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## "As the stereopticon condenses into one instantaneous field": The reader's holographic reality in part IV of Faulkner's *The Bear*

Sandra Kay Alps

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// "AS THE STEREOPTICON CONDENSES INTO ONE INSTANTANEOUS FIELD" //

THE READER'S HOLOGRAPHIC REALITY  
IN FAULKNER'S PART IV OF THE BEAR

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
English Composition

---

by  
Sandra Kay Alps  
June 1989

"AS THE STEREOPTICON CONDENSES INTO ONE INSTANTANEOUS FIELD":  
THE READER'S HOLOGRAPHIC REALITY  
IN PART IV OF FAULKNER'S THE BEAR

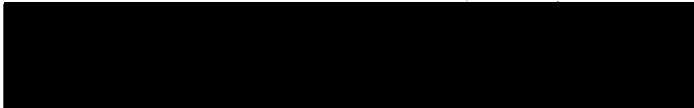
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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
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San Bernardino

---

by  
Sandra Kay Alps  
June 1989

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## Abstract

Criticism on Faulkner's work often focuses on his characteristic style and alludes to the difficulty readers have entering Faulkner's world. Examining the reader's experience is an effective means of understanding the power of Faulkner's rhetoric and style. However, the sense of reality underlying Faulkner's work is an integral part in the reader's experience as well.

Stepping beyond the bounds of literary criticism, the theories of quantum physics provide insight into the relationships between what might be called "holographic knowledge" and linguistic experience, and between the fictional world and the reader's sense of reality. The particular features of Faulkner's style and rhetoric examined here in relation to the reader's altered sense of reality are: the repetition of key terms, the characteristically long, ongoing sentences, the rhetorical device of the ledgers which create an altered sense of time, the relationship between vivid, concrete images and abstractions, all of which contribute to the powerful, evocative world Faulkner creates.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jennifer Randisi, for introducing me to Faulkner's world, and for providing me with the insight and the inspiration to enter it.

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## Introduction

Initial encounters with Faulkner's novels often result in the reader's frustration, confusion, and lack of initial engagement. The difficulty is said to lie in Faulkner's unique style.<sup>1</sup> However, a deeper, more fundamental difficulty exists, which actually determines how and why Faulkner uses language to create a particular kind of reading experience. Underlying any work of fiction are assumptions about the nature of reality and the controlling forces which determine the events of the fictional world. The assumptions underlying Faulkner's work affect the reader's sense of reality during the reading experience.

Criticism on the work of Faulkner has often focused on his characteristic style. The long, complex sentence constructions, unconventional punctuation usage, and rhetorical patterns, all contribute to a particular, unmistakable style evident throughout Faulkner's work. Among critical approaches to Faulkner's work, the reader-response approach illuminates the subtleties of Faulkner's style. However, a strictly literary approach provides an incomplete conception of Faulkner's work. The proponents of the new physics have adopted the hologram as metaphor for understanding the nature of the universe. Faulkner's characteristic rhetoric and style reflect what one might call, metaphorically, a "holographic" view of reality,

particularly in terms of the reader's experience.<sup>2</sup>

Syntactical and rhetorical analysis will illuminate this holographic sense of reality reflected in Faulkner's style and in the reader's experience of The Bear, Part IV.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout The Bear, Faulkner alludes to the holographic nature of time and space. While exploring the story's central issues, in Part IV, Faulkner defines metaphorically, the relationship between the linguistic experience, shared by the characters and the reader, and the issues which are central to the story:

McCaslin merely lifting one hand, not even toward the ledgers: so that, as the stereopticon condenses into one instantaneous field the myriad minutia of its scope, so did that slight and rapid gesture establish in the small cramped and cluttered twilit room not only the ledgers but the whole plantation in its mazed and intricate entirety . . . the whole edifice intricate and complex . . . (298)

The metaphor of the stereopticon, an archaic device which superimposes one image on another, conveys the holographic notion of reality: "the edifice intricate and complex" is the entire social and economic system of the South "condensed into one instantaneous field" represented in this single, subtle gesture. The stereopticon also provides a metaphor for understanding the altered sense of time and



space and the role of the reader's developing linguistic experience in The Bear, Part IV.

Criticism on Faulkner's work frequently focuses on the reader's activities. Conrad Aiken's article, "William Faulkner: The Novel As Form," an early critical work on Faulkner's style (published in 1939), exemplifies the altered sense of reality the reader experiences in Faulkner's work. Aiken states that "Mr. Faulkner's style, though often brilliant and interesting, is all too frequently downright bad" (650). Readers often express frustration, yet, as Aiken admits, Faulkner's prose captivates the reader and conveys a sense that much more is going on than merely the intentional confusion of the reader. What Aiken fails to realize is that this intentional confusion is an integral element in the power of Faulkner's rhetoric on the reader.

Aiken explains the overall effects of Faulkner's writing and what he believes Faulkner is trying to accomplish through his syntactical style:

It is as if Mr. Faulkner, in some sort of hurried despair, had decided to try to tell us everything, absolutely everything, every last origin or source or quality or qualification, and every possible future or permutation as well, in one terrifically concentrated effort: each sentence to be as it were, a microcosm. And it must be admitted that the practice is annoying and distracting. (651)

Aiken seems torn between the means--the difficult reading process--which he describes candidly, and the ends--the effects of Faulkner's style.

But more important, he points to the kind of reality Eastern mystics have understood for centuries--the sense of reality now emerging in the Western scientific community. The notion of the microcosm--the whole enfolded in the parts--is, in a simplified sense, the holographic paradigm. What Aiken finds "annoying and distracting" is a result of his reluctance to redefine his own expectations of fiction which probably depend upon his previously held conceptions of time and space. What Faulkner, by his own admission, has attempted and often succeeded in doing is capturing all of time in a part--the single sentence.

While serving as Writer in Residence at the University of Virginia in 1957-1958, almost twenty years after Aiken's critical work was published, Faulkner himself described what he was trying to accomplish with his use of long, complex sentences.

That is a matter of the carpenter trying to find the hammer or the axe that he thinks will do the best job. Another thing is, everyone has a foreknowledge of death that is, he will have only a very short time comparatively to do the work and he is trying to put the whole history of the human heart on the head of a pin, you might say.

(Gwynn 84)

Faulkner reveals his desire to capture the whole of time in the moment. Time is a central force in Faulkner's work, both in form and in content. In part IV of The Bear, the individual perception of time in the characters and the reader is explored.

Aiken also points out specific reasons for his negative criticism of Faulkner's work, and as he does this, he describes the reading process:

It is distracting to have to go back and sort out the meaning, track down the structure from clause to clause, then only to find that after all it doesn't matter, and that the obscurity was perhaps neither subtle nor important. (651)

Ironically, Aiken's negative criticism is exactly right. His description of the reader's activities point to what makes Faulkner's work so engaging for the reader. The paradoxes and ambiguities which result from the reader's activities are as much a source of meaning as the concrete images Faulkner ties his abstractions to.

Aiken's awe and frustration are demonstrated through the stream metaphor he uses to describe the effect Faulkner's style has on the reader:

One has had of course, to emerge from the stream, and to step away from it, in order to properly see it; and as Mr. Faulkner works precisely by a

process of immersion, of hypnotizing his reader into remaining immersed in his stream, this occasional blunder produces irritation and failure. . . . But, despite the blunders, . . . the wilful bad writing . . . the style as a whole is extraordinarily effective; the reader does remain immersed, wants to remain immersed. . . . What Mr. Faulkner is after, in a sense, is a continuum. He wants a medium without stops or pauses, a medium which is always of the moment, and of which the passage from moment to moment is as fluid and undetectable as in the life itself which he is purporting to give. It is all inside and underneath, or as seen from within and below; the reader must therefore be steadily drawn in; he must be powerfully and unremittingly hypnotized inward and downward to that image stream. [emphasis Aiken's] (652)

Aiken weighs the difficulty of the reading process with the rewards gained from reading Faulkner's work. And, finally, in his analysis, he leaves the immediate frustration of Faulkner's style behind and admits to the power of Faulkner's rhetoric. Aiken's description of the reader's activities is wonderfully accurate, and provides a point of departure for a close analysis of some of the ways Faulkner's style, particularly his use of complex, unconventional

syntax and rhetorical devices, work to create a holographic experience in the reader. After taking a closer look at the implications the new physics have on the reader's relationship to the fictional world, in Chapter One, the contrast between Ike's wilderness experience and linguistic experience of working through the land ownership issues, is explored in Chapter Two. Faulkner's characteristic rhetorical devices and syntactical strategies are the focus of Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, the reader's holographic sense of time is explored through an examination of Faulkner's use of the ledgers as a powerful rhetorical device. Chapter Five focuses on the main character's definition of truth and its relationship to linguistic experience.

## Chapter One: Holographic Reality And The Reader

We (that indivisible divinity that operates in us) have dreamed the world. We have dreamed it as enduring, mysterious, visible, omnipresent in space and stable in time; but we have consented to tenuous and eternal intervals of illogicalness in its architecture that we might know it as false.

Jorge Luis Borges Other Inquisitions

The language we use to describe the world and to formulate thoughts is based on the notion of a world "out there," separate and distinct from us as individuals; as Borges puts it, the world is "omnipresent in space and stable in time." Inherent in conventional uses of language is the assumption that the world has a distinct order with or without the human observer. In Wholeness and the Implicate Order, David Bohm points to the importance of exploring this aspect of language.

Every language form carries a kind of dominant or prevailing world view, which tends to function in our thinking and in our perception whenever it is used, so that to give a clear expression of a world view contrary to the one implied in the primary structure of a language is usually very difficult. It is therefore necessary in the study of any

general language form to give serious and sustained attention to its world view, both in content and in function. (46)

Faulkner's own particular style conveys an underlying world view which differs from the typical Western world view. Before proceeding with an analysis of the ways in which Faulkner's use of language creates an altered sense of time and space, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the implications the principles of new physics have on the idea of reality and their relationship to language.

Shortly after Max Planck developed a mathematical formula to explain the "discontinuous behavior of matter when it was involved with the emission of light or the absorption of heat energy" (Wolf 67) in 1900, Einstein developed his Theories of Relativity. These discoveries mark a turning point in human concepts of time and space. Physicists Neils Bohr, Erwin Shroedinger, Louis Victor de Broglie, Max Born, Werner Heisenberg, and many others since, worked to develop the theories of quantum mechanics and have begun examine their implications. The nature of quantum mechanics leads to a basic change in the definition of reality and the relationship of reality to human consciousness. Quantum theory leads to the conclusion that

there is actually no such thing as pure energy or pure matter. Every aspect of the universe seems neither to be a thing or a no-thing, but rather

exists as a kind of vibration or energetic expression. (Wolf 106)

At the sub-atomic level there are no barriers between "things." Human thoughts and perceptions are not separate from the "vibrations or energetic expressions." The implications of this theory are complex and difficult to comprehend because they invalidate the concept of reality we had come to accept. Ken Dychtwald summarizes the basic ideas of quantum mechanics and alludes to the implications these theories have on human notions of reality.

As the quantum physicists look deeper and deeper into the most elemental building blocks out of which the so-called 'physical world' is constructed, they begin to discover that the line between what is matter and what is energy is not a very clear line at all. Instead, the basic particles of life seem to exist somewhere in the never-never land between these two extreme states of being. The building blocks of life seem to resemble vibrational probabilities more than they do slabs of wood or sheets of metal.

Similarly, as metaphysicists look deeper and deeper into the most elemental building blocks of the so-called 'non-physical' or psychological world, they are also discovering that the world of matter and energy, or body and mind, are not quite



as distinct as many of us have been led to believe. Similarly, the basic particles or units of consciousness seem to exist somewhere in the energetic never-never land between these two extreme states of being . . . matter and energy only appear to exist in the illusory context where time has been stopped, or where there is no time, or where the human mind attempts to freeze time with thoughts and cameras.

What this point suggests is that the various aspects of the universe express themselves in the form of intermingling, yet distinct energetic interference patterns which contain information that defines their nature, spirit, style, consistency and in fact, identity. (Dychtwald 109-10)

The far-reaching implications of quantum theory have led to a dramatic movement which has, appropriately enough, served to eradicate many of the boundaries between and among various disciplines of thought.<sup>4</sup> "Quantum theory and relativity had a revolutionary effect upon [the] Newtonian approach, not only in transforming the formalism of physics but also in changing the worldview that was associated with it" (Peat 4). One of the researchers at the forefront of the New Physics is David Bohm, who has developed the idea of the holomovement and described some of its implications. To alleviate one stumbling block in understanding, Bohm accepts

the etymological implications of the term "theory" as "a form of insight, i.e. a way of looking at the world, and not a form of knowledge of how the world is. Hence, the description of the universe as holographic is only a metaphor for something which can only be represented, rather than known in absolute terms. F. David Peat expresses a similar idea in Synchronicity:

scientific theories can never come to life of themselves, they must always remain what they are--theories, objective accounts of the world that must be set beside the immediacy of our personal experience and those rare flashes of insight that suggest a deeper reality lying beyond the world of appearances. (1)

If this distinction is not made, the fragmentation, which Bohm and other holomovement proponents are working to overcome, simply continues.<sup>5</sup> Bohm describes the nature of the interrelationship between all aspects of the physical world through the holographic model. Bohm concludes that

physical entities which seem to be separate and discreet in space and time [are] actually linked or unified in an implicate or underlying fashion. In Bohm's terminology, under the explicate realm of separate things and events is an implicate realm of undivided wholeness, and this implicate whole is simultaneously available to each explicate part.

In other words, the physical world itself seem[s] to be a gigantic hologram, with each part being in the whole and the whole being in each part. (2)

The holographic model of the physical world eliminates theoretically and metaphorically the boundaries between human perception and the world it perceives.

The Western notion of reality is based on conceptual boundaries which determine expectations of and relationships to the objects and events of the physical world. The holographic notion of reality opposes the tendency to order aspects of the outer world. As Bertram Russell puts it, "Order, unity and continuity are human inventions, just as truly as catalogues and encyclopedias" (Leshan 24). The greatest difficulty is that an individual's notion of reality is so much a part of himself that he cannot easily escape it or develop a clear view of how it shapes and determines his sense of reality.

The older view of consciousness is that it is something that arrived late on the scene of history and found everything already well-organized.

Consciousness then discovered reality. (Leshan 24)

This notion of reality holds that reality and consciousness are separate, which results in a fragmentation reflected in thought and particularly in language.

Since the exploration of the quantum world began, gradual changes in the human sense of reality have occurred,

particularly among members of the scientific community.

