

**T.C.  
VAN YÜZÜNCÜ YIL ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI  
BİLİM DALI**

**TECHNIQUE OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S  
*THE SOUND AND THE FURY* AND *AS I LAY DYING***

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

**Hazılayan**

**Mohammad Salih İBRAHİM**

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Metin BARLIK**

**VAN, 2019**

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ESERLERİNDE BİLİNÇ AKIŞI TEKNİĞİNİN KULLANILMASI**

**Mohammad S. IBRAHİM**

**VAN, 2019**



KABUL VE ONAY SAYFASI (EK-4)

Mohammad Salih İbrahim tarafından hazırlanan "Technique of Stream of Consciousness in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*" adlı tez çalışması aşağıdaki jüri tarafından OY BİRLİĞİ ile Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalında YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ olarak kabul edilmiştir.

**Başkan :** Doç. Dr. Aydın GÖRMEZ  
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı, Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi  
Bu tezin, kapsam ve kalite olarak Yüksek Lisans Tezi olduğunu onaylıyorum

**Danışman:** Dr. Öğr. M. Metin BARLIK  
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı, Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi  
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**Yedek Üye :** Unvanı Adı SOYADI  
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Tez Savunma Tarihi: 15/03/2019  
Jüri tarafından kabul edilen bu tezin Yüksek Lisans Tezi olması için gerekli şartları yerine getirdiğini ve imzaların sahiplerine ait olduğunu onaylıyorum.

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(İmza)

Mohammad SALİH İBRAHİM

(Tarih)

(Yüksek Lisans Tezi)

Mohammad Salih Ibrahim

VAN YÜZÜNCÜ YIL ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

Şubat, 2019

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ESERLERİNDE BİLİNÇ AKIŞI TEKNİĞİNİN KULLANIMI**

**ÖZET**

Bilinç Akışı tekniği, karakterlerin özellikle düşüncelerinin, duygularının, algılarının ve fikirlerinin akışını aktarmakta kullanılabilen güçlü ve modernist bir yazma stili olarak bilinmektedir. Teknik, anlatımı karakterin zihninin içindeki zamansız ve mekansız perspektife taşıyarak, normalde kullanılan “anlatıcı”ya ait mantığı, vurguları veya gerçekliği tamamen geride bırakmaya çalışmaktadır. James Joyce ve Virginia Woolf gibi yazarlar tarafından kullanılmış olsa da, William Faulkner’in bu tekniği *The Sound and the Fury* ve *As I Lay Dying* eserlerinde kullanım şekliyle bir sonraki aşamaya taşıdığı iddia edilebilir. Bu romanlarda Faulkner karakterlerini ve onların düşünüş biçimlerini Bilinç Akışı tekniğini kullanarak resmetmekte ve bu sayede onların söze dökülmemiş düşüncelerini düzenlenmemiş biçimleriyle, ilk var oldukları andaki halleri ile okuyucuya sunmaktadır. Bu yaklaşımla Faulkner iletişimin gerçek doğasına ve düşüncelerin ne kadarının aktarılıp ne kadarının aktarılamadığına odaklanabilmiş ve aynı olayların farklı karakterlerin zihinlerine nasıl yansıdığını inceleyebilmiştir. Bu romanlarda okuyucular zorlu ama bir o kadar da tatminkâr bir anlatıma kavuşurlar: öyle ki bu hikâyelerde zaman çizgileri kırılmakta, zihni her şeye kadir karakterlere “aptal” denmekte ve içine kapalı erkek kardeşler, kız kardeşlerinin ahlaksızlıkları yüzünden deliliğin eşğine gelmektedir. Çalışmanın ilk kısmı konuyla ilgili tanımları verip, Bilinç Akışı tekniğinin çıkış noktasını, literatürdeki yerini, ve özelliklerini incelemektedir. İkinci kısımda William Faulkner’in biyografisi ve eserlerinin listesi verilerek, *The Sound and the Fury* romanında Compson ailesinin iç dünyasını yansıtmak için Bilinç Akışı

teknikinin nasıl kullanıldığı deęerlendirilmiřtir. Üçüncü kısım aynı deęerlendirmeyi *As I Lay Dying* romanı ve Bundren ailesi için yapmaktadır. Dördüncü ve son kısımda ise Bilinç Akışı teknikinin iki romandaki kullanılıř biçimleri kıyaslanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler : Bilinç Akışı, kişisel bilinç olgusu, iç monolog, serbest dolaylı tarz, William Faulkner.

Sayfa Adedi : 72

Tez Danıřmanı : Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Metin BARLIK



(MA Thesis)

Mohammad Salih Ibrahim

VAN YÜZÜNCÜ YIL UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

February, 2019

TECHNIQUE OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE  
SOUND AND THE FURY* AND *AS I LAY DYING*

**ABSTRACT**

The Stream of Consciousness is known as a strong and modernist writing style that is capable of conveying the flow of thoughts, emotions, senses, and reflections of the characters. The technique carries the narrative to the timeless and location less perspective inside the character's mind, and the logic, punctuations, and reality of a narrator is left behind. Authors like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf used the technique, but arguably William Faulkner carried it to its next step with the way he used it in his works *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. In these novels, Faulkner portrays the characters and their reasoning using the Stream of Consciousness Technique in order to reveal to the reader the unspoken thoughts of the characters in their unorganized form, as they just come into presence. With this approach, Faulkner was able to focus the true nature of communication and how much gets transferred how much doesn't, and how the same events are reflected on the minds of several characters in different ways. The readers are treated with a challenging yet rewarding narration, where timelines fracture, omniscient characters are labeled "idiots", and introvert brothers are driven crazy over the immoral actions of their sisters. The first chapter of the study provides the definitions for the subject matter, inspects the origins, literature presence, and properties of the Stream of Consciousness technique. The second chapter provides a short biography for William Faulkner and a list of his works, then moves on to the novel *The Sound and the Fury* and inspects how Faulkner uses the technique to show the readers the inner world of the Compson family. Chapter three inspects the second novel, *As I Lay Dying* in the



same manner, but for the Bundren family. The fourth and final chapter compares the use of the Stream of Consciousness technique in both novels.

**Key Words:** Streams Of Consciousness, personal consciousness phenomenon, interior monologue, free indirect style, psychological, William Faulkner.

**Quantity of Pages** : 72

**Scientific Director** : Assist. Prof. Dr. Metin BARLIK



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Metin BARLIK for the patient guidance, encouragement and advice, he has provided throughout my time as his student. I have been extremely lucky to have a supervisor who cared so much about my work, and who responded to my questions and queries so promptly. I would also like to thank my colleagues of English language and Literature Department at Van Yuzuncu Yil University. Who helped me in my supervisor's absence? In particular I would like to thank my lecturer Dr. Zeki Edis, and fellow students, Soran Abdulrahman and Sirwan Hassan. I must express my gratitude to (Lawy's mother) my wife for her continued support and encouragement. I was continually amazed by her willingness to proof read countless pages of meaningless English language and Literature, and by the patience of my mother, father, sister and brothers who experienced all of the ups and downs of my research. Finally, I would like to thank, who is always in my consciousness.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **DEFINING THE STREAM OF CONCIOUSNESS**

The authors use various approaches in delivering the storylines in their works of literature. One method they often use is to shift the perspective into the very minds of the characters and to deliver their thought flows and states of awareness directly to the readers as the character experiences them. This method is called the “Stream of Consciousness”, as the reader experiences the thoughts streams of the characters as they occur, hence the term “stream”. This process often involves the interior monologues and random associations the character makes, and the method is sometimes called “the interior monologue” for this reason.

Utilizing this approach in literature changes the form of the narrative to the very thoughts and ideas of the character in question instead of the usual experience the readers have where they observe the characters from outside of their person, like other characters or the environments, do during the flow of events. This shift makes it a more personal and honest experience with the character. That being said, the thought process is not a coherent and smooth experience, the thoughts often make jumps towards parallel or sometimes even irrelevant thoughts. The complexity of the thought flow can be argued to be dependent on the complexity of the character, and in terms of the literature framework, the world can be argued to have become a more complex place after the two world wars. Perhaps this is why the stream of consciousness method is quite successful in capturing the thought processes of the war veterans, people who came back from the war disillusioned, their experiences have changed their view of the world. The post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was an emergent phenomenon experienced by a larger population of people than ever in history after the world wars, and this had its influences on the literature itself as well. The earliest example of this can be argued to have occurred in the works of the minor French author Eduard Dujardin, where he tested the method, in somewhat raw of a form, in his short novel “The laurels have been cut”. Dorothy Richardson (Pilgrimage, 1915 – 19338), Virginia Woolf (Mrs. Dalloway, 1925; To the

Lighthouse, 1927), and William Faulkner (1929) can also be argued to have utilized the method as part of long monologues of their characters.

The term “stream of consciousness” was coined first by William James in his book “Principles of Psychology” (1890) to describe the flow of perceptions, ideas, thoughts, and emotions in the waking mind in a continuous, unbroken manner. In literature, however, it was first utilized by May Sinclair in 1918 as part of the discussions on the novel of the aforementioned author, Dorothy Richardson. Since then it has been adopted as a means to describe a certain narrative approach in fiction.

The modern era of the literature saw numerous authors, including Samuel Richardson, to utilize the method of stream of consciousness. These authors have somewhat developed and improved the use of the method, and in modern fiction, it has become a means to deliver the full spectrum of a character's mental processes, without the intervention of the narrator. In this state, the observations and senses of the character affect their consciousness and their blurred, semi-consciousness thoughts, along with their memories, hopes, emotions, and the random connections they draw with their lives and the events around them.

In structural form, this method has also influenced the emergence of a new phenomenon where the thoughts are given even more emphasis and the punctuations are used less. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this narrative mode is now generally associated with modern novelists and short story authors. (Damasio, A. R. 1999).

### **1.1 Terms related to the Subject and Their Origins**

As mentioned before, the stream of consciousness method changes the perspective to the inner minds of the character and the narrative takes the form of an interior monologue. This method is mainly associated with the modernist movement and can include observations, impressions, and even ideas that are outside the sensory inputs of the character. Random thoughts or fragment of thoughts without direct connections to other thoughts or events can step in and out, and this irregularity is often reflected in the lack of punctuation, or in use of seemingly

“wrong” punctuation marks. Even the syntax may shift, and a loose, incomplete form may take over the form the narrative.

American psychologist William James is believed to have used the term for the first time, who was also the older brother of Henry James, the famous novelist. It has since been used by psychologists in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to describe the awareness reflections of the mental processes of an individual. In his book “The Principles of Psychology”, James describes this sensation of consciousness as “Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as ‘chain’ or ‘train’ do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described.” (239) [emphasis in the original].

