] The world filter is especially attractive because of its relative freedom from visual connotations and the confusion that accompanies such connotations. Indeed, Chatman argues that focalization has come to be such a problematic term that it should be abandoned entirely.[102] Chatman (1990) proposes that the terms slant and filter capture the difference between, on the one hand, "the narrator's attitudes and other mental nuances appropriate to the report function of discourse," and, on the other hand, "the much wider range of mental activity experienced by characters in the story world - perceptions, cognitions, attitudes, emotions, memories, fantasies, and the like."[103] Herman suggests that by using the term filter and slant, Chatman wants to escape the connotations of Genette's distinction between external and internal focalization. Chatman argues: "[T]he external internal tangle that 'focalization' gets into would be resolved because, by definition, a term such as 'filter' would be recognized as internal to the story world and 'slant,' by contrast, as external to it."[104]

However, Herman attempts to undermine Chatman's division in his examination of what he terms hypothetical focalization.[105] Herman examines perceptual and conceptual filtration of events through an agent not actually in the story world, yet nonetheless imagined as

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[98] Ibidem.

[99] Claude-Edmond Magny was already speaking of the events of a narrative as being 'filtered' through a 'filter' in 1948. Gene Moore suggests that Magny and Chatman 'filter' is less confusing than 'foclizer' in Nelles, *Frameworks:Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative.*, p. 80. Chatman uses the term entirely independently, but the coincidence confirms the aptness of the coinage in Nelles (1990), 'Getting focalization into focus,' p. 368.

[100] Chatman, ibidem.

[101] See "Character" in Chatman, p. 196. See Chatman cited in Nelles, *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative.*, p. 80. See Nelles, 'Getting Focalization into Focus,' p. 368. Chatman (1986), 'Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus,' p. 196.

[102] Nelles, 'Getting Focalization into Focus,' p. 80.

[103] Chatman (1990), *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film,* p. 143. David Herman (1984), *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*, pp. 409-10.

[104] Chatman (1990), *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film,* p. 148. Chatman cited in Herman (1984), *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*, p. 410.

[105] Herman (1984), *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*, p. 410 onward in this chapter.

counterfactually present by interpreters.[106] Prince offers his version of Chatman's position and several new justifications to it. Prince wants to retain the term focalization but argues that characters can be focalizers and narrators cannot be.[107] Prince reintroduces the concept of focalization by narrowing it down to the two ways in which a narrator reveals information about the narrated world. Prince, therefore, argues that the narrator either reports what some characters perceive or he does not. Consequently, focalization is obtained in the first case but is not obtained in the second.[108] In other words, Prince's point that narrators cannot be focalizers is based on the same logic as Chatman's opinion that narrators cannot perceive. It would seem that for Prince and Chatman, the story/discourse distinction establishes boundaries that limit the powers of narrators.[109]

Phelan attempts to debunk Prince and Chatman's theories by proving that narrators can be focalizers. Unlike Genette's typology, Chatman and Prince use a simple criterion to identify focalization with the character's perception. Phelan argues that Prince and Chatman inadequately capture the dynamics of narration as readers experience it. Phelan asks if narrators cannot perceive the story but only report it with a given slant, then what happens to the perceptions of narratees and readers.[110] Phelan looks more closely at the reporting function of the narrator and argues that Chatman and Prince appear to have forgotten that reporting itself performs two functions: presenting elements of the narrative world and simultaneously providing some angle of vision.[111] A human narrator, Phelan argues, cannot report a coherent sequence of events without also revealing not just a set of attitudes (or slant) but also his or her angle of perception. In other words, as the narrator reports, the narrator cannot help but simultaneously function as a set of lenses through which the audience perceives the story world. Phelan argues that the narrator's perceptions may be unreliable or partial, but just as a character cannot act without revealing something of himself or herself, a narrator cannot report without also revealing his or her perceptions.[112] According to Fludernik, all visual and perceptional parameters are subordinate to the presentation of consciousness. Perception centrally correlates with perceptional consciousness. Narrational

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[106] Ibidem.

[107] Prince, p. 44. Prince cited in Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, p.113.

[108] Prince, p. 44. Prince cited in Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, p.114.

[109] Prince cited in Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, p.114.

[110] Prince cited in Phelan (1996), *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, p.114.

[111] Ibidem, pp. 114-15.

[112] Ibidem, p. 115.

descriptions thus invoke an evaluative frame of mind on the part of the narrator/slant and may project a character's perceptions as in internal focalization.[113]

In *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Genette has recognized that the main weakness of his study of focalization is the failure of his choice of the 'metaphor of seeing.' As Genette remarks: "My only regret is that I used a purely visual, and hence overly narrow, formulation." [114] Accordingly, Genette redefines focalization as a restriction of 'field' or selection of narrative information with respect to omniscience and rejects Bal's reinterpretation of his earlier concept of focalization.[115] Nevertheless, studies of focalization after Bal consider different categories of focalization. Thus, Allan Palmer, for example, proposes the following three binary distinctions within the term focalization:

(1) intramental and intermental

(2) single and multiple

(3) homogenous and heterogenous[116]

Palmer explains that the difference between intramental and intermental focalization refers to the distinction between mental activity by one and by more than one consciousness. Similarly, single focalization occurs when there is one focalizer while the term multiple focalization refers to the presence of two or more focalizers of the same object. The multiple focalizers may be intramental individuals or intermental groups or a combination of the two.[117] In the case of homogenous focalization, the two focalizers have the same perspective, views, and beliefs and so on relating to the object. By contrast, heterogenous focalization reflects the fact that the focalizers' views differ, and their perspectives conflict with one another. [118] If focalization is single, then it can be either intramental (one individual) or intermental (relating to a group), but it will be homogenous and not heterogenous unless an individual or group has conflicting views on an issue.[119] If focalization is multiple, then it can involve different individuals, or different groups, or a combination of both. It can be homogenous or heterogenous. Palmer emphasizes that a fairly large number of possible

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[113] Ibidem.

[114] Genette cited in Nelles (1990), 'Getting focalization into focus,' p. 366. Genette (1988), *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* p. 64. Genette cited in David Herman (1984), *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*, p. 409.

[115] Genette (1988), *Narrative Discourse Revisited,* p. 74. Genette cited in Jahn (1996), 'Windows of Focalization,' p. 244.

[116] See Alan Palmer, Ch. 3. 'Large Intermental Units in Middlemarch,' in Alber and Fludernik (2010), *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, 83-105 (p. 93).

[117] See Alan Palmer, Ch. 3. 'Large Intermental Units in Middlemarch,' in Alber and Fludernik (2010), *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, 83-105 (p. 93).

[118] Ibidem.

[119] Ibidem.

combinations can be derived from these variables.[120] Another useful examination of focalization has been offered by Manfred Jahn. Jahn draws a distinction between the static focalization pattern (as if it would be in a fixedly focalized figural novel) or the dynamic (as it would be in variably focalized texts or texts that use both narrator and reflector focalization). As an example of a dynamic focalization pattern, Jahn gives White's novels, where focalization is highly dynamic and changes from chapter to chapter.[121] By comparison, Fludernik presents a new model of focalization in which the terms 'external' and 'internal' are defined as positions from which a perspective is gained.[122] External relates to the extradiegetic level and internal to the diegetic. 'Embodied' means that the perspective comes from an anthropomorphic figure whose brain interprets what she/he sees and who can make statements about herself/himself.[123] See Fludernik's figure (below) for her analysis of forms of focalization.[124]

Vantage point	Embodied	Describes psychological states of others	Impersonal
External (extradiegetic level)	So-called omniscient narrator	Yes	Impersonal 'omniscient covert narrative
	First-person narrator	No	Neutral perspective
Internal (diegetic level)	Reflector figure	No	0

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[120] Ibidem. See also Manfred Jahn's distinction between strict, ambient, and weak focalization. Jahn (1999). Jahn cited in Fludernik, 'Mediacy, Mediation, and Focalization: The Squaring of Terminological Circles,' in Alber and Fudernik (2010), *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses.*, 83-105 (p. 121).

[121] Manfred Jahn, Ch. 7. 'Focalization', in *Cambridge Companion to Narrative*., ed. David Herman, p. 107.

[122] Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology*, pp. 36-37.

[123] Ibidem, p. 36.

[124] Ibidem, p. 37. Cf Heinze (2008). Fludernik points out that her model excludes supernaturally gifted narrators as well as recent experiments with omniscience in first-person narrative.

Fludernik emphasizes that her model focuses exclusively on visual perspective and access to consciousness. In addition, it does not attempt to consider ideological perspective (Uspensky 1973, cf. ch. IX).[125]

7.4. Telling versus showing.

Fludernik argues that in considering important aspects of narrative structure, we should also draw attention to how the action is rendered. The choice here is between two basic techniques. One of these uses a narrator to tell the story explicitly. The other seems not to require a narrator as a mediator at all.[126] Fludernik points out that because of the prominence given to mediacy in Stanzel's work, mode and the oppositional pairs subsumed in it (telling vs. showing and teller vs. reflector) can be argued to be constitutive of the narrative.[127] In Stanzel's theory of narrative, the distinction between showing and telling is a central concern, as expressed in the teller mode vs. reflector mode dichotomy.[128] Traditionally, stories are told, and a person tells them to us so that we actually see before us a teller who mediates the story to the reader or audience. In the novel, a narrator persona often provides a similar illusion of communication and direct address.[129] In the Jamesian novel, Friedman writes: "[T]he reader perceives the action as it filters through the consciousness of one of the characters involved, yet perceives it directly as it impinges upon that consciousness, thus avoiding that removal to a distance necessitated by retrospective first-person narration."[130] Friedman writes of this technique as follows: "the story told as if by a character in the story, but told in the third person." In other words, it is a focalized narrative, told by a narrator who is not one of the characters but who adopts the point of view of one.[131] By comparison, the models of Genette and Stanzel foreground the narrator as the teller of the story. For Stanzel the category of the narrator is to be divided into two types.[132] On the one hand, there is an explicit teller in most first-person narratives and in authorial narratives.[133] On the other hand, we have a narrator

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[125] Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology*, p. 37.

[126] Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology,* p. 35. In section 'Presentational modes: telling vs. showing,' Fludernik refers to the following dichotomist classifications of narrative: Stanzel's mediated vs. immediate narrative; reporting and scenic presentation in Otto Ludwig; and telling versus showing in Percy Lubbock.

[127] Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology*, p. 90

[128] Ibidem.

[129] Ibidem. See also Fludernik (2009), p. 90. In Ch. 9. "Narrative Typologies" on Stanzel's concept of mediacy and telling vs. showing dichotomy.

[130] Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology*, p. 167-68.

[131] See Friedman cited in Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* p. 167. See also Friedman Norman, 'Point of View in Fiction,' *PMLA* (1955), 70. rprt. In Philip Stevick, *The Theory of the Novel* (New York, 1967), p. 113.

[132] Fludernik, Ch. 4. 'Mediacy, Mediation, and Focalization: The Squaring of Terminological Circle,' in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses.,* ed. by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik., p. 115.