Today science is beginning to view the nature of consciousness quite differently. Classifying and organizing the world are seen as human activities. What we can observe of reality is our own organization of it. Reality is a compound like water, with consciousness one of the elements. But we can never hope to know what the compound would be without consciousness. (Talbot 135)

Even if the relativity of reality is accepted, we cannot simply do away with the constructs we create and the order we impose upon the world and the events we experience. As humans who function in an established social world, we must create agreed upon notions of reality. Michael Talbot expresses the implications of living in a world created by the individual perceiver:

In everyday life the illusion of a single reality is the result of the constructive interference of all possible realities. We allow our perceptions to be swayed by the consensus and the consensus determines what phantasmagorie we choose as the arbitrary one reality. The paradigm shift implied by the new physics is that there is no "out there" reality. (135)

The constructs we create in order to understand and maintain a constant relationship with the world are comfortable and

primary to our way of thinking and functioning, but awareness of these constructs and ways we might learn to see beyond them is part of acknowledging the "illogicalness in the architecture [of reality] that we might know it as false."

Our notions of order are pervasive, for not only do they involve our thinking but also our senses, our feelings, our intuitions, our physical movement, our relationships with other people and with society as a whole and, indeed, every phase of our lives. It is thus difficult to 'step back' from our old notions of order sufficiently to be able seriously to consider new notions of order.

(Bohm 176)

Language is the central source through which human beings develop the world view they hold; in fact, language used in a conventional manner is inseparable from an individual's view of reality. As Ludwig Wittgenstein said, "The limits of my language are the limits of my world" (Clark vii).

Among critical approaches to literature, reader-oriented or phenomenological approaches are validated by the holographic paradigm, by the concept of reality purported by the new physics. Formalist critics' tendency to separate the object of perception--the literary text--from the perceiver--the reader--is the practice reader-response critics argue against. Similarly, quantum mechanics

determines that the observer affects the behavior of subatomic activity, and therefore, that the observer creates the outcome of subatomic events. In the reader's experience of a fiction, the reader is the participant rather than the observer, who creates meaning, and whose activities are the work of literature. In Faulkner's work, attention to the readers' activities is important because they must suspend their fragmented sense of reality in order to enter the holographic sense of reality Faulkner's style reflects.

In his essay "Literature In the Reader: Affective Stylistics," Stanley Fish recalls Yeats' question: How can we know the dancer from the dance? (Tompkins 70). In terms of time, the dancer is the dance, because the dance really only exists while it is happening; in this same way, according to Fish's reader-response approach to literature, the text is the reader's actual experience of it. Wolfgang Iser states:

The literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two. . . . the convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed, but always must remain virtual, as it is not to be identified either with the reality of the text or with the individual disposition of the reader.

(50)

Quantum mechanics supports the notion of an object being nonexistent until the consciousness perceives it. Literary theory, particularly reader-response criticism, has become accepted as a legitimate approach to reveal a fictional work's subtle effects as they occur. Quantum physics and the holographic model of reality validate the reader-response approach through discoveries made in an entirely different field. The theoretical support offered to literary criticism through new physics points to the eradication of boundaries once thought indestructible.

As a method for stylistic and rhetorical analysis, the reader-response approach provides an account of how a reader's sense of reality is affected during the act of reading. The following analysis of part IV of The Bear uses reader-response methodology to unravel the reader's experience of Faulkner's underlying sense of reality.

## Chapter Two: Holographic Knowledge And Linguistic Experience

The ultimate nature of reality transcends language.

--Michael Talbot

Throughout his work Faulkner points to the inadequacies of language as a means of deep understanding. In The Bear the main character, Ike, undergoes a broad range of experiences in the wilderness through which he gains what might be called "holographic knowledge." These experiences are, in one sense, beyond the bounds of language to describe. Yet, through his unconventional style, Faulkner overcomes the inherent limitations of language to convey the holographic sense of the wilderness Ike experiences.

In Part IV, the reader shares the linguistic experience with Ike, moment by moment, as he sorts through and articulates the issues he is trying to understand. The wilderness concept established throughout the first three sections of the novel serves as the foundation for the reader's linguistic experience of the complex issues explored in Part IV. Like the stereopticon which merges "the myriad minutia of its scope," Ike's recognition of the wilderness must be superimposed with the linguistic experience he undergoes in Part IV.

Faulkner expresses the ironic relationship between language and understanding throughout his work: words are



inadequate, but they are the medium we know and are bound to. In Mysticism and the New Physics, Michael Talbot discusses the limits of language as a means of understanding:

We have discovered that our language limits our experience of "realities" encountered in both mysticism and the new physics; and yet our linguistic ways of thinking dominate our life [sic]. We do not realize that outside the narrow plane of words there may be vast realms of conscious experience which we are denying ourselves. We have been culturally conditioned to think with words. (182)

Because we have learned to "think with words," language is the means for first ordering deep understanding, then bringing it to the surface, and finally to an intellectual level. Faulkner is a writer; his medium of expression is language. However, he creates a world with words which become his attempt to overcome the limitations inherent in language.

One of the ways Faulkner transcends the ordinary boundaries of language lies in the distinctive reading experience he provides the reader, who must suspend previously held expectations and alter reading strategies to enter the world Faulkner creates. The writer's characteristic development of rhetorical patterns and syntactical structures creates a reading experience which requires the reader

to focus on unraveling meaning by working through language; the reading experience --the sorting through, the continual grasping for clues in a series of linguistic mysteries, the "immersion" into the long, ongoing sentences, --creates a very different kind of understanding for the reader which conventional uses of language do not convey. The thought process the reader undergoes while engaged in reading Faulkner's work takes the shape and form of Faulkner's prose, so that her sense of reality is altered, at least for a time.

Ike's understanding of the wilderness might be called "global" or "holographic" --it encompasses a wide range of experiences and emotions. John Welwood defines holographic knowledge as the broad range of experiences which are understood outside the bounds of language:

Felt meaning can be seen as an experiential manifestation of holographic compression, where many bits of information function all together as a whole... The felt sense is blurry in that it includes all [emotional, physical, experiential aspects] implicitly. (129)

Welwood substantiates the idea of holographic knowledge through what David Bohm calls the Implicate Order --the indivisible order which underlies the whole universe. Bohm states that the holographic storage of light waves may be generalized to include one's thoughts, feelings, urges, will

and desire' [which] have their ultimate ground in the implicate order of the larger universe." The "thoughts, feelings, urges" of the individual are, according to Bohm and many proponents of the new physics, interconnected with the order of the entire universe, and even contain the implicate order of the entire universe. Language is an abstract human system which, in its conventional form, has a limited capacity to convey this interconnectedness. This definition of holographic knowledge describes both Ike's developing wilderness concept and the reader's experience of Faulkner's work.

Ike's holographic knowledge of the wilderness comes from direct experience with it, and more through his intuition than his intellect. He learns the skills of survival and the ritual meaning of the hunt not only from Sam Fathers and the other men in the camp, but more from the wilderness itself. He does not reach the point where he feels the need to articulate the issues involved in land ownership until Part IV, although the narrator provides numerous references throughout the first three parts of the novel to the significant issues Ike later explores. It is as though both Ike and the reader gain a sense of the issues before they are explored and articulated. The opening paragraphs of the novel allude to the point in Ike's development before he has gained the understanding or the need to articulate his understanding:

He was sixteen. For six years now he had been a man's hunter. For six years now he had heard the best of all talking. It was of the wilderness, the big woods, bigger and older than any recorded document:--of white man fatuous enough to believe he had bought any fragment of it, of Indian ruthless enough to pretend that any fragment of it had been his to convey . . . (191)

It is the actual experience, more than "the best of all talking" which gives Ike his deep understanding of the wilderness. The reader's understanding develops experientially along with Ike's. Ike does not experience his recognition of the wilderness until he goes into the woods and learns the skills and values necessary to actually see the bear.

Ike's profound moment of understanding, when he goes into the wilderness without his gun, reflects the notion of holographic knowledge through the language and syntactical treatment Faulkner uses to describe it.

He had left the gun; by his own will and relinquishment he had accepted not a gambit, not a choice, but a condition in which not only the bear's heretofore inviolable anonymity but all the ancient rules and balances of hunter and hunted had been abrogated. (207)

Faulkner's characteristic use of the "not...but" construc-

tion creates an antithetical relationship between the sentence elements. In this case, the antithesis is between possible interpretations of Ike's act. The effect of the negation, balanced with the assertion, is that the reader understands both what is and what is not, thus emphasizing the assertion.

So that the reader is ingrained with the importance of the act, Faulkner repeats the word "relinquish" over and over again, throughout the first three parts of the story. This repetition prepares the reader for the more abstract use of the word which, through repetition, becomes a concept in Part IV. Without the gun, Ike has given in to the wilderness.

The abstract terms, tied to concrete details, give Ike's actions symbolic significance. The language Faulkner uses to describe Ike's act conveys its ritualistic connotations and the mythic qualities of the bear. What Ike enters into is not a "gambit," a word which refers to the game of chess, and implies a competitive relationship. The "rules and balances" of the hunt, modified by the word "ancient," no longer stand because the gun has been left behind. The bear's "inviolable anonymity" has also been abolished through Ike's simple act. The bear becomes a symbol of the wilderness through the language used to describe him. But these words also indicate the integrity, the wholeness of the wilderness. Ike's relationship to the wilderness is not one

of competition, conquering, or overpowering; it is one of cooperation, of Ike giving in to its order, and becoming part of its wholeness, in a sense, part of the "inviolable anonymity" with the bear.

Only occasionally does Faulkner use short sentences. While Ike is in the woods to see the bear, for example, Faulkner uses short sentences to convey the deliberateness of Ike's actions. The passage opens with one of Faulkner's typically long sentences, followed by several of the short, declarative sentences Faulkner infrequently employs. The power of the passage lies in the deviation from the long, ongoing sentences the reader has come to expect. The short declarative sentences work because the reader's experience is layered behind them.

Ike's experience is captured for the reader in the concrete details, and the short sentences which, in this case, follow a more abstract analysis of Ike's act:

He had already relinquished, of his will, because of his need, in humility and peace and without regret, yet apparently that had not been enough, the leaving of the gun was not enough. He stood for a moment--a child, alien and lost in the green and soaring gloom of the markless wilderness. Then he relinquished completely to it. It was the watch and the compass. He was still tainted. He removed the linked chain of the one

and the looped thong of the other from his  
overalls and hung them on a bush and leaned the  
stick beside them and entered it. (208)

The polysyndeton, (the use of additional conjunctions between elements) characteristic of Faulkner's style, develops the concrete description of Ike's actions: each simple and deliberate. The reader adjusts to these, and is hit, somewhat unexpectedly, with the power of the last element: "and entered it." The last words of the paragraph have the greatest impact on the reader. The power of the last element lies in the reader's expectations, in that the wilderness is something which can be "entered," but only after the trappings of civilization are left behind. Through leaving behind the compass, Ike no longer has the human system of direction-- north, south, east, and west-- represented in the instrument which defines space in human terms. When he leaves the watch behind, Ike relinquishes the linear concept of time which the watch measures. He must assume the notions of time and space inherent in the "markless wilderness" in order to "enter it."

Also interesting is Faulkner's use the pronoun "it." The referent for "it" must be supplied by the reader, and because the reader participates in the naming of "it" --she assumes the power that comes with the act of naming. The reader lends her interpretation of reality to the developing story. This kind of involvement exemplifies

the importance of the reader as participant rather than observer. According to both quantum physicists and reader-response critics, there can be no passive observer--the act of observation affects, even creates, the reality.

The description of Ike's experience with the bear, his of recognition of the wilderness, reflects not only the development of Ike's holographic knowledge of the wilderness, but also the holographic experience of the reader. Faulkner describes the actions leading to Ike's recognition of the wilderness as a condensed whole in one continuous image stream. The reader's experience of the language--the experiential motion of working through the Faulknerian sentence-- is holographic, in that the long sentences reveal to the reader a wide range of subtle meaning. Language condenses the scene, as the stereopticon condenses the "myriad minutia" into one vivid image.

Another important effect of Faulkner's style is the sense of motion the reader experiences while working through the long, ongoing sentences such as the previous one. Many critics have discussed Faulkner's emphasis on motion in the themes and texture of his work. Walter Slatoff points to the "antithesis of motion and immobility" (Slatoff Quest for Failure: A Study of William Faulkner 11). Richard Adams states: "Paradoxically, this opposition between dynamic life and static word is a basic element of Faulkner's style, a principle means by which the motion of life is artificial-



ly--and artistically--stopped" (106).

The nature of motion is also one of the central paradoxes of quantum physics. In Taking the Quantum Leap, Fred Alan Wolf describes the observer's effect on the paradox of motion:

Both . . . attributes, momentum and position, are potentially present, but not actually present, until an attempt is made to measure these attributes. How we choose to compromise will determine whether the wavelength (momentum) side of reality or the particle (location) side of reality is manifested. . . . We never actually lose information. Rather, we shape it. That is, we alter potential reality, making it actual. What is hidden in our acts of observation is still potentially present. (140)

The human systems of measurement and observation affect what the observer sees: motion or position. Faulkner's style, too, exhibits this paradox of motion and stasis. The ironic nature of language, "the opposition between dynamic life and static word," is an inseparable part of Faulkner's style. Faulkner describes this relationship between the motion of life and the static quality of language:

You write a story to tell about people, man in his constant struggle with his own heart, with the hearts of others, or with his environment. It's

man in the ageless, eternal struggles which we inherit and we go through as though they'd never happened before, shown for a moment in a dramatic instant of the furious motion of being alive, that's all any story is. You catch this fluidity which is human life and you focus a light on it and you stop it long enough for people to be able to see it . . . (Gwynn 239)

The motion of life is conveyed through Faulkner's style. His long, complex syntactical structures carry the reader along, creating a sense of motion; however, the rush of images is often interspersed with abstractions which convey the static nature of language to the reader.

The paradoxical nature of motion expressed in Faulkner's work may be exemplified in the way the wilderness concept develops in *Ike*. His understanding of the wilderness comes not through words, but through experience, yet it is through Faulkner's unconventional language usage that the reader understands the wilderness concept. The form of the language Faulkner uses to describe the developing wilderness concept in *Ike* reflects the wholeness of the wilderness which cannot be separated into static parts. In a continuous stream of images, Faulkner describes the actions leading up to the moment of *Ike*'s recognition:

now he was going faster though still not panicked, his heart beating a little more rapidly but strong

and steady enough, and this time it was not even the tree because there was a down log beside it which he had never seen before and beyond the log a little swamp, seeing as he sat down on the log the crooked print, the warped indentation in the wet ground which while he looked at it continued to fill with water until it was level full and the water began to overflow and the sides of the print began to dissolve away. Even as he looked up he saw the next one, and, moving, the one beyond it; moving, not hurrying, running, but merely keeping pace with them as they appeared before him as though they were being shaped out of thin air just one constant pace short of where he would lose them forever and be lost forever himself, tireless, eager, without doubt or dread, panting a little above the strong rapid little hammer of his heart, emerging suddenly into a little glade and the wilderness coalesced. (208-9)

The motion of Ike's recognition is captured in the style of Faulkner's long, on-going sentence. There are no punctuated stops, and few pauses; the comma is used only to tie elements together (such as "moving, not hurrying, running, but merely keeping pace; and tireless, eager, without doubt or dread, panting"). This deliberate, but spares use of punctuation causes the reader to continue the motion of the sentence and

the motion of Ike's experience, as it occurs in time. In this example, the string of actions are all Ike's actions, so that the reader assigns the final act to Ike as well. Through Ike's perception, and the reader's participation, the wilderness becomes a whole. The continuous motion condenses, as the stereopticon condenses images, until the verb stream describing Ike's actions leads to the final act, the coalescence of the wilderness.