A similar phenomenon as a psychological process is what is known as the “free association”. This process is where the mind observes, collects, or imagines a random data, and then uses it to draw connections unconsciously, subconsciously, or preconscious to other data. As can be seen here, the association works on connections, if one were to evaluate the original data and the new data that has been associated with it, there surely will be a “connection”, an “association” as the name suggests, however personal or contrived it may be. A stream of consciousness, however, is the continuous, uninterrupted flow of sensations, ideas, images, recollections, and thoughts, experienced at all layers of the consciousness. It is natural; the already-existing form of the mind, supposedly every healthy individual has a “stream of consciousness”.

As a literary term, on the other hand, “stream of consciousness” emerged as the culmination of three seemingly unconnected processes: the developments of the psychiatric sciences, the western philosophy’s ongoing questioning of the nature of “being”, and the focus on realism at the artworks of the nineteenth century slowly being left behind in favor of more personal, self-conscious subjective forms. In the end, the literature saw an emergence of this new form as well, and the term came to be used to define a particular novel style, or as a particular method of narrative or character development.

At the outset, this technique can be argued to be dependent upon the mimetic representation of a character's waking mind, and display of all layers and ranges of a character's consciousness directly and unmediated, creating a stream of memories, thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Whereas in the previous works the authors were ever present, and sometimes over-present at their works, now with the stream of consciousness the author took a step back to behind the scenes, and the self-awareness of the character in the form of a stream of consciousness even took hold of the narrative strategy of the artwork. With this development, entire stories were developed as collectives of the unconscious, subconscious, or preconscious thoughts of its characters. While many authors employed the method, it is the British authors that arguably used the stream of consciousness most thoroughly, as exemplified by Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Dorothy Richardson. (Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, G. 2011).

Since the term has quite a wide and deep origin, it is only natural that numerous literary critics have come to use the term for many kinds of textual manifestations where the mental activities of the characters are utilized as part of the narrative. While collecting every mental activity under a term that could definitely refer to each of them is convenient, it also belies the true richness and depth of the real meaning of the stream of consciousness. A great example of this derogation is the classification of "interior monologue" as the stream of consciousness itself. The term actually comes from French collection of words "monologue intérieur" where the monologue of the character is textually presented as an articulated, logical collection of thoughts of a character. This is a natural phenomenon to the readers, as every healthy individual supposedly is capable of running interior monologues in their own minds. It is not quite the same of the whole capability of our minds, however, where random collections of irregular and disconnected thoughts, ideas, and emotions constantly step in and out of various levels of the consciousness, creating a colorful, deep, and rich environment. In literature, such a flow is often reflected in a manner called the "sensory impression", which is quite different from the presentation of the "interior monologue."

The sensory impression is presented in the literature as a simple listing of the sensations and-or impressions of a character, usually separated by ellipses. These are



mostly unconscious or preconscious elements that represent the inarticulate thought processes, and as such, they have not experienced the characters themselves as words, or sentences even. The correct utilization of the stream of consciousness method requires attention to prevent the free association processes of the authors themselves getting involved and shaping the flow of the thoughts in an articulated, and sort of, artificial manner. To ensure this is not the case, the story itself needs to be anchored within the stream of the consciousness of the characters. A practical method to achieve this is to use recurring themes or motives. In this method, a motif, usually related to the overarching story or as a part of it, flows at the surface of the character, then disappears among the flow of other emotions, ideas, or images. At a later point of the flow, it re-emerges, this time in a different form perhaps, and brings the story back to focus and progresses it, for the character and the reader.

A good example for this method is provided in the short story “The Mark on the Wall” by Virginia Woolf, where the story begins with what could be called a spoken monologue about a collection of events, but as the character notices a mark seen over an accessory on the wall, it becomes the overarching motif. The character’s consciousness then flows seemingly at random, through memories and ideas and recollections, but as the story progresses, the mark keeps coming back to surface, and the character ponders its nature, or origin, and keeps alternating between the rich, boundless flow of thoughts, and the mark on the wall. This creates a narrative medium where the mind of the character streams off to a wide range of chronological and spatial sceneries but keeps being pulled back to here and now as the mark on the wall keeps resurfacing between them, anchoring the character to a particular location and period. (Majumdar, R., & McLaurin 1997).

## **1.2. The Literature Development of Stream of Consciousness**

By now we have established that the term “stream of consciousness” was coined first in psychology and was later adopted by the literature. William James’ introduction of the term in his book “The Principles of Psychology” in 1890 came with considerations on the nature of the consciousness, which arguably had a stronger influence than Freud’s theories. The connection between the nature of consciousness and the narrative method in literature was first coined in a discussion

by May Sinclair during the discussions of Dorothy Richardson novels. James Joyce then steps in for the literary development of the idea, perhaps to great new heights, with two of his works, namely the *Ulysses* (1922) and the *Finnegans Wake* (1939). William Faulkner (1897-1962), the American novelist, follows the Irish author, together with the works of Virginia Woolf (1882-1941). But many consider the novel “*Pilgrimage*” by Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957) to be the first true use of the stream of consciousness method by an author. The 12-volume novel sequence analyses the development of a young woman, and how her sensitivity shapes her responses to the harsh environment she finds herself in. That being said, earlier works seem to share the use of similar techniques, the earliest precursors of which might be considered to belong to Ovid (43 BC- 17/18 AD) as part of his work the “*Metamorphoses*” (8 AD).

The below works might also be considered to have parts of what could be described as “stream of consciousness”.

- *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658, by Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682))
- *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759, by Laurence Sterne (1713-1768))
- *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843 by Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849))
- *Anna Karenina* (1877, by Leo Tolstoy's (1828 -1910))
- *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904, by Henry James (1843 – 1916))
- *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1915, TS Elliot (1888 – 4 1965))
- *Les Lauriers sont coupés* (1888, Édouard Dujardin (1861 –1949))

### **1.3. The Properties of Stream of Consciousness**

#### **1.3.1. Stream of Consciousness is Modernist**

The stream of consciousness in literature as is known today is only present in the modern era of the literature. Even though earlier works display partial streams of consciousness, only modernist works include its full-fledged utilization. Modernism is broadly defined as modern thoughts, characters, or practices, but in deeper

meaning, it represents a collection of cultural movements of the western societies experienced in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These movements have caused paradigm shifts and changes in cultural tendencies, which were naturally reflected in literature as well. The specifics of these changes include how the reality was traditionally reflected on artworks, and modernism rejects the traditional methods of incorporation, rewrites, recapitulations, and revisions (Bayu Al-Chazal, 2009:73).

But the most important characteristic of the modernism that is in relation to the stream of consciousness is the fact that it is self-conscious. Modern artworks “know” that they are artworks, and thus are brave enough to challenge and experiment with form and flow, drawing the attention from the content to the materials used in their creation. This definition is also in relation to why the movement was first called “avant-garde”, and later when it settled and matured took the name “modernism”. “Avant-garde” is an important term as it means to “move into the inner world against the cold reality of the exterior world, in presence, history, and time”. This is a great parallel to draw to what “stream of consciousness” presents.

It would be incommensurate to not discuss the relationship between modernity and the earlier periods in the context of the retreat of feudalism and emergence of capitalism, industrialism, rationality, and secularism. The changes in literature, and to a degree, in philosophy, were all in relation to these changes, and the stream of consciousness is part of it all. (Bouzid, 2013).

### **1.3.2. Stream of Consciousness is a Personal Phenomenon**

William (1892:3) claims that in his definitions, the terms “state” and “thought” are parts of the personal consciousness, that their meanings are inherently known to us and that they are familiar, but when asked, we would be unable to define them clearly. He believes that personal consciousness is a series of thoughts, emotions, and reflections that occur inside the mind. Since the stream of consciousness occurs inside the mind of an individual, it’s a part of the person, instead of being a universal phenomenon. It’s true that thoughts and ideas and

reflections might be influenced by an individual's perception of the world, the shared and universal environment for all of us, they are still linked only to the other thoughts in our very own minds. William James explains this phenomenon with the following:

In this room -- this lecture-room, say -- there are a multitude of thoughts, yours and mine, some of which cohere mutually, and some not. They are as little each-for-itself and reciprocally independent as they are all-belonging-together. They are neither: no one of them is separate, but each belongs with certain others and with none beside. My thought belongs with my other thoughts, and you're thought with your other thoughts. Whether anywhere in the room there be a mere thought, which is nobody's thought, we have no means of ascertaining, and no experience of its like. The only states of consciousness that we naturally deal with are found in personal consciousness, minds, selves, concrete particular I's and you's (William, 1892:3).

So, each of these minds has his own thought for himself. There is no thought even comes into direct sight of a thought in another personal consciousness than its own. That is to say that everyone his thought do not came to another person. It seems as if the elementary psychic fact was not thought or this thought or that thought, but my thought, every thought being owned. Everyone will recognize the existence of something corresponding to the term 'personal mind' is all that is insisted on, without any particular view of its nature being implied. On these terms the personal self rather than the thought might be treated as the immediate datum in psychology. The universal conscious fact is not 'feelings and thoughts exist,' but 'I think' and 'I feel.' No psychology, at any rate, can question the existence of personal selves. Thoughts connected as we feel them to be connected are what we mean by personal selves. Psychology is to interpret the nature of these selves as to rob them of their worth William (1892:3) So, if the personal consciousness is a multitude of thoughts in each one human being, every thought of one another is unknown to the other; they cannot know themselves how they think. (Bouzid, 2013).

### **1.3.3. Stream of Consciousness Encompasses the Interior Monologue**

In literature works, one of the characteristic means of delivering the streams of thought is through the means of interior monologues. These are narrative

techniques where reflections, emotions, and ideas that course through the mind of the character are presented with the pronoun “I”, or rarely, “We”. These pronouns are used by the character when they come to be expressed inside the mind as the grammatical subjects of the process (Lodge, 1992:42). Other researchers claim it is actually the process of quoting the stream of consciousness, and presenting the flow of ideas, reflections, and emotions in verbalized form. Verbs however limited, restricted forms that are not fully capable of reflecting ideas or emotions as the character experiences them. As such, interior monologue is actually the character speaking to him/herself and is a subset of the whole idea of a stream of consciousness. Still, they are often referred by authors or scholars as though they are similar. James Joyce even believes they are thoroughly linked to each other and cannot be separated. In *Ulysses*, the author reflects the thoughts and feelings of his characters in a continuous, uninterrupted way, and provides for one of the most widely known interior monologues in literature. Dujardin also uses the interior monologue in “*Les Lauriers sont coupés*” in the form of modern understanding of the stream of consciousness. Dujardin believes that the form of the “monologue intérieur” was a means of accommodating poetic and musical themes to the fabric of. (Malkolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, 1976:455).