[133] Ibidem.

in reflector-mode narratives, where the narrator is in abeyance, covert, seemingly absent.[134]

The main grounding of Stanzel's mediacy lies in the verbal mediation of story by means of a narrator's act of narration.[135] However, the novel also offers the additional option of seeing things from the point of view of a particular character. Stanzel calls such characters reflectors.[136]

Stanzel emphasizes that his theory of narrative is based on the assumption that mediacy is the generic characteristic that distinguishes narrative. A teller-character and a reflector-character are agents of transmission. The teller is responsible for telling and the reflector's attribute is showing. Stanzel argues that the distinction between teller-characters and reflector-characters is crucial for narratology. The structural significance of these basic oppositions emerges from the observation that a transformation of narrative text determined by one pole of one of these oppositions into a text dominated by its opposite elements usually alters the meaning of narrative. Stanzel points out that the reflector-character's[137] main function, as the name indicates, is to reflect: "[...] to mirror in his consciousness what is going on in the world outside or inside himself.[138] A reflector-character never narrates in the sense of verbalizing his perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, since he does not attempt to communicate his perceptions or thoughts to the reader.[139] Stanzel argues that this produces the illusion in the reader that he obtains an unmediated and direct view of the fictional world, apprehending it through the consciousness of the reflector-character. Stanzel observes that reflector-characters frequently communicate most when they silently abandon themselves either to perceptions of the outside world or of the reflections, which these perceptions evoke.[140]

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[134] Ibidem.

[135] Stanzel cited in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses,* p. 113.

[136] Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*., p. 36.

[137] The term reflector derives from Henry James, who called some of his focalizers, like Strether in *The Ambassadors* reflectors. James cited in Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*. p. 36. See also *Narratology.,* ed. by Susana Onega, Jose Angel-Garcia Landa, Ch. 10 'A new approach to the definition of the narrative situations,' p. 162.

[138] Stanzel, 'Teller-character and Reflector-character in Narrative Theory, *Poetics Today.,* Vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter, 1981), 5-15 (p. 7). In *A Theory of Narrative* Stanzel refers to Ingarden who suggests that some novelists show a clear preference for teller-characters (e.g. Galsworthy) and others for reflector-characters (Joyce, Thomas Mann and Faulkner), p. 153. Fludernik's model of experientiality stems from Stanzel's reflector-mode mode where reflector simply substitutes consciousness for narration. See Fludernik in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses.,* p. 116. Also, Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural Narratology,'* pp. 43-52.

[139] Ibidem. See also Stanzel cited in Fludernik (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology*, p. 36.

[140] Stanzel, *A Theory of Narrative,* Ch. 6. 'The opposition mode: teller-character – reflector-character,' p. 150.

Chatman writes on the narrator as follows: "The narrator is a reporter, not an 'observer' of the story world in the sense of literally witnessing it. It makes no sense to say that a story is told 'through' the narrator's perception since he/she/it is precisely narrating, which is not an act of perception but of presentation or representation."[141] As this suggests, the teller-character's main function is to tell, narrate, report, and to communicate with the reader, to quote witnesses and sources, to comment on the story, to anticipate the outcome of an action or to recapitulate what has happened before the story opens.[142]

In accord with this, Stanzel argues that what is narrated by a teller-character claims, implicitly or explicitly, to be a complete record of events, or a record as complete as the narrator could or would, for the sake of the reader, make it.[143] However, what is presented through a reflector-character makes no such claims. The selection of elements from the world seems to be arbitrary, determined by the reflector-character's experiential and existential contingencies.[144] Stanzel points out that only in the theoretical construction of the typological circle are teller-character and reflector-character located opposite one another as clearly distinct poles.[145] In practice, we frequently find these techniques in combination and alternation within the same text.[146] In this context, Stanzel offers a comparison between the teller-character and the reflector-character.[147] Because this comparison sheds a lot of light on the focalization and narration in *The Town* and *The Mansion* and also on the narratological technique in *The Snopes Trilogy* as serial narrative as a whole, Stanzel's comparison is tabulated below.[148]

TELLER-CHARACTER	REFLECTOR-CHARACTER
Narrative preliminaries: explicit, introduction and exposition oriented toward the reader.	Abrupt or clipped opening, presupposition; the reader has to deduce the exposition.

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[141] Chatman cited in Walsh (1997), 'Who is the Narrator,' 495-513 (p. 500) Chatman (1990), *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film.,* p. 142.

[142] Stanzel (1981), 'Teller-character and reflector-characters in narrative theory,' p. 6.

[143] Cf. N. Friedman in *Narratology,* ed. By Susana Onega, Jose Angel-Garcia Landa. Reference to Friedman's article "Point of View in Fiction." According to Friedman, narrative transmission by a teller-character is always a generalized and compressed account whereas showing is immediate scene rather than a summary. (1955: 1169).

[144] Ibidem, p. 8. The opposition between teller-character.

[145] See Stanzel for the circle.

[146] Stanzel (1984), *A Theory of Narrative.,* p. 168.

[147] Ibidem p. 169. See Stanzel cited in Cohn (1981), 'The Encirclement of Narrative,' p. 160.

[148] Stanzel (1984), *A Theory of Narrative.,* p. 168. See Stanzel cited in Cohn (1981), 'The Encirclement of Narrative,' p. 160.

It can be grasped as a whole, it is ordering and makes sense.	That which is presented is registered by the reflector at the moment of perception. He usually cannot grasp it as a whole, and its meaning is often problematic.
The tendency toward abridgement in report form, toward conceptual abstraction and generalization.	The tendency toward concrete particularly toward impressionism and empathy.
The authorial narrative situation as well as the first-person narrative situation with dominance of the narrating self.	The figural narrative situation and first-person narrative situation with dominance of the experiencing self.
Communication process as in reporting model.	Communication process as in narrating model.
Selection criteria obvious, motivated by the personality of the teller.	Selection criteria not obvious, areas of indeterminacy are existentially significant.
External perspective and internal perspective, tendency toward aperspectivism.	Internal perspective, the tendency toward perspectivism.

Keen argues that when a character self-narrates, then obviously character and narrator overlap. Nevertheless, Keen emphasizes that the gap between the narrating self and experiencing self might still be substantial.[149] Keen also adds that any character within a story may also be used as a secondary narrator in an embedded narration.[150] The central function of a character lies in his/her role as reflector (Stanzel), focalizer (Genette) or filter (Chatman)[151]. Keen favours reflector characters, for which she gives the following explanation: "Reflectors can be smoothly integrated into the description of narrative situations employing fixed, multiple, or variable perspectives. Reflectors can also work in combination with the narrator's externalized reports of objects, actions, and actions."[152] Fixed perspective stays

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[149] On dissonance and consonance see Suzanne Keen, *Narrative Form*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 44.
[150] See Keen (2003), *Narrative Form*, Ch. 8.
[151] Keen (2003), *Narrative Form,* p. 44.
[152] Keen (2003), *Narrative Form,* p. 45.

with a self-reflector (usually a single figure). Multiple perspectives can be employed either in formal alternation with different sections employing different centres of consciousness or one collective narrator in first person plural.[153] The former strategy is more consistent with a figural narrative situation. The latter technique is more common in an authorial narration. In authorial narration, an external perspective of the narrator makes the presentation of multiple characters' thoughts more plausible.[154] In variable focalization, the narrative may shift from external focalization of events in one chapter, for example, to character-bound focalization in the next.[155]

The differences between teller-characters and reflector-characters allow us to draw some conclusions about their relative reliability as mediators of the fictional events.[156] Stanzel quotes D.H. Lawrence's famous aphorism - "Never trust the artist, trust the tale."[157] Stanzel's interpretation of this aphorism is that we must always be on our guard when reading a story in which the author has chosen a teller-character for transmission, whereas we can 'trust the tale' if it is transmitted to us through a reflector-character. For Stanzel, reflector-characters have to be distinguished according to the clarity and capacity of their mind, but never according to their reliability.[158] Stanzel thus objects to Booth's obliterating the distinction between teller-character and reflector-character. By applying the criterion of reliability indiscriminately to both categories, he claims, Booth obscures the structural significance of this distinction and reduces the usefulness of the otherwise fundamental criterion of reliability. Stanzel argues that the criterion of reliability could be more useful if limited to teller-characters. Teller-characters make verbal statements and thereby address or intend to address an audience.[159] Welsh agrees: "The epistemological difference between a story which is communicated by a teller-character and one which is presented by a reflector-character lies mainly in the fact that the teller-character is always aware that he is narrating while the reflector-character has no such awareness at all."[160] Thus, the criterion of reliability is irrelevant regarding reflector-characters. However, Stanzel distinguishes here between lucid and torpid reflectors, depending on the keen or dim perspective of the reflector. In other

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[153] See Gerald Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology,* p. focalizer, reflector, central intelligence, and holder of the point of view. The central consciousness is the consciousness through which situations and events are perceived H. James 1972.

[154] Keen (2003), *Narrative Form,* p. 45.

[155] Ken Ireland (2001), *The Sequential Dynamics of Narrative: Energies at the Margins of Fiction*, p. 78.

[156] Stanzel (1984), *A Theory of Narrative*, p. 150.

[157] Lawrence cited in Stanzel (1981), 'Teller-character and reflector-characters in narrative theory,' p. 9. Lawrence (1969), 4.

[158] Ibidem.

[159] Stanzel (1984), *A Theory of Narrative*, p. 152.

[160] Richard Walsh (1997), 'Who is the Narrator.', p. 500. Wash 1984 (1979), pp. 145, 146, and 147.

words, Stanzel distinguishes between reflector-characters who tend to intellectualize their experiences and reflector-characters that are intellectually dull and flat. Stanzel writes that the latter type is frequently found in the modern novel. As an example, we can take the Bundren family in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and an even more extreme case, the idiot Benjy in *The Sound and the Fury.*[161] Reed draws a similar comparison between the teller-characters in *The Town* and the reflector-characters in *As I Lay Dying* - [162]

> In *As I Lay Dying*, (…) the narrators (with the possible exception of Darl) all seem to be unconscious of the form of the whole. Their narratives contain no indication of the kind of telling and hearing we see in *The Town.* There they seem to address their words more to themselves than to any hearer.[163]

However, Reed's study of *The Town* would have been more persuasive if he had considered "the framing consciousness of the various narrators" that he mentions.[164] Reed does not deny the fact that it is exactly this phenomenon of 'the forming consciousness of the narrators' that is responsible for *The Town's* polyphonic organization and therefore the organization the middle part gives to the entire trilogy.[165] He concludes: "One result of the technique (or perhaps its accomplished aim) is greater objectivity about characters and careful, detailed anatomy of consciousness."[166]

7.5. Charles Mallison: the unborn narrator.

Reed writes about the device of a Charles Mallison as a narrator in *The Town*: "he isn't born until six years after his starting-point in the narrative (…) and the book (as all good trilogy or tetralogy segments should) assumes that we haven't read the first volume and carefully brings us up to date."[167] Ruediger provides an interesting analysis of narratives in which the first-person narrator displays knowledge he cannot have because he was not born yet.[168] Ruediger asks how the narrators know what they know. The knowledge they display is temporally, spatially or cognitively undisclosed to them. As a result, the narrator turns unreliable.[169] However, this does not happen in *The Snopes Trilogy.* Reed argues: "The amount that he [Chick] cannot know or finds out too late or is too small to understand serves the cause of timed revelation, because then Ratliff or Gavin can step in with the answer or the analysis or