The description Faulkner provides of Ike's holographic understanding of the wilderness reflects another important issue raised by quantum physics. The wilderness seems to be created by Ike through his perception of it. Fred Alan Wolf and others propose that reality depends upon the perceptions of the observer for its manifestation. He contrasts the notion of external reality with the "mind world . . . [which] consists of thoughts, dreams, and pictures, which resemble or symbolize" the external reality (184-5). The observer affects the quantum function of the world, and therefore, cannot be an observer, but is always a participant. Likewise, reader-response critics see the text as the reader's creation.

Faulkner's diction adds to Ike's mystical recognition of the wilderness as a whole: "It rushed, soundless, and solidified--the tree, the bush, the compass and the watch glinting where a ray of sunlight touched them" (209). The compass and the watch seem to materialize. The bear and the

wilderness could both be referents for the pronoun "it." Through the reader's participation in naming the referent the bear is connected to the wilderness. "It did not emerge, appear: it was just there, immobile, fixed in the green and windless noon's hot dappling . . ." (209). The words Faulkner chooses to describe the bear and the wilderness create the stereopticon effect of condensing the bear and the wilderness into one. The phrase "in the green and windless noon's hot dappling" describes both the "dappled" appearance of the bear, and the environment which surrounds it. The sense of Ike's creation of the wilderness through his perception is an important element in the holographic sense of reality Faulkner creates through language.

Faulkner's description of the moment Ike recognizes the integrity of his surroundings, "the wilderness coalesced," also reflects the holographic sense of reality: the Implicate Order of nature. The word "coalesce" means to unite into a whole, in the same manner the stereopticon superimposes the bear and the wilderness to create one condensed image.

Through following Ike's perceptions, Faulkner endows him with the power of creation shared with the reader through the reading experience. The wilderness does not exist in its wholeness, until Ike recognizes it; his recognition is his creation. As a result, the wilderness concept which develops in Ike and in the reader through the first three

sections of the story, becomes the foundation for the linguistic experience of the issues in Part IV.

The dominant rhetorical modes in the first three parts are narration and description of events as they take place. However, Part IV is dominated by the dialogue between Ike and his cousin, who explore the central issues of the story, primarily through the rhetorical mode of definition. Faulkner intersperses narratives of the past into the dialogue to illustrate and define the abstract issues. These narratives become snapshots of life, images implanted in the reader's memory, adding an emotional element to the reader's linguistic experience of the abstract issues. This transition is an important one, for without the reader's shared experience of the wilderness, the issues explored throughout Part IV would lack the depth of meaning Ike's experiences bring to them.

One way Faulkner accomplishes this contrast between Part IV and the rest of The Bear is in situating the reader's own sense of proximity to the story's plot. The first three parts are the event-filled account of Ike's initiation into manhood. The setting is the wilderness, where Ike learns the meaning of the hunter and where the basic values of his character evolve; this "wilderness concept," which develops within Ike, is also the source of the internal conflict related through linguistic experience in Part IV. From the beginning of Part IV, Faulkner

establishes a shift from the reader's concrete experience of the wilderness, to linguistic experience.

The section's setting is provided in the first paragraph: "himself and his cousin juxtaposed not against the wilderness but against the tamed land which was to have been his heritage" (254). This is the thematic focus of the story and of Ike's conflict. Until now, the reader has been informed with a sense of place, of where the events of the story occur. Major de Spain's hunting camp, the cabins, the shed where the dog, Lion, is kept, the woods, are all described in clear detail so that the reader forms images which provide this sense of an actual location. Looking randomly over the first three sections, one finds paragraphs which begin: "He could find the crooked print now whenever he wished, ten miles or five miles or sometimes closer than that to the camp" (210). "Each morning through the second week they would go to Sam's crib" (217). "They returned to the house. . ." (248). But in Part IV, Ike and his cousin are "juxtaposed . . . against the tamed land." The difference which develops the reader's sense of proximity to the action occurs in the first paragraphs where "the land," in a much larger, more abstract sense, becomes both the setting and one of the central issues. The conversation which takes place between Ike and his cousin, to borrow Aiken's metaphor, becomes the stream into which the reader and the characters are immersed. The complex issues are the focal point, and

the actual setting--the commissary--provides a dim backdrop. In the second and third paragraphs, which begin without capitalization, the commissary is described:

not against the wilderness but against the land,  
. . . and in the commissary as it should have been,  
. . . the square, galleried, wooden building  
squatting like a portent above the fields...him-  
self and his cousin amid the old smells of cheese  
and salt meat and kerosene and harness, the ranked  
shelves of tobacco and overalls and bottled  
medicine and thread and plow-bolts, the barrels  
and kegs of flour and meal and molasses and nails,  
the wall pegs dependant with plowlines and  
plow-collars and hames and trace-chains, and the desk  
and the shelf above it on which rested the ledgers .  
. . . (255)

The reader is enveloped in the smells and crowded in among the goods of the commissary; through the catalogue of images, Faulkner creates a setting where language, in the form of a dialogue between Ike and his cousin, becomes the powerful medium through which the past is evoked and the complex issues explored. The commissary is twilight, the transition between day and night; the stereopticon metaphorically describes the overlapping of day and night, as well as the juxtaposition of the wilderness and the tamed land.

The ironic nature of language is also explored in Part



IV of The Bear, as Ike struggles to order, through language, the issues of land ownership, slavery, and the nature of truth: the inevitable changes imposed by society (brought about by the men of his family) are opposed to the wilderness concept which is an inseparable part of Ike. The stereopticon of Ike's patrimony and his sense of the wilderness create the conflicting view he has of his own life. Faulkner's use of language leads to understanding through its complexities, through the seeming incomprehensibility of his long, ongoing sentences, but at the same time the style and themes of his work point to the limitations of language.

The notion of "trying to say," an important, recurring motivation for characters throughout the body of Faulkner's work, represents the failed attempt to articulate their deepest thoughts. In one sense, language has limitations for conveying the deepest emotions and knowledge, yet there remains the human need of transforming the broad range of experience and emotion into language.

For example, in The Sound and The Fury, Benjy, the thirty-three year old idiot, lacks the ability to articulate; his "trying to say" is a source of great frustration for him. Ironically, through Benjy's impressions the reader gains the most objective understanding of the events of the novel. Quentin, on the other hand, is so caught up in the meaning he projects on events and on the past, that he meta-

phorically drowns himself in language; words overwhelm him, so that he is never quite able to sort through the issues and come to terms with his past or his future.

The deepest understanding a character experiences in The Sound and The Fury occurs in church, when Dilsey, the black woman who manages the Compson house, listens to the preacher:

And the congregation seemed to watch with its own eyes while the voice consumed him, until he was nothing and they were nothing and there was not even a voice but instead their hearts were speaking to one another in chanting measures beyond the need for words . . . (367)

What Faulkner calls the "truths of the heart" are understood when the Dilsey loses her sense of herself as a separate individual and joins the collective self of the congregation. The deepest understanding, "hearts speaking to one another," is, at the same time, "beyond the need for words."

Language is the means of coming to terms with the past and understanding the issues which will determine Ike's future. Ike relates his motivation for the dialogue which takes place in Part IV:

I'm trying to explain to the head of my family something which I don't quite understand myself, not in justification of it but to explain it if I can. I could say I don't know why I must do it

but that I do know I have got to because I have  
got myself to live with for the rest of my life  
and all I want is peace to do it in. (288)

Through saying it, through evoking the past and trying to formulate it into language, Ike begins to articulate the conflict within himself and to realize that the conflict cannot be resolved entirely; with the passing of time come the inevitable changes which even his strong convictions cannot stop. Through language, the past events are evoked as Ike and his cousin, as well as the reader, reconcile the issues of the novel into a whole.

The second sentence in the opening paragraph of Part IV begins: "He could say it . . ." (254). The subject is "He," a pronoun without a referent except that provided in the first sentence (where the referent is also unclear) and in the story's first three sections. The context for this statement then, is the whole of the first three sections. This is, after all, Ike's story, but readers are left to reach this conclusion on their own. Again we are drawn back to the first three parts of the story, an effect which logically connects this rather odd section to the previous story. "It" also has no referent at this point in readers' activities. We must continue reading to discover what "it" is, so that we are drawn both backward and forward. The reader's experience may also be understood through Faulkner's stereopticon: the reader must have the experience of

the first three sections, in order to understand the fourth section of the novel.

The whole of Part IV is Ike's articulation. The clause, "He could say it," puts what follows entirely in the realm of the possible rather than the actual, because what follows is what Ike was capable of saying. The word "could" denotes ability or possibility. The possible interpretations of this statement include: he was unable to say it in the past but had since gained the ability, he didn't actually say it, but had the ability, as if he didn't need to say it. For Ike, as for characters throughout Faulkner's novels, the importance of being able to articulate his understanding is important. It seems irrelevant, finally, whether he actually say it or not; the unspoken reality, for Ike is just as real as the spoken reality, because his motivation for articulating the issues is so that he himself can understand them in an intellectual sense.<sup>6</sup>

Paradoxically, Faulkner's use of language makes it difficult for the reader to gain a clear chronological sense of the events of the past which are the source of conflict for Ike's future. Instead, what the reader gains is an impression of the past; the present moment of the story contains the whole past, even though the reader at times does not understand the implications of the past's details. Eric Larsen describes this aspect of Faulkner's language in

an article titled, "The Barrier of Language: The Irony of Language in Faulkner."

One of the great ironies in Faulkner is the creation of experiential truth, of motion, out of words which are in themselves held to be insufficient to convey or embody truth....Words which are empty forms can be handled and put into a new form in such a way that they themselves become an experience. Perceiving the words in this new form creates an emotion, an experiential perception, an art-emotion which did not exist before the pattern was created. (30)

It is through the difficulty, the complexity of the linguistic experience that Faulkner overcomes the limitations of language. That Ike is able to verbalize the relationship between the wilderness and the tamed land exemplifies the way in which deep levels of understanding develop into articulation.

### Chapter 3: Wholeness And Resonance

Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning. --T.S. Eliot

Part IV of The Bear is a characteristic example of the ways Faulkner "overcome[s the] tendency toward fragmentation by using language in a freer, more informal, and 'poetic' way" (Bohm 34). To the uninitiated reader, the complexity of unconventional sentences looks chaotic and disordered. Faulkner syntax requires the reader to focus on unraveling the long on-going sentences phrase by phrase, or more appropriately, thought by thought. We have seen how holographic knowledge and language, specifically Ike's wilderness experience and his linguistic exploration of the land ownership issues, are inseparable parts of the whole process of understanding. At this point, a close analysis of Faulkner's syntactical structures, his sparse use of punctuation and capitalization, and his use of repetition will bring into focus the ways of Faulkner's unique style of language usage as it shape the reality of the reader.

Our sense of reality has a significant impact on our relationship to any work of fiction. Faulkner uses language in a way that the reader must adopt an altered sense of time and space in order to enter Faulkner's world. David F. Peat, in Synchronicity, describes the ways language affects

our worldview:

Language, the whole activity of communication, and perception through the senses and the mind all act on each other in particularly subtle ways. In this way a worldview and language are able to reinforce each other so that everyone who speaks that language is unconsciously disposed to see the world in a particular light. (142)

When a writer uses language in an unconventional manner, readers must adjust to and accept the alternative view of reality as it is imbedded in the particular use of language.

The shape and form of Faulkner's unconventional prose results in the "flow" of language Aiken describes. The holographic sense of reality the reader experiences in Faulkner's work comes through his particular, unconventional use of language. David Bohm describes the notion of the holographic reality, which he calls "the implicate order."

The implicate order is particularly suitable for the understanding of such unbroken wholeness in flowing movement, for in the implicate order the totality of existence is enfolded within each region of space (and time). So, whatever part, element, or aspect we may abstract in thought, this still enfolds the whole and is therefore intrinsically related to the totality from which it has been abstracted. (172)

Faulkner's repetition of abstractions connected to concrete details, creates rhetorical patterns which remain "enfolded" into the reader's memory. With each recurrence of a particular abstraction, the whole field of meaning the reader has previously connected to it emerges again, as will be explored in depth later. In Science, Order and Creativity, by David Bohm and F. David Peat, the idea of the implicate order is related to language: "Language is also an enfolded order. Meaning is enfolded in the structure of the language, and meaning unfolds into thought, [and] feeling. . . ." (185). Bohm's description of the implicate order enfolded into a single element provides an accurate description of Faulkner's style. As Aiken's commentary suggests, the experience of reading Faulkner's work is like entering the flow of a stream. The reader must become immersed, she must follow the motion of the linguistic experience, and let go of her expectations about what a sentence (or a paragraph) does.

One stylistic device Faulkner employs is perhaps the most obvious to the reader initially: evident throughout Faulkner's work is his departure from conventional uses of punctuation and capitalization. Paragraphs begin and end without the usual signals readers expect. For example, Part IV opens: "then he was twenty-one" (254). Typically, Faulkner begins the sentence without capitalization. This departure from convention creates an open-endedness to his



sentences; the reader does not have the conventional beginnings and endings he is accustomed to in conventional prose, and the flow of the reading experience is uninterrupted by stops and pauses. The reader is, as Aiken put it "continually drawn forward," and must circle back to clarify and recall what has come before.

The next paragraph also begins without capitalization: "not against the wilderness but against the land, not in pursuit and lust but in relinquishment . . ." (255). This spare use of capitalization becomes the rule rather than the exception throughout this section of the story. When Faulkner does choose to capitalize, the capitalized word is emphasized. In this way the reader begins to adapt to Faulkner's unconventional rules; no longer does capitalization signal the beginning of a new sentence; instead capitalization contributes to the emphasis of the infrequently capitalized words.