#### **1.3.4. Stream of Consciousness Also is Expressed with a Free Indirect Style**

Besides the interior monologue, the stream of consciousness can also be expressed with a technique called the free indirect style. In this mode, the narrative expresses the ideas or thought processes of the characters, but instead of the pronouns “I” and “We”, the narrative uses the third person with the past tense and gains the form of the reported speech (Hence the term “indirect”). That being said, the vocabulary used is still fitting to the character, and some forms of taglines that involve the third person pronoun are omitted (like “she thought, she wondered, etc.). That being said, the third person pronoun is still used for other actions in the thought stream, and this fact represents one significant difference of free indirect style with interior monologues. (Bouزيد, 2013).

## CHAPTER II

### WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*, AND THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN IT

#### 2.1. Faulkner's Biography

William Faulkner is widely regarded as one of the most influential American writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is accepted to have embodied the sensible nature of the southern regions. His influence on modernist literature was reflected in poetry, novels, screenplays, and short stories. Two-time Pulitzer winner, and Nobel Prize owner in literature, Faulkner came a long way from his origins of New Albany. Born in 1897 as a son to a family which lost the large economic means they had during the civil war, he moved to Oxford Mississippi with his family after the conflict. Here he nourished his skills of penmanship and bonded with the location, so very much so that he based the fictional town of Jefferson he used in his works.

While he was intelligent, he lacked interest in the classical education provided in the province and dropped out of school. Instead, he found a job in a bank and began to write his earliest attempts at literature. Later, he attempted to fly fighter planes in the First World War by becoming a pilot for the USA, but when his application was rejected, he moved to Toronto, Canada. Here he joined the Canadian Air forces instead. He finally moved to France to fight the war, but by then, the war had ended. Returning to the USA, Faulkner attended to the University of Mississippi until 1921.

Meanwhile, his love life began to flourish, and in 1929, he married Estelle Oldham, who came with two children of her from a previous marriage. The couple later had their two daughters as well, but the older one died at only nine days of age.

Faulkner has always been known for his novel, experimental style of narration and writing, where he takes extreme care for the uttered words and the diction, and meticulously details out the characters' states of mind. He uses perspective shifts and narrative voices and arranges the timelines and spatial

descriptions with a brilliant, baroque style of writing where sentences go to extreme lengths and have complex subroutines.

Faulkner himself claims that the narratives that unfold in multiple dimensions in his works come to him very naturally and instinctively, and he says he almost has an automated way of writing. Whether they are performed consciously or unconsciously, his techniques get hold of the reader's attention and guide it through the intricate methods of how he is telling the story, and what the story is about. What really sets him apart, though, is the fact that he innovated novel techniques to try and achieve what he wanted: complex, oblique, unfolding narratives that convey the character in a different dimension where the reader's attention is swirled around the subjective world the character is in, and his/her relationship with the outer world. This technique suits him well and requires the maximum amount of participation and attention from the reader to get the most out of the experience. This is partially due to multiple perspective changes, whether by moving from conscious thoughts of a character to unconscious ones, or from a time period to another, which doesn't necessarily happen in chronological order, either. His usual style is to use a narrator to reveal a story either experienced by or told to him/her, but the novelty he uses in combination with a stream of consciousness technique is that he uses multiple narrators. This approach makes his stories multi-dimensional and provides perspectives of different characters for the same events that take place during the story. It is widely believed that he was influenced by the works of James Joyce and Joseph Conrad for this reason.

His first-person narratives are quite effective, and he is capable of supporting them with third-person narrations and the technique of stream of consciousness. He uses these powers to draw a landscape of how the modern world challenges the position of men. Due to the multi-dimensional and usually non-chronological narrative, the readers are engaged and participate in the story in order to reveal the truth or to ascertain it from the thoughts and emotions of the characters. Since the same series of events are reacted to by numerous characters in the story, and since the reader is able to read into their streams of consciousness, the story is revealed as is, without the influence of an intermediary narrator.

Furthermore, the combination of the stream of consciousness technique with how Faulkner treats the concept of time in his stories creates an effect that reveals a story with unprecedented amounts of dimensions and perspectives. This approach was novel for Faulkner's time, but also influenced the future and contributed to the solid foundations of the modernist movement in literature. He used omniscient perspective, inner monologues, first-person narratives, symbols, flashbacks, unrealism, allegories, unreliable narratives, and foreshadowing, temporal repetitions of fractures, juxtapositions, and speculations.

But the tool he uses to the greatest effect is believed to be the multiple narratives technique. When multiple characters narrate over the same series of circumstances, Faulkner becomes the composer of a detailed, four-dimensional story. His experimentations cast him as one of the greatest progenitors of the modernist movement. He simultaneously plays complicated themes with time, space, and consciousness, and at the same time tells intuitive relatable stories. Even when he innovated and experimented to break the molds of the old narrative methods, he still kept telling stories of traditional communities. This prevented his novelizations from being completely alien and inaccessible, but instead to have a sense of relief and experiencing something fresh. This mutual aspect might be due to how he was raised as a southern boy growing in rural regions, but had grown to be a man involved in the industrialized, war-torn modern world. When he matured, both of these aspects of his characters were so deeply engraved inside him, he perhaps couldn't let any of them go, creating an inner space where his stories came out "autonomously" as he himself describes it. Many people have reported these conflicting, contradicting divisions in his personality, as he tried to construct a self-contained, designed world that tried to mend the loss of political, cultural, and theological qualities, but at the same time accepting that the history has a very strong tendency to repeat itself and to deny this fact, or to close one's eyes to it, is childish. This conflict inside him created a ripple effect, which is reflected in the flowing, shifting, intricate landscapes of his narratives and stories.

Faulkner had a heart attack and died in 1962, leaving behind a legacy of great utilization and combination of stream of consciousness technique with the perspectives of multiple-characters and timeline fractures. His stories have a



development that follows Lacan's linguistic stage developments, and he has enriched his means of dealing with the language after maturing into symbolic and imaginary stages. He was skilled in creating a web of vivid storylines, and was awarded O-Henry Memorial Award and was accepted to the National Institute. (Faulkner, 1987).

## **2.2. Faulkner's Works**

He wrote many novels: *Soldiers' pay*, *Mosquitoes*, *Sartoris*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Sanctuary*, *Light in August*, *Pylon*, *Absalom, Absalom*, *The Unvanquished*, *The Wild Palms*, *The Hamlet*, *Go Down, Moses*, and *Other Stories*, *Intruder in the Dust*, *Requiem for Nun*, *Affable*, *The Town*, *The Mansion*, *The Rivers*, *a Reminiscence*, *Flags in the Dust* Short fiction, *New Orleans Sketchers*, *These Thirteen*, *Doctor Martino – and Other Stories*, *The Portable Faulkner*, *Three Famous Short Novels*, *Knights Gambit*, *Collected Stories*, *Big Wood*, *Selected Short Stories*, *A Faulkner Miscellany*, *Uncollected Stories of William Faulkner*.

He poetry works are: *Vision in Spring*, *The Marble Faun*, *This Earth*, *A Poem*, *A Green Bough*, *William Faulkner: Early Prose and Poetry*, *Mississippi Poems*, *Helen*.

He wrote some famous plays: *Today We Live*, *The Road to Glory*, *Slave Ship*, *To Have and Have Not*, *The Big Sleep*, *Land of the Pharaohs*. (Faulkner, 1987).

## **2.3. Sound and the Fury**

*The Sound and the Fury* is a novel told from the perspectives of different characters, the first three chapters delivering the thoughts, ideas, memories and interior monologues of Compson brothers. The final chapter of the novel is told from the perspective of Faulkner himself and focuses on a character named "Dilsey", who works as a cook with the family. On the surface, the novel is about the three Compson brothers and their relationship with their sister Caddy, but at a deeper level, the story involves the deterioration of the aristocratic, high classes of the older era after the Civil War. The story revolves around an event acting as an anchor point the thoughts of the characters keep coming back to, but at different locations and time periods throughout the story.

The characters mostly consist of the members and affiliates of the family, but they are all mentioned and observed from the perspectives of the characters of the relevant chapters as the reader is subjected to the streams of consciousness. Benjy is a 33-year-old retarded man, and he delivers his thoughts at the April of 1928. Quentin is a Harvard student and delivers his part in June of 1910, while Jason is a worker at a store and is bitter about his job and life, and delivers his thoughts at the April of 1928.

The location of the story is mostly in and around the town of Jefferson located at Mississippi, and the Compsons are one of the prominent families of the town as they helped settle it and then defended it during the Civil War. The conflict had a heavy toll on the family, however, and their once great status and wealth began to deteriorate. Mr. Compson is now alcoholic, while his wife, Mrs. Compson has become a self-obsessed and absorbed hypochondriac. With their parents in ruins, the children are mostly taken care of by the “negro” cook of the family, Dilsey, who also plays the largest role in the events of the fourth chapter.

Quentin is the oldest of the brothers, and is a sensitive soul to a fault, and is often in a state of neuroses. The sister, Caddy, is a stubborn soul but knows how to show compassion and acts as a mother figure, and thus becomes the affection point of the brothers. Jason is bitter and even jealous of other children. Finally, Benjy is the “idiot” of the family and has difficulty in grasping the concept of time.

As they grow up, Caddy begins to starts changing and behaving less affectionate, and focuses more on herself and becomes somewhat reclusive. Quentin is slowly driven to depression, and Benjy cries and moans a lot more as he lacks the care of his sister. Meanwhile, Quentin has an opportunity to go to Harvard, and the family liquidates a great deal of land to be able to meet his education costs. The fractures become more prominent, however, as Caddy becomes pregnant. While she keeps hiding the name of the true father of the child, at some point Quentin claims he is the father. This is not true, however, as this was Quentin’s last attempt at gaining the affection of his sister back, despite the probable reprimands by their father due to the claimed incest. But Mr. Compson almost behaves indifferently to the situation and ushers Quentin to the Harvard.

To save the state of the family name, Caddy tries to engage Herbert Head, a banker, with a quick marriage. Jason is also going to get a good-standing job at the bank after the marriage. But when her pregnancy is discovered, Herbert divorces her and fires Jason. Jason becomes even bitterer. Meanwhile, Quentin struggles against the implications of Caddy's pregnancy, considering it's a major sin and is unable to cope with the idea. He commits suicide towards the end of his first year at the Harvard.