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[161] Stanzel (1984), *A Theory of Narrative*, p. 152.
[162] Joseph W. Reed, Jr. *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 244.
[163] Ibidem.
[164] Ibidem.
[165] Ibidem.
[166] Ibidem, p. 265.
[167] Reed (1973), *Faulkner's narrative,* p. 242.
[168] Ruediger, 'Violations of Mimetic Epistemology in First-Person Narrative Fiction,' *Narrative,* vol. 16., No. 3. (Octobee, 2008), 279-297. E.g. *Sent For You Yesterday.* Wideman, 17.
[169] Ibidem, p. 280.

the conclusion, satisfying our reader's urge for fictional didactic." He goes on: "Mallison is the anchor of the book not only in the prevalence of his sections but also in the way in which his attractiveness can cover weak transitions."[170]

Ruediger refers to Culler's suggestion that we abandon the term 'omniscience' and instead use the term 'paralepsis' whenever referring to the phenomenon of a first-person narrator knowing and/or seeing something to which he/she should not have access by all that we as readers know about human cognition and perception.[171] Nelles, however, argues that a narrator does not necessarily have to intend the full range of meaning of what is narrated or even to consider that it has a meaning at all. Nelles argues that this is frequently the case with narrators, who are children, e.g., the twelve-year-old narrator of Faulkner's story "A Justice."[172] Hamburger concludes that because of the personal character of first-person narration – as compared to neutral omniscient third-person narration – it is the only genuine one.[173] As Hamburger observes: "it is an innate characteristic of every first-person narrative that it posits itself as non-fiction, i.e., as a historical document."[174]

The Snopes Trilogy is a mixed-type of the first-person narrative with three homodiegetic narrators and a third-person omniscient narrator. The omniscient narrator in *The Snopes Trilogy* radically differs from that in a monologic novel, playing a service-function instead and giving background descriptions and summaries in the intervals between monologues given by homodiegetic narrators.[175]

In the opening paragraphs of *The Town*, Charles indicates his sources of information about Flem: Ratliff, Gavin, and the Jefferson town members. Charles makes it clear that he shares their point of view by saying: "I means the Jefferson town." This supports Ladell Payne's observation: "[…] in most of *The Town* the entire community speaks as with one voice."[176] Consider, for example, a passage like the following:

> And even now we don't know whether or not that brass was all. We will
> never know exactly how much he might have stolen and sold privately
> (I mean before he thought of drafting Tom Tom or Turl to help him) either
> before or after someone – Buffaloe probably, since if old Harker had ever
> noticed those discarded fittings enough to miss any of them he would

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[170] Reed (1973), *Faulkner's narrative,* p. 242.

[171] Ruediger (2008), 'Violations of Mimetic Epistemology in First-Person Narrative Fiction,' p. 282.

[172] Nelles, *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative,* p. 55.

[173] Hamburger cited in Stanzel (1984), *A Theory of Narrative*, p. 88.

[174] Hamburger cited in Monika Fludernik, Ch. 18. 'Identity/alterity, in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative.*, ed. by David Herman, pp. 260-274 (p. 264). See also Kate Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature.* (2nd ed) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 312-13.

[175] See also Reed (1973), *Faulkner's narrative,* p. 244.

[176] Ladell Payne, 'The Trilogy: Faulkner's Comic Epic in prose,' *Studies in the Novel,* Vol.1, No.1. (Spring, 1969), 27-37 (p. 33).

probably have beat Snopes to the market; very likely, for all his presence of simple spectator enjoyment, his real feeling was rage at his own blindness – notified somebody at the city hall and had the auditors in. All we knew was that one day the three safety-valves were missing from the boilers; we ha to assume, imagine, what happened next: (…) (*The Town* p. 376).

Thus, in *The Town,* we see the Snopses vs. the Jefferson town binary through the eyes of a 13-year-old child, Charles Mallison. As a result, we have an ideologically biased narrator, promoting anti-Snopes politics. However, we cannot forget that at the time of narration Charles is an adult man recalling his childhood memories and narrating events Charles himself could not have witnessed since they had happened 13 years before the day he was born. Since, an adult narrator, and Charles, a child focalizer, do not coincide, Reed argues for the increased objectivity of Charles's narration as a teller of Flem's and the Snopses story:

> Charles is the first and last to speak and has the most to say. He is the teller with whom we have and are intended to have the most in common. Partly this is because he is less pushy than others and thus more able to move toward objectivity; but it also, because he is a child, subject to the objective freedom and subjective limitation, peculiar to the child-narrator. He is able to observe transparently because he has his eyes open and is not subject to the adult bias of selection.[177]

In addition, by using Gavin Stevens as a secondary narrator, Faulkner aims at the objectivization of the narrative account due to Gavin's social status as a Harward-educated lawyer and the fact that he is not originally Jeffersonian: "He had changed. Even we (Jefferson. I was only three then) didn't know how much until the next April 1917, after the *Lusitania* and the President's declaration (….)" (*The Mansion*, p. 843). Once again, the collective Jefferson town narrator – the 'we' form – emphasizes the collective experience. And Mallinson explicitly identifies himself with Jefferson.

With the choice of heterogetic narrative with an omniscient point of view, as Reed suggests, *The Snopes Trilogy* would be a monological novel not a polyphonic narrative characterized by "the nature of all-round dialogue" and that is undoubtedly the narrative technique at the core of all *The Trilogy.* [178] However, as Bakhtin writes: "There is no authorial voice that would monologically regulate this world. An author's intentions are directed not to oppose this dialogic arrangement and the rigid definitions of characters, ideas, and things, but, on the contrary, namely to increase those colliding voices, to deepen their interruption to the minute detail, to the microscopic

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[177] Reed (1973), *Faulkner's narrative,* p. 241.

[178] PD, p. 76. See Bakhtin cited in Qian Zhongwen, 'The Problems of Bakhtin's Theory about Polyphony,' *New Literary History.,* Vol. 28., No. 4. (Autumn, 1997), 779-790 (p. 781).

structure of events."[179] As in all Faulkner's other polyphonic novels, in *The Snopes Trilogy,* we observe what Bakhtin calls 'a large-scale' and 'micro-type dialogue.' [180] By 'large-scale dialogue' Bakhtin means 'the counterpoint relationships' between characters/homodiegetic narrators.[181]

In order to stay credible and believable as a homodiegetic narrator, Charles needs to reveal all his sources of information. Charles's account of the Sutpen story mainly consists of town-talks or conversations that took place in his family house, for example, conversations that took place at the table when dining together was still a family custom. Mallison's accounts as a focalizer and as a listener of family-talks always involve his uncle Gavin Stevens. For example, Charles says: 'maybe it was because mother and uncle … [get ready to] the University of Virginia.' And all the family talks, it would seem, revolve mainly around one subject – Flem Snopes. 'so mother would sit at the end … they couldn't hear him' (p. 389).

Charles reports this conversation as one among many that took place at the dining table.

Afterward, Gavin leaves Jefferson for Germany. The letters Ratliff continues to send to Gavin throughout his years of absence then become the source of information on Flem. Later, Charles recalls that in this time Gavin came back home from Europe once only – for the funeral of a grandfather (p. 447). Charles was only five at this point in the narrative, but he nevertheless becomes the recipient of Ratliff's account:

> And possibly the only reason he came home at all was that Grandfather had died during the last year of the war and he came home to see us as people do in between. Though I believed then that the reason he came was to tell Ratliff what it was about Montgomery Ward Snopes that was too bad to write on paper. Which was when Ratliff said about all the listening I would
> have to do, meaning that with him, Ratliff, alone again too tote the load, anyway I could do that much (*The Town*, p. 447).

Reed writes on Charles Mallison's narration:

> We are second-hand hearers: we hear from him; he has been told so that he may catch up. His lack of involvement in the proceedings – as messenger-boy, as Gavin – for Ratliff during the war, as the little pitcher with big eyes – makes his narratives the most convenient medium for traditional suspense structures and for Faulkner's favourite device of suspense by omission.[182]

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[179] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 115. "Авторского голоса, который монологически упорядочивал бы этот мир, нет. Авторские интенции стремятся не к тому, чтобы противопоставить этому диалогическому разложению твёрдые определения людей, идей и вещей, но, напротив, именно к тому, чтобы обострять столкнувшиеся голоса, чтоб углублять их перебой до мельчайших деталей, до микроскопической структуры явлений."

[180] Bakhtin cited in Qian Zhongwen, "The Problems of Bakhtin's Theory about Polyphony," p. 780.

[181] Ibidem.

[182] Reed (1973), *Faulkner's Narrative,* p. 242.

As a child, Charles shares all the privileges of innocence.[183] Howe writes on this aspect of Charles as a child-narrator as follows: "because of his receptivity and the absence of a recognizable bias, Charles represents the collective consciousness of Jefferson."[184] Indeed Charles comments on his childhood membership of a specific Jeffersonian social group: "That's what we – all the boys in Jefferson between six and twelve years old and sometimes even older – would go out there to hide behind the fence and watch. We never had seen anybody bust a blood vessel and die and we wanted to be there when it happened to see what it would look like.' (*The Town,* p. 463).

By contrast, Reed writes on Charles's disillusionment as an adult narrator: "The objective child we counted on as the antidote to Stevens and Ratliff has become a bitter adult."[185] Suzanne Keen is enlightening here. Keen argues that narration might be either consonant or dissonant; that is, it may present the experiences of the protagonist-self as reported by a narrating self-positioned very close to the experiences (consonant narration), or it may emphasize the altered perceptions made possible by a gap in time between experiences and narration (dissonant narration). Dissonant narration lets the narrating self-deliver judgements or make reflections that would be impossible or highly implausible for a narrator living close to these experiences.[186] Charles's account is a mixture of dissonant and consonant narration.[187]

At this point, Stanzel's term 'ansteckung' provides a way out of the we-narrative dilemma. By ansteckung (infection), Stanzel describes the incorporation of figural language into the narrative. This is meant to signify a merging, in an empathic context, of the voice of the narrator and those of other characters, resulting in an intensification and expansion of figural viewpoint.[188]

7.6. The collective Jefferson-town narrator.

Having considered the three first-person (singular) narrators in *The Town* and *The Mansion* in the preceding section, my aim in this section is to highlight the distinctive quality of the nonstandard multiperson narrative technique employed in *The Snopes Trilogy* and the nature of the collective Jefferson town narrator. In this section, I will consider the collective nature of the homodiegetic narrator "we" in *The Snopes Trilogy,* and, thus, expand Genette's bipolar