Another effect of Faulkner's spare use of capitalization is that he is able to capture the complex thought patterns of Ike. Thus, the linguistic exploration of the past Ike embarks on is shared by the reader, who must work through the long, unstopped sentences and paragraphs which flow, one into the next. In this particular example the reader connects the statement to the previous three sections wherein Ike McCaslin has undergone his initiation into manhood. Without the capitalization which usually signifies

the beginning of a new thought or idea, the reader might see this as a conclusion to the previous three sections. As William Nestruck points out in "Function and Form in The Bear, Section IV," "The hunting story formally becomes a kind of dependent clause . . . [the opening clause] serves as a conclusion and an epitome of the first three sections" (131). The reader connects the statement with what comes before. This is a reaction ingrained in the reader through conventional grammatical rules; "then" is a transition which makes the clause dependent, (in this case on the first three sections of the story), Faulkner creates a syntactic situation wherein the statement of Ike's age is an idea which connects to the entire sixty-three page account of Ike's initiation into manhood. The lack of capitalization and end punctuation creates an open-endedness which might seem to contribute to a fragmentation of thought, but which actually achieves the opposite. This opening statement is, as T.S. Eliot put it, "an end and a beginning." The break from conventional capitalization and punctuation creates the flow, the connectedness of one sentence to the next. The reader is forced to connect the open-ended sentences with what precedes and follows each one. In this way the integrity of the whole and the flow of the prose are maintained.

The form of the dialogue between "himself and his cousin," is established through repeated pronouns which have

no referents, except as the reader supplies them. The conventional dialogue form is used infrequently; the usual indentation and quotation marks are absent, and in their place, the reader is given signals at the end of each paragraph, telling who the speaker of the following paragraph is: "and he," "and McCaslin." These abbreviated signposts inform the reader of the speaker's identity without interrupting the constant flow of the dialogue. The lack of capitalization beginning most paragraphs, the lack of end punctuation, and the extremely long sentences all work together to involve the reader through the effort required to maintain sense of the story's events.

Faulkner creates a holographic sense of reality in the reader through various forms of repetition and modification of key terms and phrases. Throughout the first three sections, Faulkner connects concrete images, and in so doing enfolds emotional and spiritual connotations into many of the abstract terms he uses in the fourth section. Faulkner develops the kernel idea in the same way a piece of music develops a theme through variations on a motif. The terms are abstract, but through the first three sections they have become concrete, as they are connected to specific details and experiences Ike has in the wilderness. Thus, Ike's wilderness experience provides the underlying foundation for the linguistic experience he undergoes in Part IV.

The principle of resonance provides an accurate

description of the effects of Faulkner's repetition of key terms. The transformation of concepts takes place in the memory of the reader, who recognizes the key terms from one repetition to the next, so that their connotative meaning is magnified and multiplied each time they are used. The reader is left to arrive at the understanding of these concepts through her own compilation of additions and modifications to the terms. To each term, narratives of the past, Biblical allusions, and historical interpretations are added, so that the word comes to stand for the whole complex of issues and images which have been tied to it throughout the narrative. In this way the abstract terms resonate in the memory of the reader, and a holographic sense of Ike's world develops.

Throughout Part IV, the phrase "the tamed land" (against which Ike and his cousin are "juxtaposed") is modified in the following ways: "the tamed land which was to have been his heritage," into "the land . . . tamed and ordered," "tamed and ordered for the reason that the human beings he held in bondage . . . had removed the forest from it . . ." (254). The forest is a quality, a sense of the wilderness, rather than a particular place. "the tamed land" is transformed further: "[Major de Spain's] fragment of that wilderness . . ."; "his fragment" becomes "the fragment . . ." (255). The effect of Faulkner's use of antithesis, ("not against the wilderness but against the tamed

land . . . ") is that a contrast is established immediately: "the land" and "the wilderness" are direct opposites. The same statement is repeated again in the beginning of the second paragraph and, thus, gains its power and emphasis by becoming established in the mind of the reader. "the tamed land," becomes "tamed and ordered." By using only "tamed," the reader automatically associates it with its referent "the land." The reader puts these together, thus participating in the creation of the story.

In the next paragraph, the concept of "the land" is enlarged by yet another repetition:

knowing better Major de Spain had had his fragment of that wilderness which was bigger and older than any recorded deed. (255)

"Fragment of that wilderness" (with the antithetical relationship between land and wilderness fresh in the reader's mind) is the source of "the land." The quality of wholeness is central to the wilderness concept established throughout the first part of the story; therefore, the opposite "fragmented" works upon the reader's sense of logic: the wilderness cannot remain "the wilderness" if it is fragmented. The reader must add up all of the modifiers and referents to her or her notion of "the land" into something like: "the fragmented wilderness which has become: the tamed and ordered land." There are several other possible constructions of this complex of modifiers

and terms, and it is in Faulkner's not putting them together that other possibilities remain, and the reader is left to participate in the formulation of the whole idea each term or set of interrelated terms becomes.

Repetition of the words "the land" continues--and the constant modifications and additions to the simple words builds them into a complex concept so that they resonate in the mind of the reader. The addition of the terms such as "repudiate," "relinquish" and "bequeath" all refer to Ike's inheritance. The conflict Ike experience is later described by Faulkner in his Nobel Prize Speech as "the human heart in conflict with itself." Ike's concept of the wilderness is incompatible with the notion of inheritance of the land. Along with the land, Ike would inherit, and therefore accept, "the sins of the fathers" including, in general, the institution of slavery which "tamed and ordered the land," and, in particular, the incestuous relationship between Ike's grandfather and his daughter.

Faulkner's meshing of images and issues into a linguistic atmosphere, is another rhetorical device which endows abstract terms with the power of the reader's holographic understanding. Faulkner ties the repeated key terms to the setting; however, in the second paragraph he ties them to the concrete, specific location--the commissary--he describes as "not the heart perhaps but certainly the solar-plexus of the repudiated and the relinquished: the square, galleried,

wooden building . . . " (255). The commissary functions to sell and trade goods. The commissary, where the conversation between Ike and his cousin takes place, manifests the slave/land owner social structure of Ike's heritage and is the instrument through which the wilderness has been transformed into the tamed land. The diction used to describe the commissary recalls the "tamed and ordered" land. The description, "square, galleried, wooden," embodies the idea of a place "tamed and ordered." The participant reader must make such connections, consciously or unconsciously; in this way the fragmentation of thought is overcome: through the participation of the reader, who makes these connections, the filling in of the gaps occurs in the reader's mind rather than in the words on the page. The reader's thought process is the experience; not only does she comprehend on a surface level, but participates in the creation of the text.

The struggle with the notion of inheritance is enfolded in the words Ike and his cousin use to describe it. Again, Faulkner's repetition gives power and weight to the words: "relinquish," "repudiate," "bequeath," and "dispossess." McCaslin uses the word "relinquish" many times, which later becomes "repudiate." The semantic difference between these two words is important; in giving it up--relinquishing--he would be acknowledging the fact that the land he was to inherit was something that one could actually own and

another could choose not to accept. But Ike's use of the word "repudiate"--many times, even in a single paragraph--reveals his deeply felt conviction that the land is something which cannot be owned.

At the beginning of Part IV, Ike reveals to his cousin that he cannot give up or relinquish the land because no one can really own it. Ike says: "'I can't repudiate it. It was never mine to repudiate'" (256). The following sentence conveys to the reader the entire history of the wilderness, developing important relationships between and among the key terms:

'It was never Father's and Uncle Buddy's to bequeath me to repudiate because it was never Grandfather's to bequeath them to bequeath me to repudiate because it was never old Ikkemotubbe's to sell to Grandfather for bequeathment and repudiation. Because it was never Ikkemotubbe's fathers' fathers' to bequeath Ikkemotubbe to sell to Grandfather or any man because on the instant when Ikkemotubbe discovered, realised, that he could sell it for money, on that instant it ceased ever to have been his forever, father to father to father, and the man who bought it bought nothing.' (256)

The rhythm and repetition of the sentence, as well as its length, serve to carry the reader through from one repetition



of the words, "repudiate" and "bequeath" to the next. The logic of the sentence, undoubtedly inspired by biblical genealogies, lies in the generations of land owners whose notion of ownership is, according to Ike invalid according to his view of reality. Each clause adds emphasis to the notion of giving up the land in a cause and effect relationship. The sentence elements are constructed in parallel ways: "It was never Father's . . . It was never Grandfather's to bequeath me to repudiate because . . . it was never . . . to bequeath . . ." A ladder of logical connections is built through these parallel elements, each dependant for truth and validity on the one which comes before it; in this way the validity and the possibility of land ownership throughout the generations is finally denied. On the page, the reader sees the relationships develop spatially, yet the relationships referred to are temporal. Faulkner conveys a sense of space and time through the form and content of the sentence. The semantic relationships reflect Ike's sense of reality, and determine the reader's understanding of one of the main issues in this section of the story.

A specific effect of the complex repetition of Faulkner's key terms is that they overcome fragmentation of thought so that a holographic view of reality is achieved through the activities of the reader. In Wholeness and The Implicate Order, David Bohm points to specific features of language which maintain a fragmented world view:

A cursory examination shows that a very important feature of [the fragmentation which characterizes our language] is the subject-verb-object structure of sentences, which is common to the grammar and syntax of modern languages. This structure implies that all action arises in a separate entity, the subject, and that, in cases described by a transitive verb, this action crosses over the space between them to another separate entity, the object. . . . This is a pervasive structure, leading in the whole of life to a function of thought tending to divide things into separate entities, such entities being conceived of as essentially fixed and static in their nature. When this view is carried to its limit, one arrives at the prevailing scientific world view, in which everything is regarded as ultimately constituted out of a set of basic particles of fixed nature. (29)

Faulkner overcomes this fragmentation in a number of ways. The repetition of particular parts of speech in Faulkner's syntactic development plays an important role in creating the language flow which overcomes the fragmentation inherent in conventional language usage. As Olga Vickery states:

there is no direct relationship between the word and its referent. The object is itself involved

in the process of change and the word is continually acquiring additional connotations, personal, social, and historical, in order to make it conform to the speaker's view of that object.

(267)

There is, however, an indirect relationship between elements, and that develops in the mind of the reader rather than in the proximity of sentence elements. Not only the objects of the sentences, but other elements as well, undergo a transformation through repetition. For example, the verbs "believed," "bequeathed," "relinquished," and "repudiated" are used throughout the passage and throughout the section of the story. Through the use of modifications and repetitions Faulkner creates a linguistic experience which is a whole process, rather than a series of logically progressing statements. The fragmentation which occurs as a result of the conventional subject/verb/object sentence structure, is overcome through the ongoing addition of sentence elements, often parallel elements. The repetition of verbs in a sentence creates a sense of action which is continually transformed from one verb phrase to the next.

Faulkner interweaves and interrelates the particular series of terms as Ike and his cousins work toward their definition. For example, in the discussion of land ownership, McCaslin turns to the Bible to support his side of the argument:

'Bought nothing?' and he

'Bought nothing. Because He told in the Book how He created the earth, made it and looked at it and said it was all right, and then He made man. He made the earth first and peopled it with dumb creatures, and then He created man to be His overseer on the earth and to hold suzerainty over the earth and the animals on it in His name, not to hold for himself and his descendants inviolable title forever, generation after generation, to the oblongs and squares of the earth, but to hold the earth mutual and intact in the communal anonymity of brotherhood, and all the fee He asked was pity and humility and sufferance and endurance and the sweat of his face for bread. And I know what you are going to say,' he said:

'That nevertheless Grandfather--' and McCaslin

'--did own it. and not the first. Not alone and not the first since, as your Authority states, man was dispossessed of Eden. Nor yet the second and still not alone, on down through the tedious and shabby chronicle of His chosen sprung from Abraham, and of the five hundred years during which half the known world and all it contained was chattel to one city as this plantation and all the life it contained was chattel and revokeless

thrall to this commissary store and those ledgers  
yonder during your grandfather's life, and the  
next thousand years while men fought over the  
fragments of that collapse until at last even the  
fragments were exhausted and men snarled over the  
gnawed bones of the old world's worthless evening  
until an accidental egg discovered to them a new  
hemisphere. So let me say it: That nevertheless  
and notwithstanding old Carothers did own it.  
Bought it, got it, no matter; kept it, held it, no  
matter; bequeathed it; else why do you stand here  
relinquishing and repudiating? Held it, kept it  
for fifty years until you could repudiate it,  
while He--this Arbiter, this Architect, this  
Umpire--condoned--or did He? looked down and  
saw--or did he? Or at least did nothing: saw, and  
could not, or did not see; saw, and would not, or  
perhaps He would not see--perverse, impotent, or  
blind: which? (257-8)

The modification works in the reader, who does not gain the  
sense of closure which occurs when a sentence (a complete  
idea) ends. This might seem to lead to a more fragmented  
view of reality than conventional language use does, but the  
result is that the reader's sense of action or of the object  
of an action is constantly undergoing transformation. The  
idea thus becomes fluid rather than static. In this

example, the reader is left with a series of speculations, of possibilities and unanswered questions, which draw her forward in search of answers. The syntactical development Faulkner uses to transform the terms into concepts exemplifies how Faulkner overcomes the fragmented effects of the standard subject/verb/object construction Bohm describes. Rather than temporal bits of narrative developing in a linear fashion, the sentences, in their unconventional form, are in fact microcosms of the whole story. The notion of sentences as microcosm, as Aiken puts it is

as if Mr. Faulkner, in some sort of hurried despair, had decided to try to tell us everything, every last origin or source or quality or qualification, and every possible future or permutation as well, in one terrifically concentrated effort. (651)

The reader's experience of Faulkner's long sentences is one of being caught in the stream of transforming actions and ideas without a means of escape. Conventional sentences provide stopping points between complete thoughts, where the reader pauses to accept or reflect. But the reader's experience of the long, ongoing Faulknerian sentence is one without incremental pauses.

Through parallel elements, Faulkner emphasizes the relationship of one generation to the next. Ike's argument is based on the Bible, which he calls "the Book," and God

becomes "He;" the reader, who must supply the referents in both cases, relies on the capitalization to indicate the referents. The whole sentence explains why those who supposedly bought the land "bought nothing," as is revealed through Faulkner's capitalized word "Because," which begins the long passage that follows. The whole sentence is a sort of dependent clause which relies on the previously repeated phrase "bought nothing." Again, the entire first three sections of the story provide a definition of the wilderness concept, so that the reader understands the answer to the question through the foundation provided the first three parts.

The second sentence in this paragraph begins with "He" and is one subject/verb/object independent clause. But the compound verb phrase is added, "peopled it with dumb creatures." Another independent clause follows, with another compound verb phrase added, so that the reader's sense of the sentence is of a series of actions, all relating to the land. All the verbs have as their subject, "He," repeated numerous times throughout the long sentence, to emphasize the "He" who is responsible for this series of actions. The actions contain the subject in that the reader must hold in the forefront of her attention, the subject of each action as it is developed in the progression of the sentence.