As the downward spiral of the family gains speed, the Compsons try to save face by disowning their daughter from the family. Yet, they accept the newborn child, Miss Quentin. Already at the cusp of downfall, Mr. and Mrs. Compson are unable to keep up with the child, and the task of raising her mostly falls on the shoulders of Dilsey. It wouldn't have come to be otherwise anyway, as Mrs. Compson dies due to excessive alcohol usage. With the mother gone, the responsibilities of the household fall on the shoulders of Jason. With his job at the bank gone, he now has to work in a store that sells farming supplies, and grown bitter with respite, Jason schemes to take the money sent by Caddy to help raise Miss Quentin, for himself.

Perhaps due to the state of the family, Miss Quentin matures into a rebellious, promiscuous young lady, always in an argument and struggling against her oppressive uncle, Jason. One day she has it enough and steals a substantial amount of money from her uncle and runs away with a stranger. Jason tries to find her but fails, and Benjy and the rest of the family attend to Easter services at a church nearby. (Faulkner, 1929).

## **2.4. Utilization of Stream of Consciousness in *The Sound and The Fury***

### **2.4.1. The Origins of Title**

Interestingly, the title of the novel *The Sound and the Fury* comes from a line from the famous Shakespeare play, Macbeth. In the play, Macbeth is a nobleman in the Scottish army and his wife commits suicide. He feels the life turning into a chaotic mess, and delivers a soliloquy, in which we can find the origins of the Faulkner's title and some of the novel's other inspirations:

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time.  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage.  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury  
, Signifying nothing.  
(Shakespeare's Macbeth)*

There are a lot of parallels to draw between the novel and the specified section from Macbeth. The Sound and the Fury tackles notions like time ((...) tomorrow and tomorrow), death ((...) dusty death), and nothingness ((...) signifying nothing). Furthermore, in the novel, Quentin can't shake off the feeling that the Compsons are "disintegrating" into a mere shadow of their former glory.

In the quoted section above, Macbeth expresses his inability to make use of the experiences and the knowledge of events at the past to change or fix the conundrum he is in and reflects a portion of his helplessness towards the idea of the modern man. In Faulkner's novel, this inability is reflected through Quentin, who takes the decision to stop himself from becoming a bitter, cynical shadow of the past (like Jason) or from falling to blissful ignorance (like Benjy). For them, life is now nothing but a mockery of images, sounds, and reflections. (Shakespeare, Act-V Scene-V lines 24-28).

#### **2.4.2. Chapter One: Benjy, April 1928**

*The Sound and the Fury* opens up with Benjy, the brother with a mental disability. He is the youngest and is referred to as by the "idiot". This initial chapter delivers a complex and incoherent series of mental images and sounds, sometimes seemingly random phrases, and sights. A closer inspection, however, reveals that

these are connected to each other loosely, and Benjy's stream of thoughts is changing by whatever he is doing or whatever gains his attention. That being said, careful readers are able to deduce that Benjy, while unable to express himself, is not a mere idiot.

It seems like, while being an idiot on the surface, Benjy is capable of sensing the changes in the people around her, mostly associated with his sense of smell. He states Caddy's smell has changed, when she wore perfume, or she lost her virginity, Benjy was able to understand the change through the sense of smell, or was capable of expressing it in that form, and thought that she no longer "smells like trees". Furthermore, the servants of the house believe he is capable of smelling "death", and upon Mr. Compson's death as the people were talking about it, Roskus remarks that "Benjy knows a lot more than folks thinks". While this aspect, and in connection to it, the whole chapter of Benjy can be taken as an objective description of a mentally challenged young boy's perspective of the world, but under the surface, there is a lot more organization in the narrative than first meets the eye.

The insight given to Benjy's mind in this chapter reveals that he is mostly concerned with Caddy, particularly with memories of loss related to her. There is an interesting twist in his mind, however, perhaps even connected to his "idiocy, where he is unable to place memories in their own timeframe. This results in a thought process where he re-experiences every memory as he remembers them, or something happens around him that recalls these memories. He remembers the death of Damuddy, and how her loss changed Jason. He is also quite concerned about the sexuality of Caddy, in parallel to his own loss of such a capability as he was castrated. Most of his memories revolve around some sort of loss, loss of Caddy, the pasture, and his father. Due to his incapability of associating events with time periods, he is constantly experiencing this cycle of loss. In the narrative, these losses are connected to the objects around him, like how he likes to look at the fires every time when he needs comfort. He has somehow associated the fires with his sister Caddy, contrasting warmth and chill, light and dark, and a source of comfort, for him and the family alike. Caddy is aware of Benjy's affection to fires, and both she and the servants know that he stops crying when he looks at the fires. When Caddy

leaves, the true levels of pain Benjy is suffering from can be seen as he burns himself on the stove.

Besides fires, he also finds comfort in the mirror at the library. He often watches the family members by their reflections on the mirror: "Caddy and Jason were fighting in the mirror". "We could see Caddy fighting in the mirror and Father put me down and went into the mirror and fought too". "He rolled into the corner, out of the mirror. Father brought Caddy to the fire. They were all out of the mirror." (Faulkner, 1929:64-65) Narratively, the mirror here represents a frame through which Benjy observes the events around him, and uses it to make his own version of logical processing. People can be in or outside the mirror; he doesn't understand that he is merely looking at their reflection. In a way, this first chapter can be considered the readers' version of Benjy's mirror. Characters move in and out of its frame, and while the mirror reflects everything accurately, the events are still somewhat distorted.

One important aspect that reveals the themes of sexualities and the tensions related to it during this chapter is revealed when Caddy sullies her own garments and takes off her dress in front of Quentin to confront him. These actions foreshadow her later sexual involvements, leading to the suicide of Quentin and traumatizing of Benjy: "Caddy was all wet and muddy behind, and I started to cry and she came and squatted in the water" (Faulkner, 1929: 19). Somehow, the mud on her dress is very significant for Benjy. As if sensing the disastrous events in the future, Benjy begins to cry when he sees the muddy dress of Caddy: "We watched the muddy bottom of her drawers. Then we couldn't see her. We could hear the tree thrashing. (...) the tree quit thrashing. We looked up into the still branches" (Faulkner 1929: 39).

Allegedly, this exact image of Caddy climbing to a tree and disappearing behind the branches was what motivated Faulkner for the novel. Critic John Matthews remarks that her disappearance behind the branches correspond to how she will disappear from their lives later on.

### 2.4.3. Quentin

Chapter two consists of the monologues and suicide of Quentin. He seems to be obsessed with time, and words associated with time appear seemingly at every page in this chapter. He expresses being awake as being “in time again, hearing the watch”, and his main motivation through the day is to get “out of time”. In the narrative, he wakes up and immediately tries to break the hands of the clock in an attempt to stop time, to stop the inevitable, slow but steady degradation towards death, to run away from the “reducto absurdum of all human experience” (Faulkner,193:76). He breaks the hands of the clock, perhaps thinking about his father's quote: "time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops, does time come to life", but he quickly discovers that the clock is still ticking, even without the hands.

His dislike of time shows throughout the chapter as Quentin alerts his gaze off of the clocks, tries to move away from the school chimes or factory whistles, and avoids anything that indicates the passage of time. Towards the end of the chapter, Quentin is able to “forget” the knowledge of the time, as he finds himself unable to recall for what time the school bell is ringing for. That being said, he is still aware that he wasn't able to remove himself off of the time, and as he admits to having known all the way through, the only way to escape the clutches of time is to die.

Jean-Paul Sartre remarks on the time aspect of the narrative of Quentin's part, and claims that his suicide is not just about running away from time, but actually is about an exploding or stretched out time. Interestingly, Quentin delivers the events of the chapter in the past tense, instead of using the time narrative of the first chapter with Benjy. This is as if he is looking back at what had transpired, and was in fact right at the moment of his death all along the chapter. Sartre says:

Since the hero's last thoughts coincide approximately with the bursting of his memory and its annihilation, who is remembering? Faulkner has chosen the infinitesimal instant of death. Thus when Quentin's memory begins to unravel its recollections, he is already dead. (Sarter, 1981, 1307)

Quentin is obsessed with the Caddy's absence, similar to Benjy. His chapter is also revolving around her memories, especially her promiscuity. That being said, the loss

of Caddy is not just about her promiscuity for Quentin, but also about the loss of the idealized lifestyle he has built, or imagined to build, for himself. At the center of this loss lies Caddy's loss of virginity. Quentin suffers so heavily with this loss that it's obvious that this is not just about the loss of the family's honor, and this is reflected in his actions when he tells his father that it was the incest relationship between them that took her virginity. He does this, not to save the family name, but to save his love for his sister. That being said, when he says he committed incest with his sister, this is not an indication of a desire to having sex with her; in truth, such an act would have devastated the romanticized, perfect world he envisions. Instead, he falsely confesses incest to try to keep Caddy for himself: "If it could just be a hell beyond that: the clean flame the two of us more than dead. Then you will have only me then only me then the two of us amid the pointing and the horror beyond the clean flame" (Faulkner, 1929: 116).

Another repeating theme in the chapter of Quentin is the theme of shadows, particularly, his own shadow: "Trampling my shadow's bones (...) I walked upon the belly of my shadow" (Faulkner, 1929:96). Faulkner himself comments on the importance of the theme of shadow for this chapter: "that shadow that stayed on his mind so much was foreknowledge of his own death. Death is here, shall I step into it or shall I step away from it a little longer? I won't escape it, but shall I accept it now or shall I put it off until next Friday". In fact, he comments on killing his own shadow, and about the relationship of the death and shadows, at one part of his chapter: "My shadow leaning flat upon the water, so easily had I tricked it (...) if I only had something to blot it into the water, holding it until it was drowned, the shadow of the package like two shoes wrapped up lying on the water. Niggers say a drowned man's shadow was watching for him in the water all the time" (Faulkner, 1930: 90). Evidently, Quentin is thinking about death here, perhaps as a strong foreshadowing, imagining his shadow has already drowned, and he was to soon follow suit.

Playing part at Quentin's death is perhaps his encounter with Dalton, who is presumably the villain that took Caddy's virginity. But the encounter goes quite awful for Quentin, as he not only is unable to beat him; Dalton turns out to be strong, charismatic, and even chivalrous. Facing his nemesis, so to speak, Quentin perhaps



understands that he is not what he envisions himself as, but instead, Dalton is. Like a sweet curse, Quentin's romanticized dream of the ideal world collapses upon him but also shows the reality: he is unable to measure up to his own ideas. His disillusionment carries him towards his death, which is another step of the unraveling of his family.