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[183] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology,* p. 49 Fludernik writes on the innocence of a child narrator.
[184] Irving Howe (1991), *William Faulkner: A Critical Study,* p. 184.
[185] Reed (1973), *Faulkner's Narrative,* p. 251. See also Howe (1991), *William Faulkner" A Critical Study,* p. 184.
[186] Keen Suzanne (2003), *Narrative Form*, p. 36.
[187] Cf. "That Evening Sun."
[188] Stanzel, pp. 333-34

distinction between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators.[189] There are the following types of homodiegetic narrators in *The Snopes Trilogy*: three homodiegetic named narrators (speaking in the form of 'I'); a multiperson narrator; a we-narrator; and the collective Jefferson-town narrator. Fludernik argues that the concept of frame telling allows for several real-world realizations of story-telling, such as hearsay, witness reports and the relation of well-known fables from times past. The analysis of frame narrative makes them possible to see the novel as 'building oral patterns of everyday storytelling.'[190] At this point, I will attempt to show what the narrative in *The Town* and *The Mansion* gains by having three dramatized narrators instead of one or two. My argument here is based on Stanzel's observation that reliability is a problem of the dramatized narrators in general.[191] According to Stanzel, both the authorial narrator and the first-person narrator who reveal their personality are within the definition of the dramatized narrators.[192] Booth suggests that as soon as a narrator refers to himself/herself as 'I' or 'we,' we speak of 'dramatized narrator."[193] Indeed, as Booth observes, in some literary works the narrator becomes a person of great physical, mental and moral vividness.[194] Clearly, Charles Mallison, Gavin Stevens, and Ratliff are very distinctive personae. By using multiple narration and simultaneous collective narration, Faulkner does not attempt to depersonify these dramatized narrators and to boost their reliability. Instead, I would argue, he wishes to hide the dramatized homodiegetic narrators (Charles, Ratliff, and Gavin) in the crowd of other narrator-observers. Yacobi writes: "The monologist is the most vulnerable of fictional reflectors when and because he thinks himself safest: he has nobody to provide for or to guard against, and nothing to hide or wrap up. So here mediacy leads straight into incongruity of all kinds, which in turn invites smoothing by appeal to perspectival

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[189] For Genette's distinction see *Narrative Discourse,* pp. 244-45. When drawing this distinction Genette makes a statement – "Absence is absolute, but presence has degrees – which he revises in *Narrative Discourse Revisited.* Thus, Genette differentiates between two types of homodiegetic narrative. In the first case the narrator is the hero of this narrative; in the second – an observer/witness. In other words, the narrator can be 'a star' or a mere 'by-stander.' (p. 245). For the general distinction between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrative see also John Barth "Tales within Tales within Tales."p. 97. And Ch. II p. in this paper.

[190] Fludernik (1996), *Towards a 'Natural Narratology,'* p. 339. 8.3.2. Tellers vs. reflectors, agents and readers: the dramatis personae of narratology.

[191] Stanzel (1984), *A Theory of Narrative,* p. 89.

[192] On the use of personal pronoun 'I' and 'we' in defining the dramatized narrators. See also Wayne C. Booth, 'Distance and Point-of-View: An Essay in Classification,' in *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction.,* ed. by Michael J. Hoffman and Patrick D. Murphy (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 177. See also the discussion of dramatized narrators in *Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism.,* ed. By Robert Murray Davis (Prentice Hall, 1969).

[193] As an example of plural dramatized narrator Booth gives Flaubert's narrator 'we' in the moment when Charles Bovary entered the classroom. See also Wayne C. Booth (1996), 'Distance and Point of View: An Essay in Classification,' p. 177.

[194] Ibidem.

opposition and unreliability."[195] Yacobi argues that the more artful and coherent the speaker, the stronger the tendency to give him authority.[196] This is precisely the case with Charles Mallison. In other words, in *The Town* and *The Mansion,* Faulkner came up with a solution to the fundamental problem of the unreliability of the majority of dramatized narrators by employing three different types of dramatized narrators, which are as follows:

(1) Charles Mallison – a witness narrator/non-participant narrator

(2) Ratliff – a minor participant in the action[197]

(3) Gavin Stevens – a relatively important participant in the action[198]

Booth's distinction between narrators-agents and narrator-observers is indispensable in establishing the taxonomy of dramatized narrators in *The Town a*nd *The Mansion.* Booth names three major functions of narrators, which are: reporting the fictional facts, interpreting the facts and evaluating those facts.[199] In this way, Booth places particular emphasis on a narrator's knowledge, perception, and ethics. Booth argues that it is enough for the narrator to fail to perform adequately one of these tasks for us to speak of an unreliable narrator. According to Booth, in the most common kind of restricted narration, we will have a naïve narrator reliably reporting the events but not attempting to interpret or evaluate them. Booth notes that interpretation and evaluation are beyond the capacity of the naïve narrator.[200] As we have seen, Charles Mallison, as a first-person narrator, reports his childhood memories. Also, by continually emphasizing the fact that he thinks and feels himself a Jeffersonian, Charles takes on the ideology of the Jefferson town as a group of conformists. As an adult, Charles falls outside the definition of the naïve narrator, even though it would seem he merely

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[195] Tamar Yacobi, 'Narrative Structure and Fictional Mediation,' *Poetics Today,* Vol. 8, No. 2 (1987), 335-72 (p. 338).

[196] Ibidem, p. 348. As an example Yacobi gives "My Lost Duchess."

[197] Booth makes a clear distinction between mere observers and narrators agents who produce some measurable effect on the course of events. Wayne C. Booth, 'Distance and Point of View: An Essay in Classification,' pp. 178-179. For Booth's discussion of observers-narrators and agents-narrators see *Narratology,* ed. By Susana Onega, Jose Angel-Garcia Landa Ch. 8. Types of narration. Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction,* pp. 149, 150, 153, and 163. See also Booth cited in McQuillan, *The Narrative Reader*, p. 69. From *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Booth observes that any rules we might discover about observers may not apply to narrators-agents, yet the distinction is seldom made in talk about point of view. (p. 72). For other examples of a mere observer-narrator see – "A Rose for Emily," a minor participant in the action "A Study in Scarlet" and a protagonist of *Great Expectations.* See also Andrew Hook "The Snopes Trilogy," p. 176. On Ratliff as "an active particioant" in the Snopes-related events. N *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Fiction.* Ed. A. Robert Lee, p. 176.

[198] See also Booth in (1983) Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology,* p. 24. See Reed's analysis of Gavin Stevens and Ratliff as participants in the story and its narratological consequences for Stevens as one of the homodiegetic narrators in *The Town.* Reed, *Faulkner's narrative,* pp. 241-242. Reed draws an analogy between Gavin and Miss Rosa in AA as narrators involved directly with the plot events.

[199] Ibidem.

[200] Ibidem.

repeats, without any commentary, the conversations he overheard in the family and the conversations between his uncle Gavin and Ratliff. By reporting interpretations and evaluations of the Snopes-related events as given by Ratliff and Gavin Stevens and the town, even as an adult narrator, Charles apparentlyrefuses to add anything. That would mean he shares the collective point of view of the group and agrees to pass judgement on the politics behind the actions undertaken by Flem Snopes and the Snopes family.[201] Phelan distinguishes restricted narration from unreliable narration on the basis that in unreliable narration, the narrator undertakes all three tasks – reporting, interpreting, and evaluating – and fails to perform any of them or all of them; with restricted narration, as the name suggests, the narrator's performance is limited to one or two out of three tasks.[202] Relying on the above analyzes as presented by Booth and Phelan, it becomes apparent that Charles Mallison, Ratliff, and Gavin Stevens are typical representatives of reliable and non-restricted narration. However, it is worth noting that all three of them are ideologically-grounded narrators.

One major drawback of these approaches is that neither Booth nor Phelan seriously recognize the importance of the narrator's personal and ideological involvement in the story they recall. Bakhtin writes:

> Social man [and there is no other kind] is surrounded by ideological phenomena, by objects-signs [veshch' – znak] of various types and categories: by words in the multifarious forms of their realization (sounds, writing, and the others), by scientific statements, religious symbols and beliefs, works of art, and so on. All of these things in their totality comprise the ideological environment, which forms a solid ring around man. And man's consciousness lies and develops in this environment. Human consciousness does not come into contact with existence directly, but through the medium of the surrounding, ideological world. In fact, the individual consciousness can only become a consciousness by being realized in the forms of the ideological environment proper to it: in language, in conventionalized gesture, in the artistic image, in myth and so on.[203]

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[201] Phelan draws a distinction between unreliable and restricted narration. Phelan, *Living to Tell about It – A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration.* Ch.2. "Unreliable Narration, Restricted Narration, and the Implied Author in Memoir," p. 80. See p. 343. *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Novels.* Edmond L. Volpe, Syracuse University Press, 2003. On *The Trilogy's* structure being built on its 'moral complexity' and 'Ratliff's sharp opposition to Snopesism.'

[202] Ibidem. See Phelan's discussion of six types of unreliable narrators in *Living to Tell About It,* pp. 49-65 with the division into: fraudulent narrator, contradictory narrator, permeable narrator, incommensurate narrator and dis-framed narrators. See also Phelan in Richardson Unnatural p. 103. See also pp. in this paper.

[203] *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues* on his work, ed. Gary Saul Morson, p. 31. by Booth "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the challenge of Feminist Criticism," p. 152. See also *The Narrative Reader*, ed. Martin McQuillan, p. 31. Bakhtin and Medvedev, Also 1928 *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: a Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, Trans Alber J. Wehrle.

Rimmon-Kenan (1983) has noted that there may be a number of different reasons for narrational unreliability. Rimmon-Kenan names the following factors in relation to the individual narrator: "limited knowledge, his personal involvement and his problematic value-scheme."[204] Similarly to Rimmon-Kenan, Cohn distinguishes between two standard types of the unintentional unreliable narrator: the factually misinformed narrator and the 'discordant' narrator who is ideologically biased or confused.[205] Fludernik also puts forward an interesting idea for narrational unreliability. [206] In her tripartite model of unreliability, Fludernik distinguishes between: 'factual inaccuracy,' 'lack of a narrator's objectivity,' and 'ideological unreliability.' The simple explanation for the 'factual inaccuracy' of the narrator is that the narrator is either a self-conscious liar or he/she does not have accurate information.[207] In the second and third cases, the narrator is clearly personally or ideologically biased. [208] Like Fludernik, Stanzel also distinguishes between a narrator's 'factual accuracy' and 'ideological bias.' As Stanzel writes, it is the particular quality of 'personalized narrators to demonstrate to us the 'biased nature of our experience of reality.'[209]

Let us now consider Charles Mallison, Gavin Stevens and Ratliff regarding Fludernik's tripartite concept of unreliability: 'factual accuracy,' 'objectivity or its lack,' and 'ideological bias.' As I have tried to show in Figure 3.2. below, the distinction between the three above-mentioned criteria, as established by Fludernik, is particularly useful in the analysis of *The Town* and *The Mansion* as frame narratives.