The words Ike uses to describe the land: "mutual and

intact in communal anonymity of brotherhood" reveal Ike's holographic understanding of the wilderness. Ownership of the land requires that it be divided up into parts, so that it is no longer whole, "mutual and intact." Ike's concept of the wilderness does not include the division and possession implied in ownership, and conveyed through the language used to describe it.

The kinds of rhetorical patterns Faulkner develops through repetition are exemplified in the recurrence of the word "relinquish," many times throughout The Bear.

"Relinquish" is used in relation to many issues and circumstances until these become enfolded into the term, so that each term, in a sense, becomes a holographic representation of the entire story. The first time the word is used is in reference to a decaying log in the wilderness: "It was almost completely crumbled now, healing with unbelievable speed, a passionate and almost visible relinquishment, back into the earth from which the tree had grown" (205).

Faulkner imbues the process of nature--the decaying tree--with the human quality of passion, as if it were a way of being not limited only to human experience. That Faulkner endows the features and processes of nature with what one might think of only as a human quality demonstrates that the earth, in Faulkner's world, is a reflection of the human beings who are part of it, and that the character endows the environment around him with his own qualities, through his



perceptions. In this way, Ike creates the wilderness.

Ike's passion for experiencing the wilderness and accepting the rules of the hunt as they are expressed in the ways of the wilderness is reflected in what he sees. The decay of the log returning back to the earth from which it grew, is described in a manner which gives it positive connotations; the tree is said to be "healing." Unity, rather than the expected contrast, is established in the juxtaposition of the ideas of decay and healing. The forces of nature are given a quality which Ike takes into his own character as he becomes part of the wilderness. In the reader's mind, decay, passion and relinquishment become a whole idea.

The second time Faulkner uses the word relinquish, is in reference to Ike's symbolic, deliberate act of leaving the gun behind when he goes into the wilderness.

He had left the gun; by his own will and relinquishment he had accepted not a gambit, not a choice, but a condition in which not only the bear's heretofore inviolable anonymity but all the ancient rules and balances of hunter and hunted had been abrogated. (207)

The term is still used in relation to the ways of the wilderness, but this time, it is Ike who relinquishes to "the ancient rules and balances . . ." The bear embodies the wilderness, and is described as having an "inviolable anonymity"--a whole, sacred lack of individual identity.

This description seems, at first, to contradict the bear's individuality: the name it has become known by and the unique characteristics which make the bear identifiable by all the men who have hunted it. But the men who have hunted the bear they call "Old Ben," are those who are dividing the wilderness into parcels of land. The indestructible wholeness of the wilderness is embodied in the words Faulkner uses to describe the bear as a representation of the wilderness.

The term "relinquished" is again mentioned, twice this time, in the same long paragraph:

He had already relinquished, of his will . . . yet apparently that had not been enough, the leaving of the gun was not enough. . . . Then he relinquished completely to it. It was the watch and the compass. He was still tainted. (208)

The realization "that he was still tainted" by the mechanistic trappings of civilization comes from the wilderness, as a result of Ike's relinquishment or his giving in to what the wilderness requires of him. The wilderness is, to a great degree, a creation of Ike's reflections.

The next time Faulkner uses the term "relinquish" is in Part IV; the reader, by this time, has the experience which gives the word its full range of connotative meaning. The repeated words resonate in the reader's memory. The abstract issues dealt with in Part IV are evoked through

the dialogue, but they depend on Ike's wilderness experience. Likewise, the wilderness concept has developed in the reader who has had to "enter the stream" in order to work through Faulkner's long, ongoing sentences. Ike imbues his experiences in the wilderness with a wide but particular range of meanings reflected in the language Faulkner uses to describe these experiences, so that the reader is prepared for the linguistic experience he shares with Ike in the fourth section.

At the beginning of Part IV, where the wilderness has become "the tamed land," the word relinquish is used in reference to Ike's past. All of Ike's experiences, his holographic knowledge of the wilderness, or what Bohm called the "totality of existence enfolded within each region of space and time . . .", are such that each "element . . . still enfolds the totality from which it has been abstracted." The repeated words are the elements containing the whole experiential knowledge evoked in the reader; thus, each term is imbued with the power of the whole range of experience underlying it.

The change has taken place in Ike's conception of the wilderness which has become the tamed land: "not against the wilderness but against the land, not in pursuit and lust but in relinquishment" (255). The word "relinquishment" now takes on the connotations of ownership and of giving up ownership. In this passage, relinquishment is also linked

with another important term, which, through repetition, becomes a concept: repudiate--to disavow. The next repetition reaches the powerful level of an invocation: "Relinquish," McCaslin said. "Relinquish." his cousin commands . . . Ike responds: "I can't repudiate it. It was never mine to repudiate . . ." (256). The discussion between Ike and his cousin continues; the issues Ike is trying to work through are emphasized through repetition of key terms: the tamed land, relinquishment, bequeath, repudiate, dispossessed. What Ike finally expresses is that the land cannot be owned by any human being, except in its whole, unviolated state, as a concept gained through experience. So ownership of the land is, finally, not in the outward physical possession of the land. The only real owner of the land, to Ike, is one into whom the wilderness is enfolded, one who understands the wholeness of the land and does not violate that wholeness. The reader's experience, like Ike's, is of the wilderness and not of the land. So that the reader's holographic understanding of the wilderness is established long before the discussion of land ownership takes place in Part IV.

#### Chapter 4: Time: The Past Enfolded Into The Present

Time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels, only when the clock stops does time come to life.

--William Faulkner (The Sound and The Fury)

Time is one of the central forces in Faulkner's work. For Faulkner's characters, time is the undeniable source of change and conflict, a force which his characters often attempt to overcome. Time is also a central force which operates within and dictates Faulkner's style. In Part IV, Faulkner uses the ledgers as a rhetorical device to condense, like the stereopticon, images of the past and future into the reader's present experience.

Ike's wilderness experience provides the holographic knowledge necessary for his own and the reader's understanding of the issues Ike and his cousin discuss in Part IV. In the reader's mind, the experiences of the wilderness have the immediacy of the present; they are also an inseparable part of Ike's character. Ike is the main speaker in Part IV, so his wilderness experience is central to the discussion: Ike's perception of reality is that through which the past is created. His concept of the wilderness is also juxtaposed with the complex social structure his family has lived by.

According to traditional Western thought, time is linear; experience is part of a continuous progression from the past, through the present, and into the future. In Synchronicity, F. David Peat describes the Western understanding of time:

Time, we believe, is external to our lives and carries us along in its flow; causality rules the actions of nature with its iron hand and our 'consensus reality' is restricted to the surface of things and seems closer to the rule-bound functioning of a machine than to the subtle adaptability of an organism (5).

Conventional uses of language are based on a linear notion of time which does not accurately reflect the reader's psychological experience of time. Through thematic and stylistic development, Faulkner creates a holographic sense of time which more accurately reflects the fluid, psychological construct of time in the mind of the reader.

If we conceive of time as linear, the past is measured out behind us in increments of days, weeks, years, and so on. But the human mind does not experience time, particularly the past, in this way. A more accurate account of the psychological experience of the past is that it is enfolded into the present (Talbot Beyond 67). In other words, the present contains the past as the individual mind creates it. Assumptions about the relationship between past and present

underlying Faulkner's work point to a holographic conception of time, (i.e. the past enfolded into the present). The concept of reality as a product of perception validates this understanding of time; the perceiver continually creates and recreates the past in his mind and imbues events with meaning. The past does not actually exist, except as it is brought to the forefront of the individual's attention. In this sense, the present moment potentially contains all time. The effects of the past may be seen, but how we order and describe, how we formulate causes and effects, takes place in our minds.

In Faulkner's work, the past is enfolded into the present through the reader's experience. Faulkner's use of complex syntactical strategies creates a linguistic experience in the reader reflecting the holographic sense of time. In Part IV of The Bear, the past and the future become the present through Ike's and the reader's creation of it, but especially the reader's developing understanding of the significant events and issues explored.

Ike and his cousin create the past in the present through the ledgers, for it is through their perceptions that we see their vision of the past. The brief, cryptic ledger entries become the text of the past which Ike and his cousin respond to, just as the reader responds to and creates the entire story. The notion of the past enfolded into the present becomes evident in the way the ledgers

enter into their discussion.<sup>7</sup> The first mention of the ledgers comes in the beginning of Part IV, when they are included as part of the catalogue of goods in the commissary where the dialogue between Ike and his cousin takes place:

...the desk and the shelf above it on which rested the ledgers in which McCaslin recorded the slow outward trickle of food and supplies and equipment which returned each fall as cotton made and ginned and sold (255-6)

The entire sentence, more than a paragraph long, draws the reader's attention through a description of the ledgers which gives them both their concrete substance and their abstract meaning. The ledgers rest on a shelf along with the goods--"the barrels and kegs and flour and meal," and are part of the setting of the commissary. They are also the record of "the slow outward trickle of food and supplies and equipment which returned each fall as cotton made and ginned and sold" (255-6). The polysyndeton Faulkner uses to describe the supplies works to achieve the catalogue effect. He uses the same device to convey the cyclic nature of cotton production. A style is created so that the rhythmic elements of the cycle are emphasized. Through this device the ledgers convey symbolically the cycles of time.

The sentence continues, endowing the ledgers with additional levels of meaning. The concrete description is then interrupted by a parenthetical statement:



(two threads frail as truth and impalpable as equators yet cable-strong to bind for life them who made the cotton to the land their sweat fell on) . . . (256)

The "two frail threads" become, through repetition, a metaphor for the "slow outward trickle of food and supplies and equipment which returned each fall as cotton . . ." (255-6). The cycle of production represented by the metaphor is what binds both the black slaves and the white land owners to the land. The ledgers record the inward and outward flow of goods, therefore, are the written records which symbolized by the "two frail threads." Immediately following the parenthetical statement, is a detailed, concrete description of

the older ledgers clumsy and archaic in size and shape, on the yellowed pages of which were recorded in the faded hand of his father Theophilus and his uncle Amodeus during the two decades before the Civil War, the manumission in title at least of Carothers McCaslin's slaves . . . (255-6)

This description gives the ledgers physical substance through a simple, vivid image. The parenthetical metaphor establishes the contrast between the physical, material existence of the ledgers, and their subtle, "impalpable" quality. The depth of meaning they contain is not present

in the ledgers themselves, but is located in the minds of Ike and his cousin as they endow "the yellowed pages" with meaning. The ledgers are insubstantial, really, like the "two threads frail as truth" and as arbitrary as "equators." Yet, their strength (like the bonds represented in the threads) lies in the meaning the perceiver endows them with.

The ledgers are then connected to Ike's father and his uncle, and to the time period they originated. Faulkner's use of the word "manumission" is creates the reader's sense of the formality and the emphasis Faulkner places on the act of freeing the slaves. The reader is reminded that slavery is an inseparable part of land ownership in the Southern plantation system.

The ledgers are both static, in that they are physical objects sitting on the shelves of the commissary, and are, in the context of Ike and his cousin's attention, dynamic: subject to interpretation. The past is created, the issues symbolized, and the meaning they are endowed with is subject to the individual's perception.

As the land ownership issue is explored in Part IV, Faulkner's long sentences becomes as fluid as time. The constant motion of these ongoing syntactical patterns--his recursive treatment of theme and time--reflect a holographic sense of reality. In the introduction of the ledgers into the discussion, the description of the commissary goods and the ledgers' symbolic nature are not divided into separate

sentences (complete units of thought), as they might be in conventional prose. Instead, the reader is drawn forward, through the complex modifying phrases and clauses, so that the ledgers' physicality is contrasted with their symbolic evidence of the past. The reader's attention is a whole, undivided experience as well.

The discussion of the complex issues involved in land ownership continues, and the ledgers are again mentioned, this time as Ike refers to the roles of God, man, and the earth related in the Bible. Ike argues that man was intended by God "to hold the earth mutual and intact in the communal anonymity of brotherhood" (257). The words used to describe the earth reflect Ike's conception of the wilderness as a whole. McCaslin argues that man has owned the land "since...man was dispossessed of Eden" (257).

The land has been passed on from generation to generation, on down through the tedious and shabby chronicle of His chosen sprung from Abraham, and of the five hundred years during which half the known world and all it contained was chattel and revokeless thrall to this commissary store and those ledgers yonder during your grandfather's life, and the next thousand years while men fought over the fragments of that collapse until at least even the fragments were exhausted . . . "

(257-8)

The ledgers are a representation of the successive land owners--property and human beings enslaved through the economic system embodied in the commissary,--a continuation, in a sense, of the land ownership and slavery recorded in the Bible. Later in Part IV, Faulkner uses the stereopticon metaphor to describe the entirety of the land compressed into and represented in the ledgers. The stereopticon condenses images in the visual perception of the viewer, just as the ledgers compress time through the family genealogy Ike and his cousin respond to in them.

To McCaslin, land ownership and slavery are a reality of history. To Ike, whose concept of the wilderness is of its wholeness, land ownership is impossible; the land is owned without God's grace, and is "tainted" by the institution of slavery. The inclusion of the ledgers in the discussion of the Bible creates a connection in the reader, who recalls the earlier Biblical allusions to the validity of land ownership.

The presence of the ledgers becomes more prominent as the discussion becomes more focused, although they are still the symbolic representation--the text of the past and the binding ties of the black slaves and their white owners to the land. McCaslin provides a clue about the number of generations between Ike and his grandfather, although the reader does not yet understand its significance until she has read the actual ledgers. Faulkner repeatedly creates

situations such as this where the reader where he makes statements long before the reader has the experience to understand them. The reader must suspend the need to know, holding the puzzling references in mind until more pieces are provided and the reader can finally connect them into understanding. The reader's past experience must play a part in the present reading, and so, for the reader, the past is also enfolded into the present moment of the reading experience. Characteristic of Faulkner's work, the answer to the linguistic mystery is alluded to before the question is posed. The conversation continues; the ledgers are mentioned again by Ike:

'A thousand other Bucks and Buddies in less than two generations and sometimes less than one in this land which so you claim God created and man himself cursed and tainted. Not to mention 1865.' and he

'Yes. More men that Father and Uncle Buddy,' not even glancing toward the shelf above the desk, nor did McCaslin. They did not need to. To him it was as though the ledgers in their scarred cracked leather bindings were being lifted down one by one in their fading sequence and spread open on the desk or perhaps upon some apocryphal Bench or even Altar or perhaps before the Throne Itself for a last perusal and

contemplation and refreshment of the Allknow-  
ledgeable before the yellowed pages and the  
brown thin ink in which was recorded the  
injustice and a little at least of its amelior-  
ation and restitution faded back forever into the  
anonymous communal original dust. (261) <

The ledgers are not actually taken down from the shelf, yet their presence in the discussion becomes more prominent throughout the discussion. For the reader, the understanding of the ledgers develops through the characters' interpretation of them. Although Ike and McCaslin do not look directly at the contents of the ledgers, it was "as though" (emphasis mine) the ledgers were being lifted down one by one." The ledgers are realized through the meaning and significance Ike and McCaslin assign to them. Faulkner emphasizes the point that "They did not need to," (Ike and his cousin did not need to take the ledgers from the shelf) through the short declarative sentence. Ike and his cousin don't need to look at the actual ledgers because they have their content is enfolded into their minds.