#### **2.4.4. Jason**

Interestingly, Jason's chapter is the most conventional chapter amongst others, mostly due to the fact that events usually occur chronologically, and the narrative is mostly an inner monologue form of the stream of consciousness. Many critics believe that this is intentional and the narrative is turning from chaotic to orderly, and the concept of time is becoming gradually normalized. Not only that, but where Benjy's chapter was almost entirely internal, Jason's chapter is almost entirely external: the first chapter revolves around themes of bright objects and lack of understanding of time, while the third chapter revolves around the rigid, sharp-edged world of Jason. This makes the narrative of the chapter quite "normal" compared to the previous two, as Jason recalls the events of the day.

For the first two chapters, the entry sections hinted on the primary themes and the atmosphere of the chapter. For Quentin, it was getting caught by time, and the sentence includes both the "time" and "shadow" themes. For Jason the first sentence is: "once a bitch always a bitch, what I say," (Faulkner, 1929:180). The sentence both introduces the character "Jason", and also reveals the themes of this chapter: anger, and a dark, bitter logic. Caddy was a bitch, so her daughter will also be a bitch. If it weren't for Caddy, he would have gotten the job he deserved, but now that chance is ruined. Worse, she did that by bringing into the family an illegitimate child. With the way Jason's logic works, the soundest course of action is to take revenge by plotting to take the money Caddy sends for her daughter for himself.

As can be seen, each of the brothers is obsessively fixed with the past, with Caddy at the center of it all. Benjy keeps living them over and over again as he has no concept of time. Quentin's ideals shatter and he commits suicide to leave it behind. Jason, on the other hand, seemingly cuts her off completely by refusing to utter her name. But under the surface, he was the closest to fall to her, and he is

constantly reminded of her absence. Caddy's daughter is there, and the money she keeps sending her is there, and even though it has been almost two decades that he lost his job, he is still angry with her. Clearly, Jason couldn't leave Caddy behind, either.

#### **2.4.5. Dilsey**

While this chapter has somehow gotten to be called "Dilsey's chapter", it is actually told in the third person. It is still understandable, though, as Dilsey takes the largest part and becomes the most prominent character in this chapter. While she is not the narrator, we still see the world through Dilsey's actions and she acts as the moral focus point of the chapter. This happens as Dilsey and her actions through the day are constantly contrasted by the actions of others: while Dilsey's day is slow, methodical, and almost soothing, Mr. Compson is flighty, and Jason is obsessed and bitter. Her actions and affection towards the family, particularly to Benjy, reveals that she might be even more compassionate than Caddy. She is old and wizened, and even though she witnesses the flaws of the family, she doesn't judge them at all. Benjy can't take care of himself, Quentin is lost in his dream-like ideas, Jason is always bitter and greedy, Mrs. Compson is a liar, manipulating the members of her own family, and Mr. Quentin is lost in alcohol, and young Miss Quentin is too troubled. Amidst all of them and the events that disintegrate the family, Dilsey stands calmly and tends to each of the family members during their downfall.

One final significant aspect of this chapter is that it is full of biblical symbols and themes, as it also takes place during the Easter Sunday. Dilsey has confirmed to the idealistic, self-sacrificing aspects of the Christian religion, and is attending the Sermon delivered in a church. She is affected by the speech quite deeply and even sheds tears. The narrative remarks on the ending of the Compsons, as Jason, are the last member and he doesn't have a child. Dilsey comments that "she has seen the first and the last, she was there in the beginning and she will be there at the end, a clear reference to "lpha and omega".

Unsurprisingly, the chapter, and thus, the novel, doesn't end with a clear indication of what happens to the Compsons. The reader has been provided with their faltering psychologies and slow downfall, but the novel doesn't deliver the closing.

This goes in hand-in-hand with how the story was delivered through the stream of consciousness technique, as the in the minds of the characters that deliver the story, the events are constantly repeating themselves. As such, there are no closures, not conventional ones, at least.

*The Sound and the Fury* is a prime example of the Modernist movement. It is full of the themes that modern works use to great effect: the desires of the characters and the morality of their actions, disjointed timelines, and most importantly, the stream of consciousness technique. The novel is a masterwork of writing, and the readers are engaged in the multi-dimensional story reflected through the inner worlds of the characters in a timeless manner.

The book has four chapters, and the stream of consciousness technique never repeats itself between them. Faulkner mutates the narrative and the delivery of the human consciousness masterfully, so much so that the narrative becomes the part of the characters delivering it, and through them, the readers.

The flow, and the tone of the narrative changes from the chapter to chapter in interesting ways. In the first chapter, Benjy's simple personality is reflected in the simplicity of the words and sentences used, whereas, in the chapter of Quentin, they become complex and difficult as he is constantly struggling to solve seemingly unsolvable moral dilemmas. The shift to the third chapter is also interesting, as Jason also has an involved mind, but he is affixed on money and sufferance of others. While all other characters struggle with the intricacies of everyday life and the moralities of actions, Jason doesn't care about them at all and thus the chapter flows at a more uniform and quick pace. The fourth and final chapter is a relatively normal, classical form of narration. Like the character it focuses on, Dilsey, the narration is quiet and dignified and carries the wisdom of the character, and perhaps to a degree, the author. In a way, the first three chapters create a series of combinations of environments and narratives that reach a culmination in the last chapter. While such an approach was taken before by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, it may be argued that it was Faulkner that perfected it. This technique is a challenging one, and novels written with it can be too complicated, unexciting, or difficult for the masses to read. Yet, Faulkner creates a great narrative and compelling story that stimulates and pierces the reader's mind. Whereas other similar novels focus on psychology and are

sometimes dragging, Faulkner's work delivers relatable, understandable actions. For his experimental, yet thoughtful utilization of stream of consciousness, Faulkner is awarded the Noble Prize, which he clearly deserves. (Faulkner, 1987).



## CHAPTER III

### THE UTILIZATION OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN "AS I LAY DYING"

#### 3.1. *As I Lay Dying*

*As I Lay Dying* is considered by many to be amongst the very best novels of the twentieth century. The story deals with a loss, where a family loses the mother, and the remaining members have to take on a journey to deliver her final wish of being buried beside her kin. The dying mother is "Addie Bundren", wife of "Anse", and the couple has five children: Darl, Dewey Dell, Cash, Vardaman, and Jewel. The events take place on a span of 9 days during which the family is moving on a last-wish journey on the surface, but where each of the family members has their own personal motives. The journey is somewhat perilous and at times adventurous, as the family has to overcome a flooded river, recover their overturned cart, survive injuries, and similar events of danger. The events take place towards the end of the 1920s at the northern regions of Mississippi. The targeted destination is only forty miles ending at the fictional town of Yoknapatawpha. The journey is also during a difficult period for the cotton farmers, which the Bundrens are, due to the crisis in the cotton sector, bad weather, and difficulties in obtaining proper farming equipment.

Always present at the background of the story as a moral compass, the novel is built in front of the ethical code where the farmer society at the story has to feed any travelers that request their aid. That being said, Bundrens are never seeking, and in fact, actively rejecting such an aid. Receiving no such support, the Bundrens are also traveling through an environment that could be considered hostile, as they have to survive through high-temperature weather, floods, and various dangerous elements of nature. (Faulkner, 1973).

It is known that Faulkner had written the novel at a very short period of six weeks, during which he was also working at the night shifts of a power facility. He expresses his pride at this achievement, saying: "I set out deliberately to write '*As I Lay Dying*' Before I ever put a pen to paper and set down the first word I knew

what the last word would be and almost where the last period would fall” (Faulkner, Qtd in Joseph Reed 1945, 85).

### **3.2. The Stream of Consciousness in *As I Lay Dying***

The story takes place at the nine days of the journey which the Bundren's take and the narrative is delivered through the streams of consciousness of members of the Bundren family, and some other characters. Mrs. Addie acts as the connection point for them all and is at the center of the events. The stream of consciousness technique is utilized in the novel to deliberately deliver to the reader the idea that the subconscious levels of the human psyche are often more important than the words spoken or actions performed. Faulkner once again uses multiple perspectives and competing ideas and morals as a canvas for the stream of consciousness technique, which is further discussed in this section.

While this is the shortest of the Faulkner's novels, and the plot is quite simplistic, the technique used in the delivery of the narrative is quite spectacular. The subject matter of the novel works on the interaction between what the characters perceive and what the world really is, and how the duality of insights and morals cross over. The novel once again tackles a substantial, existential fact, which on the surface looks like death, but in reality, it's about life and the circumstances in which people move through it. Although short, the novel consists of 59 parts, each assigned to a particular character in the story. The most peculiar property of the narrative, however, is that while we are reading into the stream of consciousness of the characters, we are not told who he/she is interacting with, or talking/thinking about. This aspect of the narrative is so consistently present that, at times, the character looks like he/she is talking to him/herself.

The author himself, however, never intervenes and stays loyal to what he has set out to do. The only contribution from the author, perhaps, is the vocabulary he grants to his characters, which is quite strong for some of the characters in the story who are illiterate.

At the surface, *As I Lay Dying* has quite in common with “*The Sound and the Fury*”, where the stream of consciousness technique is employed, mostly in the form

of an inner monologue, to deliver the story of a family where some members are pitted against each other. In the novel, the readers, and the characters are denied the comfort of objective truth, but instead, they have to find their way through the maze delivered by the environment, society, and their own perceptions and moralities. While the title may create the impression that Addie Bundren, the mother, is not dead but is dying, during the journey, she is actually dead and speaks only once in the novel. That being said, the narrative is always on the first person, and even though we are experiencing the streams of consciousness of the characters, the voice seems to belong to Addie. The narrative is, unsurprisingly, quite modernist, and the thoughts of the characters are delivered to the reader without any censor or repair on them, finding embodiment with text as they are.

Similarities aside, there are also subtle differences. Where *The Sound and the Fury* had four chapters each ascribed to a character, *As I Lay Dying* has 15 characters and 59 segments. The first novel opens with dates for the events of the chapter at the title, and the predominant tense is the past tense, in which the characters in the narrative speak of the events as if they happened. In the second novel, however, the present tense is used for a large portion of the novel. In the first novel, the delivery of the events by the characters' streams of consciousness processes do not necessarily coincide with the time of the events, but in the second novel, they do. This bolsters the feeling that the reader is also experiencing them along with the character. Combined with the fact that the story is delivered through the minds of numerous characters, the subject of the consciousness and the mind become much more emphasized. This is due to the fact that, if the author uses his own voice as the narrator, the aforementioned elements would be regarding his own mind and consciousness. However, delivered through the minds of numerous characters, the story requires the involvement of the reader at a much foundational level. The reader has to become a part of the whole story, not a single character, or a perspective.