	Charles Mallison	Ratliff	Gavin Stevens
Factual inaccuracy	Gossip/witness	Gossip/witness/minor agent	Agent/witness
Objectivity	Increase	slight increase	large increase
Ideological bias	Constant	increase	large increase

Let us begin with a brief analysis of Charles Mallison as a narrator. As mentioned earlier in this section, Charles's knowledge of the Snopes' saga is based on what he has witnessed

[204] Rimmon-Kenan 1983, 2003-100. And Rimmon-Kenan in Phelan and Rabinowitz *A Companion to Narrative Theory,* p. 94.
[205] Cohn in Richardson *Unnatural*, p. 94.
[206] Fludernik ,"Defining," pp. 76-77.
[207] Ibidem p. 76.
[208] Ibidem pp. 76-77.
[209] Stanzel in Greta Olson (2003: 101).

throughout his entire life, particularly his childhood observations and the conversations he overheard. Being a child and therefore a member of a different generation from Flem and Charles's uncle, Charles does not take a direct part in the Flem-related events. Charles can only observe the events, for example, when he watches his mother and uncle on their way to Oxford to collect Linda following Eula's suicide. A few minutes afterward, Charles meets his friend, Aleck, and they run to the town to observe what is happening there after Flem lost his post at Colonel Sartoris's bank:

> 'I couldn't even know now what I was looking at. Oh yes, I went to town, not quite as soon as Mother and Uncle Gavin were out of sight, but close enough. So did Aleck Sander. We could hear Guster calling us both a good while after we had turned the corner, both of us going to look at the wreath on the closed bank door and seeing a lot of other people too, grown people, come to look at it for what I know now was no braver reason than the one Aleck Sunder and I had. And when Mr de Spain came to town as he always did just before nine o'clock and got his mail from the post office like he always dud and let himself into the back door of the bank with his key like he always did because the back door always stayed locked, we – I – couldn't know that the reason he looked exactly like nothing had happened was because that was exactly the way he had to come to town that morning to have to look. That he had to get up this morning and shave and dress and maybe practise in front of the mirror a while in order to come to the Square at the time he always did so everybody in Jefferson could see him doing exactly as he always did (*The Town*, pp. 641-2).

Here memories of the event gradually shade into what he subsequently learned. Howe writes on this aspect of Charles as narrator as follows:

> To Charles Mallison, the third person, falls the task of mediating between Gavin's ambivalent views and Ratliff's ironic and occasionally cryptic comments. That a great deal of what he relates is based on admittedly faulty information attained from his cousin Gowan and that he is made the recipient at an incredibly early age of confidences and reflections from
> both Gavin and Ratliff suggests that he is both the vehicle for
> the preservation of a legend and a stage in its promulgation.[210]

In addition, Charles is presented as the only self-conscious storyteller among the three named narrators.[211] Sternberg argues that the concept of self-consciousness appears here in the qualitative sense of 'orientation to an addressee.' [212] Sternberg points out that like

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[210] Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study,* p. 184. (1991).
[211] See Tamar Yacobi tytul Poetics Today vol. 8. No. 2 (1987), pp. 335-372 and p. 337 section 2. Self-consciousness as a feature and force. 2.1. self-conscious speakers versus Unself-conscious Monologist.
[212] Ibidem. Sternberg 1978: 254-303, also 1977: 138-143, 1985: 103-28.

omniscience; for instance, self-consciousness is an authorial privilege par excellence. [213]
Bakhtin writes:

> Self-consciousness as an artistic dominance in the creation of a character is
> by itself alone enough to destroy the monologic unity of the artistic world,
> but under the condition that a character as consciousness is really self-
> represented, and not depicted, i.e., does fuse with the author, does not
> become a speaking-trumpet of the authorial voice. Under this condition,
> consequently, the accents of consciousness of a character are really objective,
> and in the literary work there is a certain distance between a character and
> an authorial voice.[214]

In relation to the case of 'factual inaccuracy,' an important contribution to the narrative is
made by Ratliff.[215] Reed writes on Ratliff as a narrator: "he is the center of information, theory,
in *The Hamlet* and even though Chick has displaced him as our closest alliance. He pronounces
on Flem Snopes as often as Gavin and more accurately."[216] Reed is right as regards Ratliff's
knowledge. Because of the nature of his profession – 'a sewing machine agent '[217] – Ratliff has
the opportunity to speak to many across the Yoknapatawpha County not only Jefferson. In
addition, as we have seen, Ratliff is characterized as a kind and genuine character throughout
The Snopes Trilogy. In *The Hamlet*, for example, we hear Ratliff giving a piece of advice to
Flem, encouraging Flem to become a good and honest citizen (p. 51). In other words, he
wishes everybody well, even Flem Snopes, which increases the sense of his objectivity as a
narrator speaking about Flem. Andrew Hook describes Ratliff as "the most sympathetic figure"
in *The Trilogy.[218]* Moreover, among the three first-person narrators in *The Town,* Russian-born
Ratliff is the only one who escapes the attributes of the Jefferson-town ideology, even though
he is the leading source of knowledge on Flem Snopes and his relatives.

Let us now have a close look at Gavin Stevens. On the one hand, Stevens opposes Flem most
of all by laying the foundations of 'Snopsism' and blaming Flem for all the evil and corruption
in Jefferson.

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[213] Ibidem p. 338.

[214] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, pp. 29-30. "Самосознание как художественная доминанта в построении героя уже само по себе достаточно, чтобы разложить монологическое единство художественного мира, но при условии, что герой как самосознание действительно изображается, а не выражается, т.е. не сливается с автором, не становится рупором для его голоса, при том условии, следовательно, что акценты самосознания героя действительно объектированы и что в самом произведении дана дистанция между героем и автором. "

[215] Cf. Reed on Ratliff and his 'know-it-all cracker-barrel philosophy' and the disadvantages of Ratliff as a participant in the events narrator. *Faulkner's narrative*, p. 241.

[216] *Faulkner's narrative*, p. 243.

[217] *The Snopes Trilogy*, p. 824.

[218] *The Snopes Trilogy*, p. 175. In *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Fiction*, ed. A. Robert Lee. See also David Minter *William Faulkner: His Life and Work.* P. 181. The Johns Hopkins University Press, London, 1997 and p. 182 on Ratliff as a 'heroic character and one of Flem's victims."

> Oh yes: the horse home at last and stabled. And in time of course (we had only to wait, never to know how of course even though we watched it, but at least to know more or less when) to own the stable, Colonel Sartoris dis-stabled of his byre and rick in his turn as Ratliff and Grover Cleveland Winbush had been dis-restauranted in theirs. We not to know how of course since that was none of our business; indeed, who to say but there was not one among us but did not want to know: who, already realising that we would never defend Jefferson from Snopeses, let us then give, relinquish Jefferson to Snopeses, banker mayor alderman church and all, so that, in defending themselves from Snopeses, Snopeses must of necessity defend and shield us, their vassals and chattels, too (*The Town*, pp. 387-8).

On the other hand, the same Gavin Stevens has an affair with young Eula and then, fifteen years afterward, with Eula's daughter – Linda. As an active participant in the Snopes-related events, Gavin loses in narratorial objectivity.

With its multiperson narration, *The Snopes Trilogy* gets the privileges attributed commonly to narrational omniscience.[219] As Richardson, points out, multiperson narrative, in general, and 'we' narrative, in particular, offer an essentially dialectical perspective.[220] Celia Britton observes:

> [I]ts (we-narrative) extreme elasticity provides a point of view that is not limited to one character or period of time but moves around from one to another. (…) As such it creates a different representation of intersubjective relations between the individual characters, suggesting that people's most intimate feelings are known to the community.[221]

As typical Jeffersonians, Gavin Stevens and Charles Mallison are the main constituents of the 'we' narrator here. Richardson calls this type of 'we narration' conventional. In 'conventional' communal narration main characters use the personal plural pronoun 'we' to describe past experiences of the narrator who is a member of the experiencing group. Richardson gives Faulkner's "That Evening Sun" and "A Rose for Emily" as examples of such narrative.[222] In *The Town and the Mansion,* Stevens and Mallison speak in unison with all the male characters in Jefferson as well as with Ratliff. What we have here is a tendency towards 'communal

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[219] Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction,* p. 153. Ch. 8 Types of narration. p. 153.

[220] Celia Britton in Richardson *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction*, p. 58. Ch. 3. "Class and consciousness 'we' narration from Conrad to Postcolonial Fiction."

[221] Ibidem.

[222] Richardson, *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction*, pp. 58-59. Ch. 3 "Class and consciousness 'we' narration from Conrad to Postcolonial Fiction."

omniscience,'[223] which takes on full meaning when we consider *The Town* and *The Mansion* as classic examples of "we" narrative.

Fludernik and Richardson are of the opinion that 'we-narratives' are more natural than, for example, 'you-narratives.' [224] Richardson explains that unlike second-person narratives, which are "unnatural" from the outset – that is, that do not exist in 'natural narrative' – first-person plural narratives are typically directed to a much wider audience and do not immediately call attention to themselves as artificial constructs possible only in literature.[225] Fludernik and Richardson agree that the 'we-narrative' is especially effective in comparison to other, traditional modes of narrating. Fludernik observes that in the majority of cases 'we-narrative' represents nothing else but an extended first-person narrative.[226] Examples of such narratives are the experiences of childhood or the town/village life, depicting the first-person narrator in larger communities.[227] This is precisely the case in *The Town* and *The Mansion.* Richardson points out that 'we-narrative' is an excellent narrative method frequently used to express the shared sensibilities of the group.[228] A typical example of this type of 'we-narrative' Richardson finds in the children's sensibility as depicted by Faulkner in his short stories.[229]

As Dorothy J. Hale points out, however, the characters in *The Town* can 'speak for themselves.'[230] At the same time, Hale also observes that the individual voices contribute immensely to the voice of the community. Hale has in mind Ratliff and Gavin Stevens, more

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[223] Richardson, *Unnatural Voices*, p. 56. Richardson uses here the term 'a collective consciousness' 'we' as the development of modernist techniques of representation.

[224] Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural Narratology,'* pp. 224-25. Section. 6.1.1. 'Odd pronouns: multiple subjects, impossible protagonists, and invented pronominal morphology. Brian Richardson *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction.* Ch. 3. "Class and consciousness 'we' Narration from Conrad to Postcolonial Fiction, p. 37. Cf. Kate Hamburger in Fludernik (Chapter 18) Identity/alterity in Paul Cobley, *Narrative: the New Critical Idiom* pp. 265-66. Hamburger enlists 'we-narrative' together with you-narrative, present tense first-person narratives as non-natural storytelling situations with the impossible scenarios that they enact.

[225] Richardson, *Unnatural voices*, p. 37.

[226] Fludernik in Richardson, *Unnatural*, p. 146. Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural Narratology,'* p. 224.

[227] As an example of this type of narrative, Fludernik gives Mauro Senesi's "The Giraffe" (1963). Fludernik, *Towards*, p. 224. See Fludernik in Richardson, *Unnatural*, p 224 and p. 145 note 13 note to chapter 3.

[228] Richardson, *Unnatural*, p. 56. See similar opinion on the feelings of the compassion, irony, or other effective responses that the collective witness narrator can convey to the reader. Bal *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of the Narrative* (University of Toronto Press: 2009), p. 28. Bal points out that the position of the witness may be less crucial to the fibula, but can be key to the reader, and, thus, influence the veracity of the narrative with these analyses, the fundamental distinction between a narrative 'I' that talks about itself and a narrative 'I' that speaks of others turns out to be general.

[229] Richardson, *Unnatural*, "That Evening Sun" and Toni Morrison in *The Bluest Eye*, pp. 47 and 56.

[230] "As I Lay Dying," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, Vol. 23 no. 1. (Autumn, 1989): 5-23 (p.23).

than any other character in the entire trilogy. Charles frequently emphasizes that Ratliff and Gavin Stevens "talked together a lot":

> Because although Ratliff had never been to school anywhere much and spent his time travelling about county selling sewing machines (or selling or swapping or trading anything else for that matter), he and Uncle Gavin were both interested in people – or so Uncle Gavin said. Because what I always thought they were mainly interested in was curiosity. Until this time, that is. Because this time it had already gone a good deal further than just curiosity. This time it was alarm (*The Town*, p. 354).