Through the development of this passage, the ledgers take on the additional layers of meaning: not only are they a record of the commissary goods, the ledgers also become the object of moral judgment of the social structure of the Old South, established to develop the land and grow cotton. The moment the ledgers are brought forth from the

past, from their obscurity, not by the physical removal from the shelves, but through the attention of the characters, they are set against eternity when they will be nothing but dust, and what they contain will no longer be of significance to anyone. Once they are forgotten or attention is no longer focused on them, they become merely decaying paper and meaningless ink. What is subject to judgement, and what has the potential to fade into obscurity, is the "injustice and a little of the amelioration and restitution" recorded in the ledgers. The abstract ideas as yet have no concrete basis for the reader to grasp. The reader understands the significance of the ledgers and is beginning to understand what they represent, but has no direct experience of them, only the linguistic experience of Ike's recollection. The same ongoing sentence transforms the ledgers from historical documents, then to objects of moral judgement, and finally to potential obscurity, all in one sentence, so that the relationship must develop as the reader follows the sentence, rather than by fragmentation of the ideas which would result from short sentences.

The sentence describing the ledgers progresses (a new paragraph begins, although it is not capitalized), and the focus becomes more specific in order to develop the reader's understanding of the men who wrote the ledgers. The development now focuses on the personal history which comes to life through the family records.

the yellowed pages scrawled in fading ink by the hand of the first of his grandfather and then of his father and uncle, bachelors up to and past fifty and then sixty, the one who ran the plantation and the farming of it and the other who did the housework and the cooking and continued to do even after his twin married and the boy himself was born (261-2)

The reader's developing knowledge of the ledgers has progressed from the concrete physical image of them, to their historical and moral significance; and, at this point, the "yellowed pages scrawled in fading ink" begin to develop and bring into focus and the characters who actually wrote them. The past, even before Ike was born, comes into focus, and becomes the present. The dialogue is interrupted and the characters are brought to life through a long narrative sentence. A clear picture of Ike's father and uncle develops through Faulkner's use of vivid images.

the two brothers who as soon as their father was buried moved out of the tremendously-conceived, the almost barnlike edifice which he had not even completed, into a one room log cabin which the two of them built themselves and added other rooms to while they lived in it, refusing to allow any slave to touch any timber of it other



than the actual raising into place the logs which two men alone could not handle, and domiciled all the slaves in the big house some of the windows of which were still merely boarded up with odds and ends of plank or with the skins of bear and deer nailed over the empty frames: each sundown the brother who superintended the farming would parade the negroes as a first sergeant dismisses a company, and herd them willynilly, man woman and child, without question protest or recourse, into the tremendous abortive edifice scarcely yet out of embryo, as if even old Carothers McCaslin had paused aghast at the concrete indication of his own vanity's boundless conceiving: he would call his mental roll and herd them in and with a hand-wrought nail as long as a flenching-knife and suspended from a short deer-hide thong attached to the door-jamb for that purpose, he would nail to the door of that house which lacked half its windows and had no hinged back door at all, so that presently and for fifty years afterward, when the boy himself was big to hear and remember it, there was in the land a sort of folk-tale: of the countryside all night long full of skulking McCaslin slaves dodging the moonlit roads and the

Patrol-riders to visit other plantations, and of the unspoken gentlemen's agreement between the two white men and the two dozen black ones, after the white man had counted them and driven the home-made nail into the front door at sundown, neither of the white men would go around behind the house and look at the back door, provided that all the negroes were behind the front one when the brother who drove it drew out the nail again at daybreak (263)

The "image stream," as Aiken put it, draws the reader along. The long sentence has a primitive folk-tale quality (as mentioned in the passage itself), which comes from the rolling rhythm of the ongoing sentence, and the ironic situation of the events described. Because there are no full stops in the paragraph, the reader gains a sense of the narrative as a whole, photograph-like image. The action of the daily scene is also reflected in the long sentence Faulkner uses to develop the characters Buck and Buddy.

What is accomplished through the narrative is that the daily events of the past are enfolded into the present moment, and held up against the larger, more abstract issues of the dialogue. By recalling the daily ritual of the past, Ike's father and uncle become personalities--characters whose actions can be understood in the present in relation to the abstract issues of the dialogue. The

reader also senses the irony through the description of the daily ritual which represents the social system Buck and Buddy have arranged with the slaves. Ironically, the formalities, or appearances are maintained by Ike's father and his uncle, but the particular living arrangements are handled in their own way. A tension also develops in the reader, as it does in Ike: these men were slave owners, yet their treatment of the blacks is not described as brutal, but rather in a comical manner, endowing Buck and Buddy with endearing qualities. However, they are still participants in an unjust social system.

Again, the reader must recall the previous mention of the "amelioration and restitution" (261), as he begins to understand the past events inspiring this idea in Ike. The developing ideas and the emerging pieces of the story are not revealed to the reader in a linear fashion at all. Instead, the ledgers emerge into a whole impression, "as the stereopticon condenses the myriad minutia," and as the bear emerges from the woods when Ike joins the wholeness of the wilderness.

The following paragraph focuses again on the ledgers, and describes their contents more specifically.

the twins who were identical even in their handwriting unless you had specimens side by side to compare, and even when both hands appeared on the same page (as often happened, as if long since

past any oral intercourse, they had used the diurnally advancing pages to conduct the unavoidable business of the compulsion which had traversed all the waste wilderness of North Mississippi in 1830 and '40 and singled them out to drive) they both looked as though they had been written by the same perfectly normal ten-year-old boy, even to the spelling, except that the spelling did not improve as one by one the slaves which Carothers McCaslin had inherited and purchased--Roscius and Phoebe and Thucydides and Eunice and their descendants, and Sam Fathers and his mother . . . (263).

Faulkner again uses polysyndeton, but with a different effect. The list of names is reminiscent of the Biblical genealogy. The list also has a mysterious, hypnotic effect, as if the people are being called to life from the past. Faulkner also leaves off in the middle of an idea "as one by one the slaves which Carothers McCaslin had inherited and purchased--" The thought is left incomplete, as the slaves are named and the means they were "inherited and purchased" are briefly described.

The reader's initial experience of the ledgers comes parenthetically, yet Ike and his cousin have neither removed from the shelves nor actually opened the ledgers. They are only manifested in the attention of the two characters.

(It was a single page, not long and covering less than a year, not seven months, in fact, begun in the hand the boy had learned to distinguish as that of his father:

Percavil Brownly 26yr Old. cleark @  
Bookepper. bought from N.B.Forest at Cold  
Water 3 Mar 1856 \$265. dolars

and beneath that, in the same hand:

5 mar 1856 No bookepper any way Cant read.  
Can write his Name but I already put that  
down my self Says he can Plough but dont look  
like it to Me. sent to Feild to day Mar 5 1856

and the same hand:

6 Mar 1856 Cant plough either Says he aims to  
be a Precher so may be he can lead live stock  
to Crick to Drink

and this time it was the other, the hand which he  
now recognised as his uncle's when he could see  
them both on the same page:

Mar 23th 1856 Cant do that either Except one  
at a time Get shut of him

then the first again:

24 Mar 1856 Who in hell would buy him

then the second:

19th of Apr 1856 Nobody You put yourself out  
of Market at Cold Water two months ago I  
never said sell himm Free him

the first:

22 Apr 1856 Ill get it out of him

the second:

Jun 13th 1856 How \$1 per yr 265\$ 265 yrs  
Wholl sign his Free paper

then the first again:

1 Oct 1856 Mule Josephine Broke Leg @ shot  
Wrong stall wrong niger wrong everything  
\$100. dolars

and the same:

2 Oct 1856 Freed Debit McCaslin @ McCaslin  
\$265. dolars

then the second again:

Oct 3th Debit Theophilus McCaslin Niger 265\$  
Mule 100\$ 365\$ He hasnt gone yet Father  
should be here

then the first:

3 Oct 1856 Son of a bitch wont leave What  
would father done

the second:

29th of Oct 1856 Renamed him

the first:

31 Oct 1856 Renamed him what

the second:

Chrstms 1856 Spintrius

) took substance and even a sort of shadowy life  
with their passions and complexities too as page  
followed page and year year . . . (263-266)

The records, in their primitive form, are the past enfolded  
into the present moment, when Ike and his cousin evoke their  
presence through thinking, speaking, and debating about their  
meaning. The ledgers are not only recreated in the sense  
that they are recalled, but are created anew in the percep-  
tions and interpretations Ike and his cousin bring to them.

The incomplete thought is finally complete after the parenthetical inclusion of the ledgers. In its complete form, the clause would read:

. . . the spelling did not improve as one by one the slaves which Carothers McCaslin had inherited and purchased--(263) . . . took substance and even a sort of shadowy life with their passions and complexities too as page followed page and year year . . . " (265-6)

The effect of the interruption is that the "substance and . . . shadowy life" can be applied to both the slaves and the ledgers. The stereoptic ledgers, in their primitive form, are the past compressed and enfolded into the present moment, when Ike and his cousin have not opened the actual ledgers; yet, through thinking and speaking about them they are created in the present.

Buck's and Buddy's choices, as well as their interactions, are revealed through the brief entries. The ledgers are cryptic, however the stories they contain are complete, particularly in the midst of Ike and his cousin's discussion of large abstract issues. The ledger are, "as often happened, as if, long since past any oral intercourse, they had used the diurnally advancing pages. . . )" (263), a kind of conversation between Buck and Buddy, containing fragments the reader must condense into the series of events they allude to.

The statement immediately following juxtaposes the ledgers' specific information with a judgement about what they reveal:

all there, not only the general and condoned injustice and its slow amortization but the specific tragedy which had not been condoned and could never be amortized . . . (265-6)

The repetition of abstract words, in this case, "amortized," "injustice," and "condoned," serves to remind the reader that the ledgers' purpose is not directed at revealing the family mysteries to the reader, but more as a means for Ike to understand and order the family mysteries. It is as if the reader is merely listening in on this private linguistic exploration. However, Ike's exploration of the issues is shared by the reader who finally has her own interpretation of the mysteries to uncover and understand. At this point in the reader's experience, the "specific tragedy" is still a mystery.

Ike's struggle to come to terms with the tradition of land ownership he was born to cannot be separated from his understanding of and relationship to the wilderness. Ike's consciousness is the medium through which the reader comes to see the world of the story. The consciousness of Ike, the attention he gives to the ledgers and the meaning he imbues them with, creates the version of the story as he tells it. The reader's sense of linguistic mystery often comes from not



knowing what Ike seems to know. For example, Ike's knowledge of the ledgers leads him to conclusions which the reader cannot know. The reader must wait for the answers to the mystery, until they are revealed, often bit by bit, later in the story. The reader's constant participation in the story's creation makes the reading experience holographic in that without this participation, the story would not become a whole, but would remain fragmented.

The relationships between Ike's father, his uncle, and the blacks who were their slaves, are developed through the ledgers and the reflections Ike makes on them. Faulkner again uses detailed, concrete description to bring to life the characters and their relationships to the larger issues:

...covering the next five pages and almost that many years, the slow, day-by-day accrument of the wages allowed him and the food and clothing-- the molasses and meat and meal, the cheap durable shirts and jeans and shoes and now and then a coat against rain and cold-- charged against the slowly yet steadily mount sum of balance (and it would seem to the boy that he could actually see the black man, the slave whom his white owner had forever manumitted by the very act from which the black man could never be free so long as memory lasted, entering the commissary, asking permission perhaps of the white man's son to see the ledger--

page which he could not even read, not even asking for the white man's word, which he would have had to accept for the reason that there was absolutely no way under the sun for him to test it, as to how the account stood, how much longer before he could go and never return, even if only as far as Jefferson seventeen miles away) on to the double pen-stroke closing the final entry . . . (266-7)

The same catalogue effect occurs again, as the "food and clothing" is expanded to a list, with each element separated by "and." The list, both for Ike and the reader, creates a concrete image of the black man, "and it would seem to the boy that he could actually see the black man . . ." The ledgers evoke the ghosts of the past both for Ike and for the reader through Ike's creation of the past.

The concepts of freedom and slavery are defined through this character: "the slave whom his white owner had forever manumitted by the very act from which the black man could never be free so long as memory lasted..." Slavery, then is defined as a condition of consciousness, of memory, so that one must believe oneself free in order for it to be so. The black man knows no other way of life and because he cannot conceive of freedom, he is not free. What the ledgers symbolize is the power of the ongoing debt, the "two frail threads" which tie both the black slaves and the land owners to the land.

The next entry gives the reader another clue as to the "specific tragedy" which "could never be amortized." The entry from the ledger reveals that Eunice "Drownd in Crick Cristmas Day 1832" (267) and another entry six months later, by Ike's uncle, states that the black woman "Drownd herself." The simplicity of the ledgers is the source of their power. They are mysterious, yet they are very revealing because the reader has so much experience to connect the ledgers to. The balance between the long sentences Faulkner uses to expand on their contents serves to perpetuate the idea of Ike's working through them. The reader must continue adding up pieces of the puzzle, along with Ike, in order to discover the whole picture.

The passage ends: "and he thought But why? But why? He was sixteen then" (267). The repetition of the question gives it its power. Ike seems to know, already, that Eunice committed suicide, but he doesn't yet understand her motives. The reader, at this point, does not yet know exactly what Ike's direct experience with the ledgers is. So, both Ike and the reader share a general sense of the ledgers before they know the specific details. Another vividly painted image creates the past in the present, when Ike actually looks at the ledgers.

It was neither the first time he had been alone in the commissary nor the first time he had taken down the old ledgers familiar on their shelf above

the desk ever since he could remember. As a child and even after nine and ten and eleven, when he had learned to read, he would look up at the scarred and cracked backs and ends but with no particular desire to open them, and though he intended to examine them someday because he realised that they probably contained a chronological and much more comprehensive though doubtless tedious record than he would ever get from any other source, . . . it would only be on some idle day when he was old and perhaps a little bored since what the old books contained would be after all these years fixed immutably, finished, unalterable, harmless. (268)

The language of the ledgers is the source of Ike's family history. What they contain becomes familiar to him, although he doesn't see their significance, because, as a child, he believes that the word, the language, is static and unchangeable. Certainly, the words in the ledgers won't change. What changes is Ike. Through his wilderness experience he develops his own sense of understanding in response to the ledgers. Their implications on his life derive from the meaning he assigns them. The changes in Ike result in the changes in the meaning of the ledgers. Language is not stable or static in time because the meaning projected onto it comes from a dynamic human being. The events of the past are not actually conveyed through the

ledgers; Ike's representation of them is. The meaning which develops through Ike's attention to the ledgers is his vision of the past enfolded and transformed, and therefore, created in the present.