The journey takes nine days, but delivered through multiple characters' mindsets, it becomes easier for Faulkner to play with the timing of events and the chronological flow of the story:

The continuity of external reality is unbroken, no matter through whose mind it is presented. That is to say, that while the narration may move backward throughout time, the sense of a stable and continuous timeline remains intact (*Goodman, 1990: 234*).

He explains the way of his experimentations, and how he developed the techniques which earned him the Nobel Prize, with the following: Sometimes technique charges in and takes command of the dream before the writer himself can get his hands on it. This happened with *As I Lay Dying*. I simply imagined a group of people and subjected them to the simple universal catastrophes, which are flood and fire, with a simple natural motive to give direction to their progress. (Faulkner, Qtd in Eric Mottram, 1971).

The narrative is mostly based on quite natural phenomena, and it is argued by some critics to have a Cubist aspect. In the words of Reid Broughton: "Repeating geometric designs - lines and circles, verticals and horizontals - Faulkner actually facets, like a Cubist painting, the design of this book" (Broughton, 1993: 93).

As expected of Faulkner, the 15 characters each contribute their own piece into a grand composition, at the center of which lies Addie Bundren and her death. The family, while united around the final wish of the mother delivers a feeling of unity that is otherwise scarce in Faulkner's novels; they still present their own conflicting personalities, both between each other and with their own selves. Within this setup, the curious emotions, strange events and thoughts, and numerous abnormal ideas all emerge and create the unique blend of the novel.

Harl Bloom, a critic and a writer himself, remarks on these unique aspects of the novel with the following words:

*As I Lay Dying* may be the most original novel ever written by an American. It is Faulkner's strongest protest against the artificial literary conventions, against the force of the familial past, which troops itself in fiction as the repetitive form of narrative imitating prior narrative. The book is sustained nightmare, in so far as it is Darl's book, which is to say Faulkner's book or the book of his daemon (Harold, Bloom, 1986: No pag).



It is every story's foundations that conflict, but since Faulkner deliberately avoids delivering absolute narratives, the reader has to "feel around" the story to be able to understand its hidden intricacies. Even the characters in the story are sometimes not aware of their own urges and motivations. This is also noticed by critics, as Arthur F. Kinney says: "The fact that the 'object' of the journey, Addie's burial, is merely alluded to, not described, supports the idea that *As I Lay Dying* is really about perception and mental states as much as it is about events" (Kinney, 1978: 139). In that regard, as the characters in the story are discovering their own hidden selves during their delivery of a stream of consciousness, the reader also discovers them, experiencing, saying, and perceiving things together.

To avoid becoming too preoccupied with the family's perspective, the story occasionally switches to the perspectives of non-Bundren characters. Rachel Samson, for example, is one such character, and remarks on the quest of the family with: "It's an outrage... an outrage," (Faulkner, 1930: 111). The same words are also used by Lula Armstid. Through non-Bundren characters, the story gains the variety in human perspective, as the family has to interact with various groups of the society.

In a sense, the journey of the family could be attributed to the whole humanity: traveling in a hostile, challenging world, refusing any help, with questionable morale, but with good intentions, at least on the surface. The journey is so symbolic, and the narrative is so holistic, that the readers get their fiction at its best. This is despite the fact that Faulkner makes seemingly arbitrary modifications to the rules of the English language, and plays with syntax, or textual format. This strange mixture, on the other hand, provides for an uneven but intricate canvas to deliver the stream of consciousness. The fifteen narrators take turns to deliver their small pieces of thoughts, observations, ideas, reflections and feelings solely through their mental acts and thought processes. All of these come together, and portray the dark yet comic story of the family's quest of trying to carry the corpse of the mother to the burial site she requested, despite the otherwise advice provided by friends and neighbors, some due to the heavy storm, some due to the questionable ethics of a nine-day trip with a corpse on board.

As mentioned before, the story is delivered from the perspective of different characters. There are a total of fifteen narrators, of which seven are of the Bundren family, while the other eight are non-Bundrens. Of the 59 parts of the story, 43 are narrated by family members, while the other 16 are narrated by non-Bundrens. At one point in the story, for example, the coffin falls to the river and disappears, and readers can read about it through the narrations of several people, and see the same event from different vantage points. The reader never gets completely lost, however, perhaps unlike *The Sound and the Fury*, as the story always revolves around the journey, and even the 59 monologues of 15 characters can't fracture its compelling force. At the hands of Faulkner, these monologues turn into great tools to deliver the differences of relationship each of the family members have between each other, and how they associate with the mother's death. Anse the father, for example, would have stayed stationary if possible:

*As I Lay Dying* is a story about a coffin. The coffin encloses the wish of a person. This wish becomes a journey in which the family members must fight to reach the forsaken place. Before she died, Addie Bundren, the mother, and wife asked to be buried in a cemetery where the rest of her family was also buried. The writer conveys the traditional values that people have not only in American towns but around the world. It also represents the seriousness that people show in order to carry out a promise. Likewise, Backman Melvin writes (...) in another sense, "*As I Lay Dying* is a fable about Addie's quest for salvation" (Backman, 1954: 66). The crossing of the river was attended by signs of disaster with the boarded log that stood (...) "like Christ," (Backman, 1954 . 41) as if Cora Tull were right, after all, in her insistence that the carting of Addie's corpse to Jefferson was a flouting of God's will... If Addie's prophecy is correct, the journey that may have begun as a flouting of God's will has been transfigured into the journey to salvation. The proof lies "in the testing of the chosen son" (Faulkner, 1930: 62 -63).

Darl Bundren is the second-oldest son and acts as the primary narrator. At first, he seems to be the truest voice of the story as he accounts the events frequently, almost with omniscient power. Yet he is quite capable of destructive behavior without much care for others, as he proves when during the burning of the barn. His powers precognition of future things at some point move beyond sensory

perceptions, like when he “knows” that Dewel is pregnant, his mother’s death, or the real father of Jewel. Amongst all the characters of the story, he is the most complicated. His decisions and words indicate a thoughtful mind with its intricate decisions and focus on even the minutest details of life. The style of his monologue parts in the novel is more complicated than the others’, and since we are hearing his inner voice, we observe character thinking in poetic imagery. It is he from whom the reader receives the views of others, deep down to their character cores, which are usually expressed with a keen eye for detail. Perhaps due to how complex and well developed his character is, Darl’s insights, and the section that delivers his part of the story, is also complicated and difficult to peer into their true depths. He speaks of Addie’s death in heightened, elegant poetic tongue, and even makes a simple announcement at its end: “Jewel, Addie Bundren is dead” (Faulkner, 1930: 51). Thanks to his omniscience, and his insight, the readers are able to learn how the coffin was loaded, how the tools were recovered from the water, how the barn of the farmers was burned. And it is thanks to him that Jewel is saved from becoming involved in a fight with a Jefferson townsman. Overall, Darl is portrayed as a sane and sensible man pitted against the other Bundrens, who are often confused, violent, and clueless. Most of Darl’s statements are followed with detailed depictions that the others generally do not narrate anything similar at all. Some parts from the section where Darl tells about how Cash completed the coffin, which takes about two pages, delivers a clear objective with each paragraph. This is done by a simple statement which is followed by a detailed depiction. This style becomes quickly associated with Darl’s style in the reader’s mind. The following is good: “The air smells like sculpture” (Faulkner, 1930: 72). Which is followed by “It begins to rain” (Faulkner, 1930:72) in the next paragraph, and “The first harsh, sparse, swift drops rush through the leaves and across the ground in a long sigh, as though of relief from intolerable suspense” (Faulkner,1930,75). Faulkner himself comments the reason behind the detailed depictions provided by Darl is due to his impending madness (or vice versa):

Who can say how much of the good poetry in the world has come out of madness, and who can say just how much of super - perceptivity a mad person might not have? It’s nice to think (...) that may be the madman does

see more than the sane man. That the world is more moving to him. That he is more perceptive (Gwynn Frederick and Blotner JosephL, 1995: 113).

Darl's madness may also be associated with his perception or omniscience abilities, which cast him capable of entering into the nonverbal 'thought' worlds the other family members. With this power, he is able to describe the mother's death even though he was outside the house to cut some wood at that particular time. To remove any suspicion that Darl's madness has crept up to narration level and the reader is also going mad with him, the events provided in sections are often verified by other characters.

Darl starts his narrative by conveying how they are trying to cross a river with Cash and Jewel, and he is responsible for carrying Addie's coffin. Other members of the family, Vardaman, Dewey, Anse, and Tull, are watching from the other side of the river. Darl, both performing the task of carrying the coffin, and narrating the events in his unusual style of stream of consciousness, delivers a detailed audiovisual description for the river: "Before us the thick dark current runs. It takes up to us in a murmur become ceaseless and myriad, the yellow surface dimpled monstrously into facing swirls (...)" (Faulkner,1973:134).

He also describes their own positioning in the water:

Cash and I sit in the wagon; Jewel sits the horse at the off rear wheel...Cash's face is also gravely composed; he and I look at one another with long probing looks, looks that plunge unimpeded through one another's eyes and into the ultimate secret place crouch flagrant and unabashed in all the old terror and the old foreboding, alert and secret and without shame (Faulkner, 1973:75).

Amongst all the characters in the story, Darl is the only one able to provide this level of introspective information and is able to deliver their spatial information along with important insight regarding the relationship between the brothers. The dialogue goes on for almost two full pages and is almost never disrupted by Darl's descriptions. Finally, they agree on what to do: "let's do that, Cash, I say. I reckon we'll have to" (Faulkner, 1973: 139).

Since the novel never delivers absolutely certain information by means of an omniscient narrator, the reader has to learn about the environment, characters, and events, through what the characters think about them. Darl envies Addie's love for Jewel, for example, and thus his opinions regarding his brother can't be trusted to be objective. Vardaman, on the other hand, initially thinks it was the doctor that killed Addie, so his opinions on him should be taken with a grain of salt. This interaction is true at every section of the novel, and Faulkner places pieces of identities with each characters properties, sometimes borrowing animal traits, sometimes biblical references. Some eyes can wooden, some eyes can listen and touch and some can burn to cinders, or drink up what they see.