Hale writes: "(…) the collective experience of a small community seems to create a social voice that is both individual and shared, that mediates between, at one extreme, Ratliff's local dialect and, at the other, Gavin's Harvard/Heidelberg vocabulary."[231] In this statement, Hale focuses upon the heterogeneity and social differences between the narrators in *the Town.* Hale's discussion of 'the individual voices in communal voice' with emphasis on social heterogeneity corresponds to the Bakhtinian concept of the novel as "a diversity of social speech types (…) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically arranged."[232]

Fludernik notes that 'we-narrative' is fairly common in spoken interaction, e.g., narratives involving groups: soldiers, sportspeople, students, scouts. Fludernik furnishes a rational explanation for that, arguing that because members of social groups share the experiences, their account of these events might be given in the first-person plural.[233] However, none of this groups are relevant to the present case. Margolin adds that collective narrative agents are common in non-literary records of group experiences: historical, political, and sociological narratives. Nonetheless, 'we-narrative' is rare enough to have escaped much theoretical analysis so far.[234] Another variant of the collective narrator is the collective witness. Genette,

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[231] Ibidem.

[232] Aczel, Richard, "Hearing Voices in Narrative Texts," *New Literary History*, Vol. 29. No. 3 (summer 1998): 467-500 (p. 488).

[233] Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, p. 31. Carr explains that 'we' fictional narratives justify the representation of collective mental events by highlighting the close affinity between individual consciousness, which results in similar thoughts, volitions, and emotions. Western social philosophers are divided into individualists, who hold that "any complete explanation of social events would have to trace them to the behaviour of those constituent parts" Carr, p. 123. Holquist argue that "society consists not merely of individuals but also of the relations among them and that the behaviour of individuals cannot even be understood apart from those relations." Ibidem. However, even the adherents of holism refuse to accept the personification of social groups – refuse to treat groups as analogous to persons. Carr, p. 122.

[234] Keen, Suzanne, *Narrative Form*, p. 37. Keen writes that first person plural narration is uncommon but intriguing e.g., "A Rose for Emily." In Ayn Rand's novella *Anthem* (1939, 1946), the singular narrator Equality 7-2521 speaks of 'we', but means I. he has been indoctrinated to understand himself as a part of group identity, and the novella reaches its climax when he discovers the forbidden concept of the individual and the sacred ego. Perhaps because of cases like this, plural narrator can seem gimmicky. Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural Narratology,'* p. 224. 6.1.1. 'Odd' pronouns: multiple subjects and invented pronominal morphology. Fludernik makes an observation that entire works written in first

however, asserts 'the collective witness as a narrator is an unremarkable variant of homodiegetic narration.'[235]

Hughes has analyzed the 'we-narrative' in Charles Dickens *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), and argues that because from the outset of the novel the narrator uses the pronoun 'we' the impression is that the narrator is speaking for a whole generation: "we had everything before us." Placing 'we' at the beginning of the literary text serves to indicate, from the outset, the feeling of belonging to the group. Richardson has made a similar point about the 'we' narrative in "A Rose for Emily." Richardson points out that as the narrative continues and the villagers unite in a common struggle, the 'we' designates a collective subject that becomes both more specific and more heterogenous.[236] Richardson classifies, therefore, four major types of 'we narrative under the following categories: conversational, standard, non-realistic and anti-mimetic[237] By conversational narrative Richardson means the unproblematic case of a single narrator describing events experienced by himself or herself and others, as found in simple 'we' stories, such as "That Evening Sun." Technically, this is not really 'we' narration, but a first-person singular narration that includes references to others.[238] In standard narration, the narrator discloses the inner thoughts or feelings of a group or when, as in Joan Chase's novel, the 'we' voice is shared experience, and third-person accounts of each girl's individual actions cannot be realistically squared.[239] The second and the third types in Richardson's classification do not apply to *The Snopes Trilogy.* The collective narrator in *The Town* and *The Mansion* consists of the male Jeffersonians who watch Flem's progress. Richardson's analysis of the multi-person narration in Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* relies heavily on the alternations of personal pronouns in the course of the narrative. Richardson argues that we-narrative is especially useful in juxtaposition with other modes of narrative – he, she,

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person plural are very uncommon: Pierre Silvain's Les Ediennes (sciagnac tytul z netu bo e z kreska) (1971) is the only consistent we novel, Fludernik can think of. Several we-texts alternate between we and I: Zamyatin's We (1924), John Barth's Sabbatical (1982), Jean Echenois's Nous trois (1992), or Gabrielle Wohman's Fahrplan (1968). See also the same examples in Richardson's Unnatural p. 146. For a more extensive discussion of we-narratives the reader is referred to Appendix pp. 141-42. In Richardson's *Unnatural*. Richardson gives the following examples of we-narratives, using the same division as Fludernik. Narratives entirely or largely in the 'we' form: William Faulkner's: "A Rose for Emily" (1930), "That Evening Sun" (1931), "A Justice" (1931), "Divorce in Naples" (1931), "Death Drag" (1932), "That Will Be Fine" (1935), "Shingles for the Lord" (1943), and "A Courtship" (1948).

[235] Genette (1980), footnote 15 p. 146.

[236] Richardson, *Unnatural voice*, p. 47. Ch.3. "Class and consciousness: 'we' narration from Conrad to Postcolonial Fiction." Richardson's analysis of the village (we-narrator) in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" as the synecdochic narrator and its evolution towards the end of the story in n actor-narrator we physically present in the story as a much smaller group of individuals acting and feeling in unision in a specific time and place.

[237] Richardson, *Unnatural Voices*, p. 59.

[238] Ibidem.

[239] Ibidem.

I.[240] However, such a pronominal analysis seems unnecessary in the case of *The Town* and *The Mansion,* since at the outset of *The Town* Charles Mallison equates unanimity of the first-person singular and first-person plural narrator.[241]

Richardson notes that the distinction between homodiegetic narrative and heterodiegetic narrative that Genette finds so fundamental is one which many recent writers cannot resist inverting.[242] We can only speak of the first-person narrative when the narrator is also a character. The distinction we have just made between first-and third-person narration includes further possible variants. The complex differences between heterodiegetic he-, they-, or you-narratives, or between homodiegetic I and we-narrative, cannot be encompassed in one single binary opposition.[243] Richardson argues that 'we-narratives' are in the majority of cases simultaneously first- and third-person discourses, and transcend either subtly or fundamentally oppositions outlined in different ways by Stanzel and Genette. 'We' narration oscillates between these two poles, occupying both at once.[244]

The Town and *The Mansion* are prime examples of how disparate is the 'we.' In the case of *The Town,* from the very start, the narrator acts as one unanimous we – a group that thinks and acts in unison.[245] The reader of *The Town* and *The Mansion* keeps in mind that Charles, Stevens, and Ratliff present the point of view of a larger group – white male residents of the Jefferson town. As Richardson suggests, first-person plural narratives are potentially different from first-person singular narratives since they may involve more accurate intersubjective beliefs as well as communal misprisions or even mass delusion.[246] Similarly to Richardson, Margolin argues that the choice of the particular grammatical form is both ideologically motivated and (more problematically) intended to foster the same ideological stance in the recipients' groups.[247] Margolin and Richardson aim to provide a definition, description, and typology of collective narratives. However, their opinions are divided as to what the collective narrative is. Margolin's definition of collective narrative rests on the idea that: "A narrative is a collective narrative if a collective agent occupies the protagonist role.[248] On the contrary,

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[240] Margolin in Richardson, *Unnatural*, p. 56. Richardson, *Unnatural*, pp 38-39.
[241] See Richardson, *Unnatural*, p. 38. Richardson on the beginning/opening of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, p. 38. Cf. Richardson "I etcetera," pp. 320-21 where Richardson contents that there is no unequivocal connection between a certain ideology and the use of a specific form of narration.
[242] Richardson, *Unnatural Voices*, p. 10.
[243] Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology,* pp. 31-32. Ch. 4. The Structure of Narrative: we-narratives
[244] Richardson, *Unnatural Voices*, p. 60.
[245] See Richardson, *Unnatural*, p. 38.
[246] Ibidem. Cf. Richardson, "I etcetera," pp. 320-21. Richardson argues that there is no unequivocal connection between a certain ideology and the use of the specific form of narration, meaning the first-person or third-person omniscient.
[247] Margolin, "Telling in the Plural: From Grammar to Ideology," *Poetics Today* 21:3 (Fall, 2000): 613.
[248] Margolin, Ibidem p. 591.

Richardson's analysis of collective narratives leans toward the position that in we-narratives a first-person narrator frequently uses the plural pronoun to denote the action of a group.[249] In my reading of *The Town*, I apply Genette's established rules of homodiegetic /heterodiegetic division of narratives, as based on the characteristics of the narrator as the teller of the story. To my mind, Margolin's definition is not only narrow but also simply incorrect in narratological analysis. Margolin's definition of collective narratives does not encompass collective witness narratives. Margolin argues that a collective narrative agent occurs in a given narrative if three conditions are satisfied:

(1) the argument position in numerous narrative propositions is occupied by an expression designating a group of some kind,

(2) the predicate position in these propositions is occupied by predicates that designate the group's holistic attributes or collective actions,

(3) the group as such fulfills a range of thematic roles in the narrated sequence.

To qualify, the collection must act as a plural subject or we-group, capable of forming shared group intentions and acting on them jointly.[250] A different type of collective agent is a community: a group with a shared sense of identity. With respect to individual group members, the narrative adopts a collective perspective on them. The individual is accordingly present as a part of a collectivity or a social self.[251] However, with respect to the group as a collective narrative agent, the portrayal of its physical, verbal and mental activities oscillates between two poles: description of a group-as-a-whole and of the individual as-group-members. Both individual and collective levels exist concurrently and are irreducible to each other so that an unresolved tension between the two is a basic feature of collective narration.[252] The tension between individual and collective levels of description reaches its climax in the representation of mental activity or experientiality, from perception to reflexive consciousness, since mental activity is inherently individual.[253] Another way of bridging the individual-collective division in this context is the employment of a singular 'we' sayer who speaks for the collective as a whole.[254] By definition, a collective narrative exists when the central agent of the narrated sequence consists of a group or collectivity acting as a body. The

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[249] Richardson, *Unnatural*, p. 39.
[250] Margolin, "Telling," p. 591.
[251] Ibidem, p. 592.
[252] Ibidem.
[253] Ibidem, p. 604. Margolin refers the interested reader to read on experientiality in Fludernik (1996: 12-13, 28-30).
[254] Ibidem, pp. 604 and 608.

narrative claims that constitute the core of a collective narrative focus accordingly on the interaction between two or more narrative agents, at least one of whom is a collectivity.[255] Ricoeur argues that humans' knowledge of the world is largely framed by narrative. We speak of our experiences or observations. Ricoeur points out that "we are born into a world of children as unspeaking children, we come into a world already full of our predecessor's narratives" (1981: 181-2).[256] He also observes that "[T]he largest part of our information about events in the world is, in fact, owing to knowledge through hearsay (1985: 156)." I want to focus on the way gossip and hearsay function in *The Snopes Trilogy* and in Faulkner's narrative in general. Ellen Goellner has written on gossip as the main code of communication and story-telling in *Light in August*:[257]