Ike's knowledge of the ledgers' content changes through his direct experience with them, although, he has intuitive knowledge even before he actually reads the written records. Ike not only questions Eunice's motives, but also his father's reaction to his Uncle Buddy's interpretation of Eunice's motives.

Then he was sixteen. He knew what he was going to find before he found it. He got the commissary key from McCaslin's room after midnight while McCaslin was asleep and with the commissary door shut and locked behind him and the forgotten lantern stinking anew the rank dead icy air, he leaned above the yellowed page and thought not Why drowned herself, but thinking what he believed his father had thought when he found his brother's first comment: Why did Uncle Buddy think she had drowned herself? finding, beginning to find on the next succeeding page what he knew he would find, only this was still not it because he already knew this . . . " (268)

The setting of the commissary becomes like the scene of seance. Ike is searching for something specific in his

father's and uncle's interpretation of events. The truth seems to lie in the versions of the truth offered by various people. The ledger entry which provides the cryptic information Ike is searching for states:

Tomasina called Tomy Daughter of Thucydus @  
Eunice Born 1810 died in Child bed June 1833  
and Burd. Yr stars fell

nor the next:

Turl Son of Thucydus @ Eunice Tomy born Jun  
1833 yr stars fell Fathers will

and nothing more . . . (269)

The cryptic judgement: "yr stars fell" might be interpreted as "your stars fell" or the "year stars fell." This could be a political reference to the Confederacy, or a reference to Ike's grandfather's loss of his patriarchal power. The cryptic entry is another example of how meaning develops in the reader's response, rather than in the words on the page.

At times, when the reader shares linguistic mysteries with Ike, the reader's insight occurs simultaneously with the Ike's discovery. For example, the description of Ike's grandfather's incestuous relationship with his daughter by Eunice is Ike's creation of the past, as he imagines it might have been. Faulkner italicizes Ike's emotion-filled statements of realization, giving them emphasis. Of the meaningless inheritance, Ike thinks:

So I reckon that was cheaper than saying My son to  
a nigger he thought. Even if My son wasn't but  
just two words. But there must have been love he

thought. Some sort of love. Even what he would have called love: not just an afternoon's or a night's spittoon" (269-70).

The details lead to Ike's creation of the past, through the stereopticon effect of the ledgers, which condense the broad range of Ike's childhood experience, his subconscious knowledge, and emotional self, into articulated understanding. Along with Ike, the reader discovers the truth of the family. Through the few simple words in the ledgers Ike puts together the story:

The frail old pages seemed to turn of their own accord even while he thought His own daughter His own daughter. No No No Not even him (270)

Again, the fact that the ledgers are not actually removed from the shelf is confirmed; the "old pages" only "seemed to turn of their own accord." So, the reader's experience of the ledgers is actual, but no more real or unreal than what actually takes place in the commissary between Ike and his cousin. The reader's experience is the condensed, holographic life experience of the characters. Ike's repetition of the word "no" reveals his sense of disbelief, as if saying the words will change what has happened in the past. But Ike already knows what happened, and he can't "unknow." What seems most disturbing to Ike is that the patrimonial relationship of Ike's grandfather to his son is less important than the old man's public social image.

The source of Ike's knowledge is not only his memory of the ledgers, but his memory of Tomey's Terrel:

And Tomey's Terrel was still alive when the boy was ten years old and he knew from his own observation and memory that there had already been some white in Tommey's Terrel's blood before his father gave him the rest of it; and looking down at the yellowed page spread beneath the yellow glow of the lantern smoking and stinking in that rank chill midnight room fifty years later, he seemed to see her actually walking into the icy creek on that Christmas day six months before her daughter's and her lover's (Her first lover's he thought. Her first) child was born, solitary, inflexible, griefless, ceremonial, in formal and succinct repudiation of grief and despair who had already had to repudiate belief and hope . . .

(271)

The diction Faulkner uses to convey Ike's developing recognition, superimposed with the vivid image in the reader's memory of the black woman walking into the creek to drown herself, give the passage its evocative power. Ironically, the parenthetical statement is used to reveal Ike's overwhelming emotion and sensitivity to the woman's point of view. The repetition of "Her first lover's . . . Her first" creates an equally powerful realization in the reader. The



words Faulkner chooses to describe Eunice's suicide:

"solitary, inflexible, griefless, ceremonial, in formal and succinct repudiation of grief and despair," reveal the deep understanding Ike feels at this moment, through the abstract interpretation of the act. The use of the word "repudiate" links Eunice's act of repudiation to Ike's own act of repudiation. Ike's act of repudiation is in response to his grandfather's values: land ownership and social status are more important than acknowledging his own child.

The time structure of this particular passage is Ike at twenty-one, recalling from memory the time when he was sixteen and was actually reading the ledgers to discover the truth about his grandfather's life. In traditional linear terms, the time structure is a flashback of a flashback. But, in Faulkner's world time is fluid: Ike's creation of the past is his reality in the present, when his understanding of past events solidifies and emerges into language. The discoveries Ike makes about the past do not occur in a succinct chronological order either for him or for the reader, who must let go of Western notions of time in order to enter into the linguistic experience where the past is enfolded into a present relative to the context of the discussion.

The setting, both when Ike is sixteen, and when he is twenty-one, is the commissary. The setting serves to connect the references to Ike's actual experience of the

ledgers (at midnight by the light of the lantern, when he is sixteen) with the time he and his cousin evoke them but do not actually remove them from the shelves. The commissary becomes the timeless setting, the stereopticon, where time is condensed into a fluid whole, representing the exchange of goods in the past, present, and future. The ledgers are the passageway from the present to the past and are even referred to in what seems to the reader to be the future.

that was all. He would never need look at the ledgers again nor did he; the yellowed pages in their fading and implacable succession were as much a part of his consciousness and would remain so forever, as the fact of his own nativity (271-2).

The reference to the future, that the ledgers will remain a part of Ike's consciousness forever (as well as subsequent references to more specific events in the future) further undermines the chronological sense of time readers expect from narratives commonly developing in a linear fashion with an occasional flashback. Readers expect to know from what point in time the story is told. The opening line of Part IV leads the reader to assume that the present is the discussion between twenty-one-year-old Ike and his cousin in the twilight commissary. Yet, this reference to the future forces the reader to accept the fluid nature of time in

Faulkner's world, where both past and future are enfolded into and created in the present, or to revise her assumptions about the chronologically ordered events of the whole.

Further references to the future substantiate the notion of the future enfolded into the present, particularly the specific revelation of actual dates:

and that was all: 1874 the boy; 1888 the man, repudiated denied and free; 1895 and husband but no father, unwidowed but without a wife, and found that no man is ever free and probably could not bear it if he were . . . (281)

This reference to Ike late in his life reveals the change he undergoes throughout his life. He reaches a point where he realizes that "no man is ever free," contrary to his statement as the twenty-one year old Ike, who says "I am free" (299). So the interpretation of the events of the past and the issues of the land, continues throughout his life, as Ike continually changes. The statement "that was all," (271, 281) is repeated several times, and refers ironically, both to the fact that he did not need to look into the ledgers again, and to the fact that the past events are over, but are never forgotten.

Finally, Ike's refusal to accept the institution of land ownership, invalidates his marriage to a woman who attempts to become a land owner by way of the marriage:

they were married and it was the new country, his

heritage too as it was the heritage of all, out of the earth, beyond the earth yet of the earth because his too was of the earth's long chronicle, his too because each must share with another in order to come into it and in the sharing they became one: for that while, one: for that little while at least, one: indivisible, that while at least irrevocable and unrecoverable... (311)

The values which develop in Ike in terms of the wilderness as an inviolable whole, also apply to the inviolable bond of marriage, but the woman Ike marries expects to own the land which Ike cannot own, so the marriage is one without love. Part IV ends in the time frame of what seems to be the future, when the outcome of his decision is manifested in his relationship with his wife; Ike concludes "She is lost. She was born lost. We were all born lost . . ." (314). He does not blame her, he only reflects on the state of humanity. So, ironically, Ike's values finally keep him from being free: he has one failed chance for children and is trapped in a loveless, passionless marriage.

The symbolic nature of the ledgers which develops throughout Part IV as Ike and his cousin work through the issues of slavery and land ownership. The abstractions Faulkner uses throughout this section are only effective because they are continually tied to concrete images. The long sentences filled with vivid details bring the scenes

and the characters of the past to life in the present moment for the reader, and give substance to the abstract ideas Ike and McCaslin explore.

. . . Lucas, the boy of fourteen whose name would not even appear for six years yet among those rapid pages in the bindings new and dustless too since McCaslin lifted them down daily now to write into them the continuation of that record which two hundred years had not been enough to complete and another hundred would not be enough to discharge; that chronicle which was a whole land in miniature, which multiplied and compounded was the entire South, twenty-three years after surrender and twenty-four from emancipation-- (293)

Both personally for Ike, and for all the people of the South, there is no freedom. The whole history and future of the South--time, and the land which is central to the issues Ike and his cousin discuss--space, are represented in the stereoptic ledgers. Through the exploration of issues represented in them, the ledgers have become a microcosm of the South, old and new. Their symbolic nature is reinforced again, in the repeated reference to the "two frail threads" which becomes a sort of refrain:

that slow trickle of molasses and meal and meat, of shoes and straw hats and overalls, of plowlines and collars and heel-bolts and buckheads and clevises,

which returned each fall as cotton--the two threads  
frail as truth and impalpable as equators yet  
cable-strong to bind for life them who made the  
cotton to the land their sweat fell on . . .

(293-4)

The abstractions Ike and his cousin use to describe the social structure and issues of the South are made concrete through the emphasis on the catalogue of goods coming in and going out of the commissary and recorded in the ledgers. The notion time, past, present, and future enfolded into the characters' and the reader's experience of the ledgers is reinforced through the language Faulkner uses to describe them:

...and again McCaslin merely lifted one hand, not even speaking and not even toward the ledgers: so that, as the stereopticon condenses into one instantaneous field the myriad minutia of its scope, so did that slight and rapid gesture establish in the small cramped and cluttered twilit room not only the ledgers but the whole plantation in its mazed and intricate entirety--the land, the fields and what they represented in terms of cotton ginned and sold, the men and women whom they fed and clothed and even paid a little cash money at Christmas-time in return for the labor which planted and raised and picked and

ginned the cotton, the machinery and mules and gear with which they raised it and their cost and upkeep and replacement--that whole edifice intricate and complex and founded upon injustice and erected by ruthless rapacity and carried on even yet with at times downright savagery not only to the human beings but the valuable animals too, yet solvent and efficient and, more than that: not only still intact but enlarged, increased; brought still intact by McCaslin . . . (298)

McCaslin's gesture directed toward the ledgers and repeated throughout the discussion, as well as his simple statement "cursed," represent the whole range of issues the reader has explored along with Ike. The development of the long sentence begins with the comparison of the ledgers to the stereopticon which condenses images into one. Faulkner's use of this metaphor works as an emblem describing the ledgers, and the commissary, as a microcosmic representation of the Southern plantation institution: "the stereopticon condenses into one instantaneous field the myriad minutia of its scope..." The language Faulkner uses is uncommon and creates a sense of formality and even of finality, as he develops the abstractions through the concrete details of the cyclic cotton production. The cycle is never-ending and seems to go on forever, as the system is "enlarged, increased . . . "

The refrain, the reference to the "two frail threads" is repeated again, although in a modified form:

'I am free:' and this time McCaslin did not even gesture, no inference of fading pages, no postulation of the stereoptic whole, but the frail and iron thread strong as truth and impervious as evil and longer than life itself and reaching beyond record and patrimony both to join him with the lusts and passions, the hopes and dreams and griefs, of bones whose names while still fleshed and capable even to old Carothers' grief had never heard . . . (299)

Ike states that he is free, but his sense of freedom is relative. His integrity gives him a freedom which is, in a sense, timeless, because he does not accept or even acknowledge the inheritance of the land and the social structure which is bound to it. Yet, he cannot ever be free from the "frail and iron thread" he was born to.

The fluidity of time in Faulkner's work is frustrating for the reader who does not let go of the expectations based on Western notions of time. The holographic notion of time, the past and the future enfolded into the present, is a means of understanding and accepting Faulkner's complex treatment of time. The reader's linguistic experience depends on the holographic sense of time in that the vivid images, events, and characters of the past must have the



immediacy of the present, in order for Faulkner's abstractions to be realized. The reader's understanding of the complex issues Ike and his cousin explore throughout Part IV derives from the reader's sense of the whole of time contained in the present moment.

## Chapter Five: Truth

Truth is one. It doesn't change. It covers all things which touch the heart--honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love.

--William Faulkner The Bear

The implications of the new physics, specifically of quantum theory, have a great impact on the notion of reality, and therefore, on the nature of truth. Truth is, in Faulkner's work, as well as in the new physics, a paradoxical issue. Ike's definition of truth and how he arrives at it reveals the relationship between language and truth.

Towards the end of Ike's and his cousin's dialogue in Part IV, the discussion turns to the nature and definition of truth. While discussing the issues of land ownership and slavery, Ike refers to the Bible in an attempt to define truth:

'There are some things He said in the Book, and some things reported of Him that He did not say. And I know what you will say now: That if truth is one thing to me and another thing to you, how will we choose which is truth?' (260)

Ike's question points to the relativity of truth, that if each individual has his own definition of truth, there can be no absolute, universal truth. His question also points to one of the most difficult philosophical questions,

raised by quantum physics, specifically Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty. Implicit in the theories of the new physics is the notion that reality is affected by the perceptions of the individual, whose observations change the behavior of subatomic particles. When Einstein saw the implications of quantum theory, he was most bothered by the idea that there could be no absolute truth. Einstein and others tried to reconcile the theories of relativity with the theories of quantum mechanics, but these attempts only served to substantiate their irreconcilability. Bohr's interpretation of quantum mechanics is that "there is . . . one unbroken wholeness that appears paradoxical as soon as we observers attempt to analyze it" (Wolf 121) This concept of reality also leads to the conclusion that there is no absolute truth, no absolute laws which accurately describe the entire order of the universe. Gary Zukav, in The Dancing Wu Li Masters, describes the notion of absolute truth in the traditional Newtonian view:

The scientific idea of truth traditionally had been anchored in an absolute truth somewhere "out there"--that is, an absolute truth with an independent existence. The closer we came in our approximations to the absolute truth, the truer our theories were said to be. Although we might never be able to perceive the absolute truth directly . . . we still tried to construct theories

such that for every facet of absolute truth, there was a corresponding element in our theories.