Darl and Addie have a complex, problematic relationship. Addie doesn't want to accept him at all, and remarks on his birth with: "Then I found that I had Darl. At first, I would not believe it" (Faulkner, 1973:164). She still mostly refuses his existence. Her feeling, or lack thereof, has caused Darl to reject his mother as well: "I cannot love my mother because I have no mother," (Faulkner, 1973:89). This is why, perhaps, all of the other children call her "mother", while Darl calls her "Addie", and sometimes "Addie Bundren". The tension between Darl and Addie never falters throughout the novel and is most present at the sections of Darl and Addie. Edmon Volpe, literary critic, comments on Darl's character and relationships with the following:

It is difficult to put Darl Bundren exclusively in one group because of his strange mental condition. He seems to be a mixture of the two groups and embodies the characteristics of two prototypical protagonists. In the course of the novel, we learn that he is very intelligent and eloquent and that he can show warm feelings and concern toward his siblings. He is genuinely worried about Cash's health when he breaks his leg and suffers a lot, and he cares for Vardaman as a responsible elder brother should. It is only these two characters who feel sorry for Darl when he is taken away to a mental asylum in Jackson (Volpe, 1964:129).

Throughout the story, Darl undergoes quite a visible development, but his brother Cash also develops significantly. That being said, Cash develops positively, while

Darl develops negatively, slowly getting mad. Cash is always described with his craftsmanship capabilities, particularly so at the beginning of the novel. He lets his actions speak for himself. For this reason, it becomes quite a critical point when he breaks his legs during the flood, and he has to use his voice more often. It is then readers, and everyone else, understand that he was actually as capable with words as he was with his hands. Darl, on the other hand, is referred by others as “not so bright” and “queer”, perhaps due to he keeps commenting on things that others do not know about and his words seem misplaced, or he laughs too much:

Darl begun to laugh. Setting back there on the plank seat with Cash, with his dead ma laying in her coffin at his feet, laughing. How many times I [Anse] told him it's doing such things as that that makes folks talk about him, I don't know(( . . . )and I turned and looked back at him and him setting there, laughing. 'I don't expect you to have no respect for me,' I say. 'But with your own ma not cold in her coffin yet) ((. . .) And Darl setting on the plank seat right above her where she was laying, laughing). (Faulkner,1973, 100).

This section represents the initial point where Darl begins to lose his mind, which is a process that gets faster and faster, particularly when he sets a barn on fire with Addie's corpse in it. His actions lead the family's decision to send him to an asylum in Jacksonville. His madness and disappointment with Cash as he makes no comment on this decision is entwined in the following section: It was bad so. It was bad. A fellow can't get away from a shoddy job. He can't do it. I [Cash] tried to tell him, but he just said, 'I thought you'd a told me. It's not that I,' he said, and then he began to laugh. The other fellow pulled Jewel off of him and he sat there on the ground, laughing. I tried to tell him. If I could have just moved, even set up. But I tried to tell him and he quit laughing, looking up at me (. . .) 'Better,' he said. He began to laugh again. 'Better,' he said. He couldn't say it for laughing. He sat on the ground and us watching him, laughing and laughing (Faulkner, 1973, 227 - 28).

At his final section, Darl begins to talk about himself in the third person narrative, indicating that he has lost all contact with reality. On the way to mental facilities at Jackson he is put in a train, in which he keeps laughing and narrating in the third person: “Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on the train, laughing,

down the long car laughing, the heads turning like the heads of owls when he passed. 'What are you laughing at?' I [Darl] said (Faulkner, 1973, 241).

At the core of the story lies Addie, and she wish to be buried in her hometown along with her kin, and her inner monologue is placed strategically at the central part of the novel. While this placement has an emphasis on her role as the nucleus, it is still supported by the ever-present consciousness of her, dispersed all throughout the novel. Alice Shoemaker comments on this aspect of the novel with the following:

Two antithetical perspectives are represented in this novel, that of Bundrens and non Bundrens toward the journey to Jefferson. These persons sectives can be conceived of architecturally as the rims of concentric wheels moving in opposite directions through time and space. The Bundren perspective is the inner wheel with the somewhat varying viewpoints of the individual family members represented as points on the wheel directed toward the hub of the wheel, Addie Bundren, the primary motivation for the journey. An outer rim, which of non Bundrens constitutes a different perspective toward the Jefferson trip (Shoemaker, 1970:30).

Even though she has only one inner monologue, she is arguably the strongest character of the story. She has a husband and a lover, and they both try to cater to her needs and wishes, while she doesn't try to return the favor. The opening monologue in her chapter sets the tone: In the afternoon when school was out and the last one had left with his little dirty snuffling nose, instead of going home I would go down the hill to the spring where I could be quiet and hate them. At night, as she recalls, 'Sometimes I thought that I could not bear it, lying in bed (. . .) with the wild geese going north and their honking coming faint and high and wild out of the wild darkness, and during the day,' it would seem as though I couldn't wait for the last one to go so I could go down to the spring. She interprets her hate in terms of the 'secret and selfish' thoughts and lives of the children, each with his own 'strange' blood. Thus she whips them till the skin welts and bleeds, till she has marked their blood with her own in a cruel empathic catharsis (Faulkner, 1973,161 - 162).

The contrast between her neighbors further emphasizes her character, where the neighbor believes in heaven and tries to be a good soul to earn it, Addie is indifferent to committing sins. She is not the heavenly, unconditionally loving mother either: where she accepts Cash and Jewel as her sons, she doesn't accept Darl. Even Cash and Jewel she believes are "her" sons, not her husband Anse's. Vardaman and Dewey, she believes, are what her husband tried to replace his first two children, after Addie usurped their love for their father. As such, she becomes perhaps one of the most profound tragic heroines of American literature. Critics compare her story to Hester Prynne's story in the *Scarlet Letter* of Hawthorne. Yet, a more even-grounded comparison can be drawn with *Emma Bovary* of Gustave Flaubert, or *Anna Karenina* of Tolstoy, or *Lady Chatterley* of D.H. Lawrence. Whereas all of these women were strong characters that were trapped in a series of unfortunate circumstances and events, Addie Bundren of Faulkner is the strong, independent, free-willed woman that has gone bitter while trying to cope with the gap between her own reality and her expectations. She is an idealist whose ideas seemingly have no chance of becoming real. This is why she becomes a tragic, romantic heroine: she is feeling betrayed by life itself.

The readers are conveyed all of this information about her through the harsh and strong words she speaks as he was dying, giving an insight what she would be like when she was still healthy. The chapters of others also contain numerous hints to how hard-working and fierce woman she was, and in combination with her own chapter, we understand how alone she had felt. Things got even worse after the birth of the children, and she better and better understood how words were useless to achieve what one desired. They were even useless to express what a person really felt at his/her core. As she saw her life a slow piling up of disappointments, her death came to her as some sort of liberation.

Due to this feeling of betrayal, she believes she is alone in the world. It begins with her feelings regarding her father, where she senses her father has no love for her. She used Anse as a means of escaping the loneliness, but it's as if she sees Anse as a means to an end, saying: "So I took Anse" (Faulkner, 1973, 163). Faulkner himself comments that Addie has no love or emotional understanding, but she is just sometimes capable of accepting things. Yet with the disappointment towards life, she



is best capable of accepting death, or rather, being prepared for it. In that regard, she sees all her life as a preparation for death. In life, she had a great desire to make others become aware of her presence, but as the circumstances are, only violence was able to make her reach that goal. Due to this, she lost her belief in words, and this is why she dislikes her husband Anse, and the preacher Whitefield, as she believes these men are just words, and nothing else. That being said, even violence couldn't make others feel her presence when it counts the most, and with this understanding, she also realizes she was also just words and nothing else. This is why, at least at her death, she wants to make her presence felt, and imposes her last will as part of herself onto the consciousness of her family members. She comments, on her means of violence when she was a teacher and whipping the students, was also part of the same character traits: "I would think with each blow of the switch; now you are aware of me! Now I am something in your secret and selfish lives, which have marked your blood with my own forever and ever" (Faulkner 1973, 162). George Wolfe, a playwright, and director, comments on this disappointment of Addie with the following: "Addie's section is narrated intense, cryptic, and expository prose because Addie is a person who has tried to solve some of the basic problems of life and has failed".

Interestingly, her idea to be buried to Jefferson came to her when Darl was born, (...) when Darl was born I asked Anse to promise to take me back to Jefferson when I died" (Kerr, 1962: 164 - 5). That being said, there are also other motivations for most of the family members to take the journey to Jefferson, except for Darl and Jewel, and they use Addie's death as an excuse for them. Dewey Dell is pregnant and would like to have an abortion in Jefferson. Anse, her husband who was terminally immovable, comments upon her death with the following as he smooths out the sheets over her dead body: "God's will be done(...) Now I can get them teeth" (Kerr, 1962:51) as he believes he can get some prosthetic teeth at Jefferson. This is rather interesting because, at her section, Addie reveals that he asked for the journey as a means of revenge from her husband: "revenge that he would never know I was taking" (Faulkner, 164). This is perhaps she knows the incompetence of the family members will cause great trouble for them during the journey, creating an ironic twist to both the past and future events. The funeral itself is reflected at eight echoing

sections to deliver the variety at the thought processes of the family members, and some in-Bundrenns, regarding the event.

Anse, the husband to Addie and father to Cash, Darl, Dewey, and Vardaman, has three sections of the narrative. Most of his actions are built on his tendency to commit to inaction, to an extreme degree of laziness, which he tries to justify by God: “The Lord put roads for traveling; why he laid them down flat on the Earth. When he aims for something to be always a - moving, he makes it long ways, like a road or a horse or a wagon, but when he aims for something to stay put, He makes it up and down ways, like a tree or a man ” ( Faulkner,1973, 34). He doesn't try to save the coffin from the burning barn, but instead, Jewel has to risk his life. He doesn't try to help carry the wagon across the river, so Cash almost drowns. This contrast gives a lot of information regarding about Anse, as he is seemingly completely devoid of suspense, and perhaps provides an explanation to why Addie wanted to have an affair, initiating the series of events which lead to the birth of the child, Jewel. Yet, even though he believes men are made to be stationary, he still sets on the journey to fulfill his late wife's wish.

God and supernatural things is what he uses to try and run away from anything that he doesn't want to face. He doesn't even call a doctor as Addie was suffering, but instead claims the situation is unjust, bad luck. When Cash's leg gets broken, he doesn't want to spend money to have it mended properly but instead just tries to solve the issue quickly by pouring cement over it. Every time his actions lead to a bad situation, he blames his bad luck. He even puts his own gains in front of others', even his children's': Jewel doesn't get the horse, Cash doesn't get the graph phone, and Dewey can't get her abortion until he gets what he wants first. Furthermore, he is quick to justify the means with the ends, as he claims nothing is more important than getting Addie to Jefferson. As mentioned before, he seems to want to go to Jefferson for a set of false teeth, on the other hand. He doesn't even care Addie's corpse is decaying and everyone can see and smell the body, but instead tries to find a new wife for himself, further acting dishonorably.