> Like gossip's dance through his fictional community. Faulkner's essays and experiments in *Light in August* work not forward toward a single, climatic and revelatory moment, but instead as a continuous redirection and transformation of textual energy through his characters' recounting and retellings, both of their lives and lives of others. In their gossip – their reinvention of what happened and why – and in the ceaseless repetitions –
> of names and family configurations, images and fears, solitude and remembering – that mark their stories.[258]

Similarly to *Light in August*, I would suggest, *The Town* is a composite of a we-witness narrative and the narrative possibilities of gossip.[259] Ratliff emphasizes that the men characters of Jefferson became even more watchful when Flem becomes a vice president of the bank. When, in the second year of his career at the bank, Flem transfers all his means to the rival bank, the male characters become even more suspicious:

> Then we watched Judge Stevens cross the Square from his office and
> go through the door and then we watched the two bonding fellers come out of the hotel and cross the Square with their little lawyers' grips, the young one toting his own grip but Sampson, the hotel porter, walking behind the white-vest one toting his, and Samson's least boy walking behind Samson toting what I reckon was the folded Memphis paper the white-vest. One had been reading while they et breakfast and they, except Samson and his boy, went in too. Then Lawyer come up by his-self and went in, and sho enough before extra long we heard the car and them Mayor de Spain druv up and parked and got out and says, 'Morning, gentlemen. Any of you fellers looking for me? Excuse me a minute while I step inside and pass good morning with our out-of-town guests and I'll be right with you (*The Town*, p. 434).

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[255] Ibidem, p. 608.

[256] Ricoeur in Paul Cobley, *Narrative: the New Critical Idiom* (Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York 2001) p. 19.

[257] Goellner, Ellen, "By Word of Mouth: Narrative Dynamics of Gossip in Faulkner's *Light in August*," *Narrative* Vol. No. 2. (1993: 105-123) p. 106.

[258] Goellner, p. 105.

[259] Ibidem, p. 107.

As Goellner suggests, Faulkner's use of the social act of gossip allows us to explore the possibility of locating the self within the community, the family, and the social status quo.[260] As Patricia Meyer Spacks observes, in relation to the social aspect of gossip, the "value of gossip at its highest level involves its capacity to create and intensify human connection."[261] Goellner also suggests that in *Light in August* gossip becomes "a dispersed public voice, representing a community judgment."[262] As a result, even gossip that takes place in private is a dialogic activity.[263] This is precisely the case in *The Town.* Finally, as Goellner observes, in many of the Yoknapatawpha novels Faulkner presents much of what happened on the plot level through gossip.[264] It is also gossip that discloses plot in *The Snopes Trilogy.* In *The Town*, we hear Ratliff telling Verner that Flem's father is an arsonist:

> Varner sucked his teeth and spat into the road. 'Name's Snopes,' he said. 'Snopes?' a second man said. 'Sho now. So that's him.' Now not only Varner but all the others looked at the speaker – a gaunt man in absolutely clean though and patched overalls and even freshly shaven (…) His name was Tull. 'He's the fellow that wintered his family in a old cottonhouse on Ike McCaslin's place. The one that was mixed up in that burnt barn of a fellow named Harris over in Grenier County two years ago.' 'Huh?' Varner said. 'What's that? Burnt barn?'
> 'I never said he done it,' Tull said. 'I just said he was kind of involved in it after a fashion you might say.' 'How much involved in it?' 'Harris had him arrested into court.' 'I see,' Varner said. 'Just a pure case of mistaken identity. He just hired it done.'(*The Hamlet*, p. 13).

Ratliff is a main source of gossip in the society of Jefferson, if not all Yoknapatawpha County. Ratliff's role in *The Snopes Trilogy* is equivalent to the function of the baltun (story teller) in Russian literature and folklore, like the baltun, his tales are oriented towards the wider audience.[265]As noted earlier, as a sewing-machine agent, Ratliff has the opportunity to travel

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[260] Ibidem.

[261] Myeer Spacks in Goellner, p. 110. Goellner's discussion the prevalent and destructive power of gossip in the hands of community see Goellner, pp. 112-123. For my discussion of the Jefferson-town racist and homophobic ideology see my MScR thesis 2011.

[262] Ibidem p. 107-8. Goellner argues that the voices that the voices of individual characters in *Light in August* are generally not as distinct as in *Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying.*

[263] Ibidem p. 109.

[264] Ibidem p. 108.

[265] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Collected* Works, vol. 6, p. 143. Bakhtin writes on the genre of skaz as follows: "Проблему сказа впервые выдвинул у нас Б.М. Эйхенбаум. Он воспринимает сказ исключительно как установку на устную форму повествования, установку на устную речь и соответствующее ей языковые особенности. Он совершенно не учитывает, что в большинстве случаев сказ есть прежде всего установка на чужую реч, а уж отсюда, как следствие, - на устную речь." Trans. "The problem of skaz was originally proposed in Russia by B.M. Ejchenbaum who perceives skaz solely as an orientation towards an oral form of narration, an orientation towards speech and its unique language characteristic. He does not quite take into consideration the fact that in the majority of cases skaz is

across the county and talk to various people. As we have seen, information in *The Snopes Trilogy* is spread by word of mouth. As soon as Flem's name crops up, it is associated with arson (p. 13). This is where Ratliff's mobility comes into play:

> 'Well,' the man in the buckboard said, 'I don't know as I would go on record as saying he set ere a one of them afire. I would put it that they both taken fire while he was more or less associated with them. You might say that fire seems to follow him around, like dogs follows some folks.' He spoke in pleasant, lazy, equable voice which you did not discern at once to be even
> more shrewd than humorous. This was Ratliff, the sewing-machine agent. He lived in Jefferson and he travelled the better part of four counties with his sturdy team and the painted dog kennel into which an actual machine neatly fitted (*The Hamlet*, p. 16).

Ratliff is an authority in Jefferson. Everybody respects him and many value his wisdom and ask his opinion on various matters. This is evident, for example, in the scene in *The Hamlet* with Varner asking Ratliff when Flem's father will start setting fire to barns and houses and what are the signs of this moment approaching (p. 18). There is also evidence, throughout *The Snopes Trilogy*, of general respect for Ratcliff:

> Oh yes, we knew that; we had Ratliff's word for that. Ratliff had to know a fact like that by now. After this many years of working to establish and maintain himself as what he uniquely was in Jefferson, Ratliff could not afford, he did not dare, to walk the streets and not have the answer to any and every situation which was not really any of his business. Ratliff knew: that not only Flem Snopes no longer a customer of the bank of which he was vice President, but that in the second year he had transferred his account to the other, rival bank, the old bank of Jefferson (*The Town*, p. 472).

As with Emily in "A Rose for Emily," the town gets to know about Flem's actions slowly, step by step. It is not simply a witness-narrative, but a detective narrative, with a collective investigator narrator: "So next morning first thing we heard was that Judge Dukinfield had recused his-self and designated Judge Stevens, Lawyer's paw, to preside in his stead.

And they ought to rung the courthouse bell this time sholy, because whether or not it was a matter of communal interest and urgency last night, it was now (*The Town*, p. 433).

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it is Ratliff more than anybody else in *The Snopes Trilogy* who seems to know the real nature of Flem Snopes:

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first and foremost an orientation towards another's speech and – as a consequence – towards verbalization."

One day one summer he drove up the southeast road into town in a two-mule wagon containing his wife and baby and a small assortment of house-furnishings. The next day he was behind the counter of a small back-alley restaurant which belonged to V.K. Ratliff. That is, Ratliff owned it with a partner, since he – Ratliff – had to spend most of his time in his buckboard (this was before he owned the Model T Ford) about the county with his demonstrator sewing machine for which he was the agent. That is, we thought Ratliff was still the other partner until we saw the stranger in the other greasy apron behind the counter – a squat uncommunicative man with a neat minute bow tie and opaque eyes and a sudden little hooked nose like the beak of a small hawk; a week after that, Snopes had set up a canvas tent behind the restaurant and he and his wife and baby were living in it. And that was when Ratliff told Uncle Gavin: 'Just give him time. Give him six months and he'll have Grover Cleveland' (Grover Cleveland Winbush was the partner) 'out of that café too' (*The Town*, pp. 353-4).

In *The Town* and *The Mansion*, the three homodiegetic narrators represent the anti-Snopes and anti-Snopsism ideology of the entire Jefferson town.

Conclusion: Faulkner's narrative competence.

Faulkner uses multiple narration in his long and short fiction. However, among nineteen novels only three (five, depending on how we count the novels included in *The Snopes Trilogy*) are polyphonic. This is the first study to investigate the novels in question as polyphonic novels in the Bakhtinian sense of the term. In order to further the understanding of Faulkner's polyphonic novels, we need first to understand what a polyphonic novel is. Literary polyphony is the ongoing dialogue between narrative voices of equal importance for the narrative transmission. This study has raised questions about the nature of a polyphonic narrative by attending to specific aspects of literary polyphony: the changes to the role of the plot and the new type of hero in *As I Lay Dying*; heteroglossia and dialogism in *Absalom, Absalom!;* and the carnival in *The Snopes Trilogy*. In the 1980s, Brodhead wrote the following about both the original and contemporary readers of Faulkner's work:

> The trouble with Faulkner's early readers, it is easy for us now to say, is that they did not know how to read him. The trouble with current readers is more likely to be that they do know how to read him – that, armed with the weapons that Faulkner criticism and academic instruction have made a standard issue, they can move right along towards a satisfactory 'reading' of Faulkner, without having to confront the difficulties (beauties too), often quite alien to what criticism describes, of Faulkner's texts themselves. Similarly, we can say, smugly but with much justice that Faulkner's early readers failed to recognize his greatness. Our own problem is more likely to be that we take his greatness as a given – that we find him important because he is important, losing the sense, even as we scour his work with our attention, of what gave his work a claim on our attention in the first place.[1]

I would argue that, some thirty years after the publication of Brodhead's article, we still do not know how to read Faulkner. Hence we frequently misunderstand him and misinterpret his works. The vast majority of Faulkner scholars, literary academics, and Faulkner readers still believe Faulkner to be primarily a stream of consciousness writer, and, as a result, they attribute the difficulties of a Faulkner novel to this particular narrative technique. Irving Howe, for example, nearly thirty years ago articulated this still widely held view:

> As an artist he [Faulkner] has not remained content with the familiar and well-worn. No other writer of our time except Joyce has so brilliantly exploited the stream-of-consciousness technique, and none has so successfully resisted the tendency of this technique to dissolve

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[1] Richard H. Brodhead, "Introduction: Faulkner and the Logic of Remaking" in *Faulkner: New Perspectives* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1983), pp. 1-19, p. 3.

into its flow the structure of plot and character. No other writer in
America has rebelled so vigorously against the 'common style.'[2]

Faulkner incorporates elements of stream of consciousness technique into his narratives but he is not a stream of consciousness writer. In this thesis, I wanted to show Faulkner, during his great creative period, as a creator of novelistic polyphony.