(37-8)

Scientists have been searching for mathematical formulas and "laws" which accurately predict all cause and effect in an objective reality; quantum theory undermines this search through the discovery that observation affects subatomic activity.

In Faulkner's world, too, the nature of truth is paradoxical. Ironically, Ike seems to support the idea of absolute truth, although he denies it in the same moment. Ike develops his own definition of truth through the process of his linguistic experience, yet, as Ike puts it, "You don't need to choose. The heart already knows" (260). Ike states both points of view which, at first, seem incompatible.

Even though he works toward a definition of truth through the medium of language, Ike is saying that truth lies beyond language, and that one can know truth not through the intellect, but through intuition and emotion. Ike's notion of truth derives from his wilderness experience which has developed into a concept and become an integral part of his character. He argues that truth comes from experience, and that reaching a definition of truth is not a matter of choosing someone else's sense of truth. More important, perhaps, is the distinction he makes about how truth is

understood.

'He didn't have His Book written to be read by what must elect and choose, but by the heart, not by the wise of the earth because maybe they dont need it or maybe the wise no longer have any heart, but by the doomed and lowly of the earth who have nothing else to read with but the heart. Because the men who wrote his Book for Him were writing about truth and there is only one truth and it covers all things that touch the heart'  
(260)

Language is the medium of the Bible. Those gain a sense of truth, are those who have known suffering and who learn, ironically, the basic emotions of life and the ability to endure their suffering. Those who understand truth in this intuitive way, don't understand it through the words of the Bible so much as through their deeply felt, holographic experiences. As Ike puts it, the Bible must be read "with the heart,"--with the truths of the heart gained through experience. So, language does have the capacity to convey truth; however, the broad range of human experience must come before a definition of truth can be articulated.

Ike points out that the emotions and experiences of the heart are too complex to be conveyed through language. As he puts it:

'They were trying to write down the heart's truth

out of the heart's driving complexity, for all the complex and troubled hearts which would beat after them. What they were trying to tell, what He wanted said, was too simple. Those for whom they transcribed His words could not have believed them. It had to be expounded in the everyday terms which they were familiar with and could comprehend, not only those who listened but those who told it too, because if they who were near to Him as to have been elected from among all who breathed and spoke language to transcribe and relay His words, could comprehend truth only through the complexity of passion and lust and hate and fear which drives the heart, what distance back to truth must they traverse whom truth could only reach by word-of-mouth? (260-1)

Ike argues that language, the articulations of the intellect alone, without intuition, emotion, and experience, cannot convey the "truths of the heart." The nature of truth "had to be explained in everyday terms," and truth could only be comprehended "through the complexity of passion and lust and hate and fear which drives the human heart." As in Ike's understanding of the wilderness, a sense of truth comes first through experience, and can then be formulated into language. What Ike says about truth, that it is understood through the suffering and complex emotions of the

heart, is exemplified in the "secret tragedy" he is aware of intuitively, before his understanding reaches an intellectual level.

The conversation returns to the defining truth, after the specific details and events of his family's past are revealed to the reader through the linguistic experience of the ledgers. Ike's own understanding of the truth comes through the wilderness. Both Ike and his cousin call forth from the past, simultaneously, yet without words, the source of Ike's definition of the truth:

. . . and it was in McCaslin's eyes too, he had only to look at McCaslin's eyes and it was there, that summer twilight seven years ago, almost a week after they had returned from the camp before he discovered that Sam Fathers had told McCaslin: an old bear, fierce and ruthless not just to stay alive but ruthless with the fierce pride of liberty and freedom, jealous and proud enough of liberty and freedom to see it threatened not with fear nor even alarm but almost with joy, seeming deliberately to put it into jeopardy in order to savor it and keep his old strong bones and flesh supple and quick to defend and preserve it . . .

(295)

The two do not communicate through language; they share the experience through this simultaneous recollection. The

bear is the embodiment of the values, the truths of the heart, which Ike must possess before he can enter the wilderness and realize its integrity. The ideas expressed cannot be divided or fragmented into neat simple statements, so that the complex ideas remain whole. Faulkner's rhetoric overcomes the bounds of conventional language, to convey the complex nature of truth through the experience of language. The reader becomes immersed in the long sentence. The repetition of Faulkner's "old verities" acts on the reader's established understanding of the bear and the wilderness as the stereopticon image of indivisible order.

The characters from whom Ike learns the ways of the wilderness are described through these abstract values-- Faulkner's "old verities." The values are defined through, and embodied in, Sam Fathers, who is described as

an old man, son of a Negro slave and an Indian king, inheritor on the one hand of the long suffering and learned pride through the endurance which survived the suffering, and on the other side the chronicle of a people even longer in the land than the first, yet who now existed there only in the solitary brotherhood of an old and childless Negro's alien blood and the wild and invincible spirit of an old bear . . . (295)

Sam, too, is a sort of stereopticon. He is "the son of a Negro slave and an Indian king . . ." The "humility" and



"pride" Sam learned through experience: "suffering" and "endurance." That Sam "could not have defined either [humility or pride]" (296), demonstrates that the source of "the truths of the human heart" is in experience; language is unnecessary in understanding these truths.

The values embodied in the Bear, the dog Lion, and Sam Fathers, become part of Ike through what he learns from each of them, so that, together with his own experience, Ike reaches a point where he is able to articulate his definition of truth. Ike and his cousin both recognize that Ike was " . . . a boy who wished to learn humility and pride in order to become skillful and worthy in the woods" (295). Ike has the desire to learn the qualities which lead him to his definition of truth, though his purpose is "to be worthy in the woods." Ike's desire to learn the ways of the wilderness is an inherent part of his character.

As a result the quantum leap's unpredictability, it becomes clear that the universe cannot be understood through absolute laws: the implication of quantum physics is that the mystery of the universe is inherent in its order.

Fritjof Capra puts it:

Rational knowledge is thus a system of abstract concepts and symbols, characterized by the linear, sequential structure which is typical of our thinking and speaking. In most languages this linear structure is made explicit by the use of

alphabets which serve to communicate experience and thought in long lines of letters.

The natural world, on the other hand, is one of infinite varieties and complexities, a multi-dimensional world which contains no straight lines or completely regular shapes, where things do not happen in sequences, but all together . . .

(14-15)

Ike's definition of truth comes through the "multidimensional" wilderness which is an indivisible whole, and where "things do not happen in sequences, but all together." The sense of truth he arrives at is his own, but it is based on this wholeness, the Implicate Order of nature. Faulkner conveys this "multidimensional" wilderness through his style: the long sentences, diction, and rhetorical patterns all work to convey the stereoptic, multidimensional nature of the wilderness.

The greatest ironies of the story are uncovered as the dialogue continues to focus on truth. The paradoxical nature of time and motion becomes clear to the reader through McCaslin's attempt to convey to Ike the paradoxical nature of truth and the irony of Ike's own tragedy. Ironically, too, he turns to language, reading Keats' "Ode On A Grecian Urn," to articulate the nature of truth:

'He was talking about truth. Truth is one. It doesn't change. It covers all things

which touch the heart--honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love. Do you see now?'

He didn't know. Somehow it had seemed simpler than that, simpler than somebody talking in a book about a young man and a girl he would never need to grieve after because he could never approach any nearer and would never have to get any further away. He had heard about an old bear and finally got big enough to hunt it and he hunted it four years and at last met it with a gun in his hands and he didn't shoot. Because a little dog--But he could have shot long before the fyce covered the twenty years to where the bear waited, and Sam Fathers could have shot at any time during the interminable minute while Old Ben stood on his hind legs over them. . . . He ceased. McCaslin watched him, still speaking, the voice, the words as quiet as the twilight itself was: 'Courage and honor and pride, and pity and love of justice and of liberty. They all touch the heart, and what the heart holds to becomes truth, as far as we know truth. Do you see now?' and he could still hear them, intact in this twilights in that one seven years ago, no louder still because they did not need to be because they would endure: and he had

only to look at McCaslin's eyes beyond the thin and bitter smiling, the faint lip-lift which would have had to be called smiling;--his kinsman, his father almost, who had been born too late into the old time and too soon for the new, the two of them juxtaposed and alien now to each other against their ravaged patrimony, the dark and ravaged fatherland still prone and panting from its etherless operation . . . (297)

The irony lies in the inevitability of change. Ike's conflict comes from the changes which have taken place: the land is being developed, Sam Fathers and the bear--symbolizing the wilderness--have both died. Ike's concept of truth comes from his sense of the wholeness of the wilderness, and from the attributes--the old verities-- which the wilderness requires of him in order for him to enter into its order. But Ike cannot stop the changes from occurring. So, like the young man on the grecian urn, if he could stop time, he would never know the pain of loss, or the humility learned through suffering. He would no longer experience the motion and the passion of life; and he would not know truth either, since truth comes through the dynamic experiences of life.

Ironically, the reader understands Ike's notion of truth through the stilled image of Ike and his cousin: "juxtaposed and alien now to each other against their

ravaged patrimony, the dark and ravaged fatherland still prone and panting from its etherless operation . . ."

(298). The stilled image of the two is set against the motion of life.

The wholeness of the wilderness, expressed by Bohm as the Implicate Order, is, finally, the source of truth for Ike, and it is through his holographic knowledge of the wilderness that Ike learns the "courage and honor and pride, and pity and love of justice and of liberty," which become an unchangeable part of his character.

The ledgers are described metaphorically as "two threads, frail as truth . . ." These threads tie the blacks and the whites to the land, even after slavery has been abolished. Faulkner conveys the paradoxical nature of truth through repetition of this metaphor. Truth is "frail," as the wilderness is too frail to withstand civilization's "taming and ordering." However, truth is also timeless and strong:

. . .and this time McCaslin did not even gesture, no inference of fading pages, no postulation of the stereoptic whole, but the frail and iron thread strong as truth and impervious as evil and longer than life itself and reaching beyond record and patrimony both to join him with the lusts and passions, the hopes and dreams and griefs, of bones whose names while still fleshed and

capable . . . (299)

Finally, Ike reaches the conclusion that his tragic, "ravaged patrimony" is a source of his "lusts and passions, the hopes and dreams and griefs . . ." It is through the motion and experience of life that he reaches his definition of truth. The verities--"the truths of the human heart"--are the distillation of the lusts, passions, hopes, dreams, and griefs, of Ike's life, and these truths are one; they do not change.

Quantum mechanics and related theories which constitute the new physics have fascinating implications regarding the relationship between the reading experience, the fictional world, and the reader's sense of reality. If the perceiver affects reality, then the fictional world is no less real in the reader's perception than the "out there" world. In Living By Fiction, Annie Dillard points to an interesting implication of the relationship between perception, reality, and fiction:

If to the artist, and to the mind, each of the world's bits is a mental object for the contemplation or manipulation, then those bits may be actual or fancied; it does not matter which. They may derive indifferently from newspaper accounts or dreams. And since mental objects have

equal status, the man of imagination is the creator of the world. (59)

Faulkner's fictional world affects the reality of the reader through the rich language experience his work provides. The reader's involvement in the linguistic experience: the layers of meaning which result from Faulkner's use of repetition and modifications of key abstract terms; the immersion into his long, ongoing, sparsely punctuated syntactical patterns; the vivid images tied to abstractions which develop into concepts; and the enfolding of past and future into the reader's sense of the present moment, all work together to create an undeniably powerful reading experience through which the reader creates Faulkner's world.

## Notes

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Any discussion of a writer's style requires a definition of the often loosely defined term. In The Harper Handbook to Literature, Northrop Frye, Sheridan Baker, and George Perkins define "style" as:

"the result of the choices an author makes, with respect not to subject matter but to its presentation. A style may be abstract or concrete, heavy with connotation or essentially denotative, characterized by particular uses of figurative language or largely free of them. Indeed, all elements of diction (word choice), syntax, paragraph construction, and organization are proper subjects for stylistic analysis in prose."

<sup>2</sup> Jerome Bruner points to the importance of the reader's experience in literature:

Once we have characterized a text in terms of its structure, its historical context, its linguistic form, its genre, its multiple levels of meaning, and the rest, we may still wish to discover how and in what ways the text affects the reader, and indeed, what makes great stories reverberate with such power: what in the text and what in the



reader? (4)

Bruner supports the reader-response approach which Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser and others have argued for a number of years. However, Bruner's background in cognitive psychology demonstrates that boundaries between disciplines are becoming less prominent. Human activities and disciplines of thought are interrelated and need to be explored from various points of view.

3 Faulkner himself states that Go Down, Moses was written as a complete novel.

"The Bear was a part of a novel. That novel was-- happened to be composed of more or less complete stories, but it was held together by one family, the Negro and the white phase of the same family, same people. The Bear was just a part of that-- a novel. (Gwynn 4)

Strictly speaking, the correct form of the title is "The Bear," yet the more common practice is to underline the title, particularly when the critical focus is on The Bear rather than the entire novel.

## Chapter One

<sup>4</sup> The theories of quantum mechanics have been described by a number of writers who make the complexities of the new physics and the work of the physicists leading to quantum mechanical theories accessible to the lay person, often

through comparison to Eastern philosophy. Fritjof Capra's The Tao of Physics, and Gary Zukav's The Dancing Wu Li Masters are readable interpretations of the new physics.

Even scientists themselves, who accept the formalism and mathematics of what has been called 'new physics,' retain many of the attitudes of nineteenth century science. Most believe, for example, in some form of objective reality that is external and independent of themselves. They look for ultimate particles and elementary entities out of which all nature is supposed to be built. They believe that the more complex fields of chemistry and biology can be reduced, in principle, to the laws of physics, and they consider consciousness to be an epiphenomenon of the physical brain. Paradoxically, scientists have not yet caught up with the deeper implications of their own subject.

The world view that we have all inherited from an outmoded physics still has a profound effect on our whole lives; it permeates our attitudes to society, government, and human relationships and suggests that every adverse situation can be analyzed into an isolated "problem" with a corresponding solution or means of control. (Peat 5)

## Chapter 2

6 In As I Lay Dying, the Reverend Whitfield represents a parody of this situation, in that he fails to ask the Bundren family for forgiveness, except in his own mind.

## Chapter 4

7 One of the key features of quantum theory, described by David Bohm in Wholeness and the Implicate Order, provides a metaphor for the nature of the ledgers:

Entities, such as electrons, can show different properties (e.g., particle-like, wavelike, or something in between), depending on the environmental context within which they exist and are subject to observation (Bohm 175).

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