Faulkner is not an easy writer. Hugh Kenner writes on the demands that Faulkner's narrative puts on its readers, making them active listeners and avid investigators:

> [We] pick up such knowledge the way actual stranger does, never impending nor embarrassing the storyteller. We pick it up from clues, which means close reading: which means, since reading despite the oral convention is what we are after all doing, that we approach the Faulkner text very like New Critics, as if it had been written by James Joyce. Hence a curious strain at the heart of anyone's confrontation with a Faulkner novel. For ideal comprehension we must take notes, turn back to an earlier page, keep track of time schemes and family trees; we must simultaneously pretend that we need do none of this, need only listen to a voice we ourselves supply.[3]

Kenner makes an apt observation about the oral nature of Faulkner's narrative, and he backs up his argument with a quotation taken from *The Hamlet*:

> And after that, not nothing to do until morning except to stay close enough where Henry can call her until it's light enough to chop the wood to cook breakfast and then help Mrs. Littlejohn wash the dishes and make the beds and sweep while watching the road. Because likely any time now Flem Snopes will get back from wherever he has been since the auction, which of course is to town naturally to see about his cousin that's got into a little legal trouble and so get that five dollars. 'Only maybe he couldn't get it back to me,' she says, and maybe that's what Mrs. Littlejohn thought too, because she never said nothing.

After giving this example, however, Kenner clearly distinguishes between the writings of Joyce and Faulkner, stating that:

> Tough written, this is not *writing,* not by the criteria Stendhal taught us, or Flaubert, or Conrad, or Joyce. Not merely are its sentence rhythms those of oral narrative (rhythms Conrad eschewed despite his fondness for oral narrators; rhythms Joyce in synthesizing them beautifully in "Cyclops" nevertheless interrupted thirty-two times with interpolations from the domain of print): not only that, but it requires the reader to play the role of the hearer, participating in the

[2] Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 1991), p. 304.

[3] Hugh Kenner, 'Faulkner and the Avant-Garde', in *Faulkner: New Perspectives,* ed. Richard H. Brodhead (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983), pp. 62-73 (pp. 66-67).

> 'now' of 'any time now' and in the speculation about where Flem had
> been. Not the sentence rhythms but the role forced on the reader will
> serve to discriminate what is radically written from what is radically
> oral. The reader-as-listener must pretend as listeners do that he does
> not confront anonymously the anonymity of print, that he knows
> people who are barely named, that characters and their pasts need to
> be cunningly 'introduced' because knowledge of all that attaches to
> a name is part of the communal stock which includes the storyteller
> and of which the bounds are indefinite.[4]

Faulkner's narrators in his polyphonic novels seduce us as readers, generating an on-going undiminished interest in his sophisticated narratives, making them exceedingly complex and alluring. Ross Chambers writes: "Etymology tells us that the narrator is one who knows; one might infer that the narratee's motivation in authoring the act of narration lies in the prospect of acquiring information."[5] Chambers compares each act of narration to a simple narrative act of disclosure of information:

> However, imparting one's experience incorporates a problem; for to
> the extent that the act of narration is a process of disclosure, in which
> the information that forms the source of narrative authority is
> transmitted to the narratee, the narrator gives up the basis of his or
> her authority in the very act of exercising it. (…) There is no need to insist
> on the various well-known "tricks of the trade," used by teacher and by
> narrator, to "maintain interest" as it is called: divulgence is never
> never complete, the telling of the ultimate secret is indefinitely
> deferred – and it most often transpires, in art as in education, that
> there *is* no ultimate secret. The fact does remain, however, that at
> the end of a "successful" narration, the interest that authorized the act
> of narration is destroyed.[6]

Frank Kermode describes most readers' expectations in a similar way: "To read a novel expecting the satisfactions of closure and the receipt of a message is what most people find enough to do; they are easier with this method because it resembles the one that works for ordinary acts of communications."[7]

Chambers, however, is wrong in the statement quoted above. To read in the manner he suggests would mean we would read Faulkner's books only once. In fact, we need to re-read Faulkner's works multiple times to understand them well, and yet our interest remains

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[4] Kenner, p. 66.

[5] Ross Chambers, *Story and Situation Narrative Seduction and the Power of Fiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 50-72. (p. 50), Chapter Three, 'Narratorial Authority in 'The Purloined Letter.''

[6] Chambers, pp. 50-51.

[7] Frank Kermode, 'Secrets and Narrative Sequence', in *On Narrative,* ed. by W.J.T. Mitchell, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 79-97 (p. 84).

undiminished – we want to read him again and again. However, Chambers goes on to explain the nature of an interest in a narrative that expects more of its readers:

> (…) the production of art is what compensates for the divulgence of (fictional) information and that the texts' production of themselves as art has its object the gaining of a new kind of authoring (in the form of the reader's attention, respect, and indeed fascination) in exchange for the purely narrative authority being progressively lost.[8]

He goes on to call this new kind of authority "narrational" (as distinct from narrative authority) and refers to it as 'the art of seduction.'[9] Faulkner's polyphonic novels clearly belong to this type of novelistic prose.

To explore Faulkner's polyphonic novels, I have devoted individual chapters to one aspect of polyphony at a time. In addition, the scope of this study was extended to include a range of more recent Western literary theorists such as Ricoeur, Bremond, Genette, and Fludernik. The thesis intends to contribute to the existing knowledge on the polyphonic novel and Faulkner's polyphonic novel in particular, by demonstrating similarities between Bakhtinian sociolinguistics and the more widely understood Western philosophy and literary theory. The thesis works strictly within narratology based on the presuppositions of Bakhtin's sociolinguistics. For this reason, I have focused on polyphony rather than such Bakhtinian concepts as the catechism and the carnivalesque.

Warwick Wadlington writes on the frequently blurred demarcating line between Faulkner's characters: "Yes it is significant that Faulkner continues to struggle with the false binaries between private and public, individual and collective (…). Dividing 'I' from 'we', 'us' from 'them' is a tragic cultural mistake in Faulkner. Learning to say 'I' as well as 'we', 'we' as well as 'I' is a major part of what is at stake in reading him."[10] Faulkner's polyphonic novels serve as prime material for the demonstration of the Bakhtinian concepts of inner and outer dialogue, namely because of the way Faulkner presents the ideological sickness of the Jefferson-town with their xenophobic politics towards strangers and their racial discrimination.

A number of possible future studies, using Bakhtin's sociopoetics to explore Faulkner's works, are apparent. Firstly, further research could concentrate on the direct investigation of Bakhtin's carnivalesque and catechism at work in Faulkner's polyphonic

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[8] Chambers, p. 51.
[9] Chambers, p. 51.
[10] Warwick Wadlington, 'Conclusion: The Stakes of Reading Faulkner – Discerning Reading', in *The Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner,* ed. Philip M. Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 197-220 (p. 218).

novels, bringing into focus, in this way, Faulkner's characteristic subject matter as a regional writer engaged with the history of the American South. Secondly, because more work will need to be done to close the subject of Faulkner's polyphonic narrative, further cross-sectional work on Faulkner's polyphonic novels could be undertaken. This would bring a mixture of cultural and narratological readings to Faulkner's polyphonic novels. Another important Bakhtinian idea is his concept of time-space – the chronotope. The precise mechanisms of heteroglossia and chronotope remain to be elucidated. Attention could be paid, in a future study, to Bakhtin's topographic poetics of encounter in his analysis of the chronotopes of the road and the threshold using Faulkner's novels as an example.

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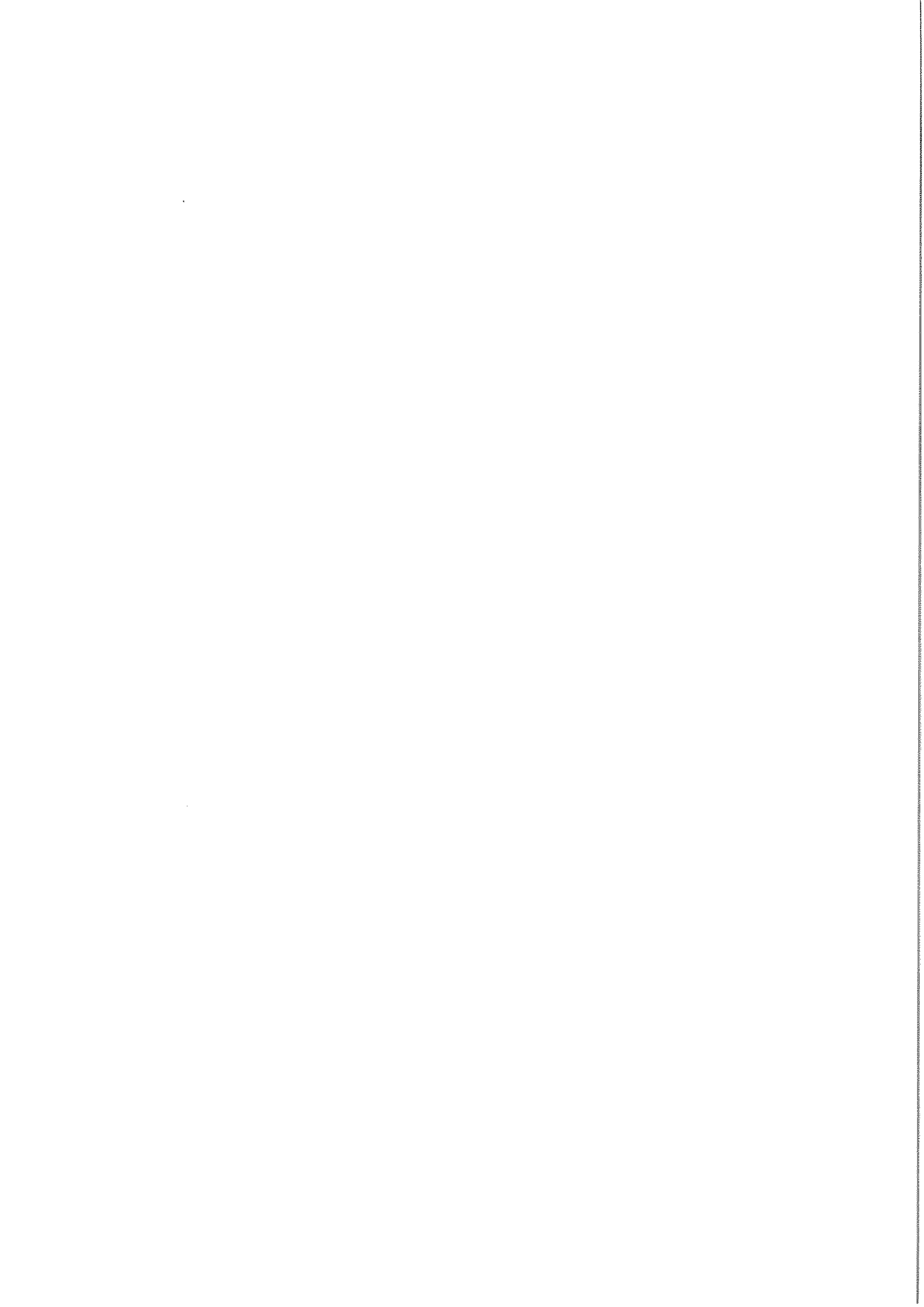
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