His laziness and awkwardness when he tries to do something himself have reached to such levels that, others can't stand his acts and instead get the job off his

hands to do them themselves. Yet, he is relentlessly selfish and vicious. He takes Cash's money, the horse Jewel wants, and the money Dewey's lover sends to her, all for himself. He understands when the family suffers and agrees that things should be solved, but it's always the others that suffer for it, never Anse.

During the novel, we see Jewel through the eyes of the others, except for his own chapter, which mostly conveys his unconditional love for his mother. Though he loves her, he is unable to express his love, except for symbols of violence. This is perhaps due to the circumstances that lead to his birth, as he was conceived through a violent act. Faulkner masterfully juxtaposes serious subjects with comic sections of the narration, like when Jewel trying to express his love for Addie and resentment towards Cash at the same time, he gets angry to Cash for preparing the coffin right under his mother's window, as if he wanted to place her into it as soon as possible. While Jewel is not fathered by Anse, he is still separated from the rest of his siblings due to the love between him and his mother not being present for the others. This is despite the fact that he knows Anse as his father. As such, he is somewhat isolated, and expresses the feeling of isolation with the following section:

I can see the fan and Dewey Dell's arm. I said if you'd just let her alone. Sawing and knocking, and keeping the air always moving so fast on her face that when you're tired you can't breathe it, and that goddamn adze going one lick less (Faulkner, 1973, 15).

Jewel also doesn't end up well when he stops and thinks and ends up with conflicting emotions; instead, he is a person of action, like jumping into the river to save the coffin, or from the barn on fire. As such, Jewel is best characterized as "heroic". Even his other compassion, the wild horse he wants to buy, is fitting to this aspect of his character.

Dewey is the only daughter amongst the children, but this doesn't mean she's treated like a little girl that needs protection all the time. She does what her brothers do the best of her abilities, even does things that are normally deemed fit for boys. The opposite is also true, by the way, as boys also do perform some feminine activities. Her brothers believe she should clean the fish caught by the boys, but Anse makes them do it themselves. Overall, Bundrens treat girls and boys equally. That

being said, critic Irving Howe believes Dewey is deranged: “(...) one who is only concerned with her own ease. She only wants to get to Jefferson to purchase abortion pills with the money she got from Lafe, her lover and the father of her unborn child” (Howe, 1962: 9). Even though she gets upset when her mother dies, she still goes to Jefferson to get to the drug store of the character, Moseley, who refuses to help her. There is another character at the scene, however, McGowan, who makes fun of the girl because she is poor and naïve, and offers help with the intentions of taking advantage of her. Only Darl is aware that Dewey carries the child of Lafe, and thus her pregnancy somewhat separates her from the other members of the family. Addie’s death left her without anyone to speak to in earnest, so her only focus becomes the abortion of the fetus, as she doesn’t want to leave behind her character to get the new identity of a mother. Dewey is in need of but lacks, love, just Lake Darl. Yet, the comparison between the two characters is very interesting, Darl has no flesh, he’s all eye, towards and for the world. But Dewey is all flesh, has no eyes, and her flesh is what characterizes her. As such, she can’t find her place in the events around her. As she thinks about her pregnancy, she comments for herself as: “a wet seed wild in the hot blind earth” (Faulkner, 1973,61).

The youngest member of the family is Vardaman. We know he is quite small, as many characters comment on his size. He must be five or six years old as he can wield an axe properly and catch fish, but he’s very inexperienced about the concept of death. He’s unable to understand or cope with her mother’s death, but instead constructs a wild analogy, where he begins to believe that her mother has become a fish. This is because he catches fish all the time and has seen death through the fish. He is confused because he catches the fish and wants to show them to his mother to gain her approval, as he deeply feels how important she is to him, but the news of her mother’s death is given to him as he was cleaning the fish. At that moment, he connects the death of Addie with the bleeding fish, and both become one in his mind. He even believes, at some point, that his mother was cooked and eaten. The process of how this occurs in his stream of consciousness is as the following:

And now it’s all chopped up. I chopped it up. It’s laying in the kitchen in the bleeding pan, waiting to be cooked and et. Then it wasn’t and she was, and it is and she wasn’t. And tomorrow it will be cooked and et and she will be him and

pa and Cash and Dewey Dell and there won't be anything in the box and so she can breathe (Faulkner, 1973, 61).

Yet, despite being aware that fish don't need oxygen when dead, he still tries to drill holes to his mother's coffin. When that approach fails to fit the reality, he instead starts to believe an imposter has taken the place of his mother. A similar problem also occurs when Darl is sent for the asylum, as he feels with the senses of a child that the family, and his place in it, is changing. Mother gone, Darl gone, and he can't get used to the "duck-shaped woman", who is Anse's new wife.

As mentioned before, at one point in their journey the coffin holding Addie's body falls to a flooded river, but Vardaman believes his mother will be fine because she's a fish. But he still doesn't want his mother to swim away from him, so he hopes Darl will catch it, and when he seemingly fails, he comments: "Where is ma, Darl? I said. "You never got her. You knew she is a fish but you let her get away. You never got her. Darl. Darl. Darl" (Faulkner, 1973,144). When the coffin is finally recovered, he insists that his mother ran out of the box from the holes he opened up for her, because he can't accept that his mother could smell that bad: My mother is a fish. Darl says that when we come to the water again I [Vardaman] might see her and Dewey Dell said she's in the box; how could she have got out? She got out through the holes I bored, into the water I said, and when we come to the water again I am going to see her. My mother is not in the box. My mother does not smell like that. My mother is a fish (Faulkner, 1973, 187). As can be seen, believing that his mother has become a fish is the least painful method of coping with his mother's death. Interestingly, he is only able to understand and accept Addie's death when Jewel comes back without his horse. This strange connection occurs because at one point Darl tells Vardaman that Jewel's mother was a horse. When Jewel comes back without the horse, Vardaman suddenly understands that his mother is gone forever. It is only after this point that the idea of fish disappears from his mind and he is able to focus on what's real.

It's not only Vardaman that has ended up worse than he started the journey, but it also seems true for the rest of the family as well. Darl is sent to the mental facility, Cash is probably crippled for life, Dewey couldn't have her abortion and is

speeding towards untimely motherhood, and Jewel lost the horse he wanted all the way through. Addie is also not very good, not because of her decaying body, but her thoughts of revenge failed, as Anse seemingly got what he wanted off of the journey. He is the only one enjoying the results of the journey, as he got his new teeth and his new wife. While certain critics believe the journey of the family to be heroic and befitting to their pride, Faulkner's vision is usually away from simpler ends: "(...) the relationship of what is accomplished to the amount of effort and sacrifice involved must make the ending of *As I Lay Dying* one of the most jarring anti-climaxes in American literature" (Faulkner,1973,155).

In his works, Faulkner often uses characters that are unable to comprehend the events happening around them accurately or profoundly, and there is always this chaos and confusion the reader is aware of. Faulkner even considers the vocabulary the characters would use, as evident of narration of Vardaman's stream of consciousness. Vardaman uses simplistic language and keeps the subject to verb format as he constructs his sentences: "If I jump off the porch I will be where the fish was, and it all cut up into not - fish now. I can hear the bed and her face (...)" (Faulkner, 1973, 52). As can be seen, Vardaman's language is simple and is not quite fluent. Where Darl narrates every little detail of every object or the environment itself, Vardaman doesn't even try to. Neglected by both his parents, Vardaman gets some attention during the story from a non-Bundren character called Tull. That being said, he is very attached to his brothers, and looks from them affirmation if his actions are appropriate: Jewel is my brother. Cash is my brother. Cash has a broken leg. We fixed Cash's leg so it doesn't hurt. Cash is my brother. Jewel is my brother too, but he hasn't got a broken leg (Faulkner, 1973, 186). As Darl is sent for the asylum, he feels sorry and begins to include him in his thoughts in the same manner: "Darl went to Jackson. Lots of people didn't go to Jackson. Darl is my brother. My brother is going to Jackson" (Faulkner.1973, 240)." Darl he went to Jackson my brother Darl, Darl is my brother. My brother Darl " (Faulkner.1973, 240).

Cash, oldest son of Addie and Anse, delivers his narrative through a chapter reflecting a mind mostly occupied with craftsmanship calculations for carpentry. He initially doesn't use words often, but instead shows his emotions through his actions. He crafting the coffin for Addie is actually an act born out of his love for her, and

Addie understands this and even appreciates it. He endures the pain and difficulties due to his broken leg through the journey with stoicism. Yet, while he enjoys building and crafting things, he is not mad at Darl for setting the barn on fire, on the contrary, he seems to understand it and shows compassion towards Darl. As such, he also gains the readers' sympathy. He also has the sympathy of the family members to a degree, mostly because they appreciate his craftsmanship, and they even respect him for it. At one point, Cash has a broken leg and Darl and Jewel risk their lives to recover Cash's equipment from the river. Due to his condition, Cash can't perform his carpentry and instead has to use more words to sustain his character.

All of these Bundrens with their own characters and motives are set against a background of a society, which also takes part in the narrative either as voices or observers. Most important of these are Vernon Tull (A neighbor who helps Anse for his own interests), Cora (Vernon' religious wife), Armstid (a farmer), Peabody (the doctor of the town), Moseley (owner of the drug store), MacGowan (assistant to Moseley, wants to take advantage of Dewey's situation), Whitefield (the preacher who Addie has an affair with) and Samson (another neighbor).

The members of the society encounter the Bundren family and deliver their observations and judgment on them in their narratives. They criticize the family for their appearance, behaviors, and origins. Anse gets the most of these criticisms as he is thought of as a parody of a hard-working man who achieves the American dream: he is so lazy that he doesn't work, and drags down and prevents his entire family from climbing the stairs of the society and reaching enjoyable life standards.

The story reflects the social and economic downward spiral the family experiences as they move through a challenging environment. Other families, they encounter often label them, mostly because of Anse, as "white trash", so that they can feel they are better than them and belong to a higher social caste. People around them believe hard work will bring in money and status, and since Anse doesn't work, he doesn't deserve any of them. That being said, Faulkner has been known to give more importance to tribal connections, like families, than social or economic classes: "Pride in family and reverence for ancestors are far more important than any involvement with class" (Howe, 1962:8). David Minter also claims that the Bundrens

are “held fast by the close-knit circle of their family” (Minter, 1980: 119). He bases his claims on the fact that neither Cash nor Darl has any relationships except with their family. Even though the neighbor’s daughter is interested in Darl, for example, he seems to be ignorant towards her but instead cherishes feelings for his sister, Dewey. Similarly, when Darl steps in between her and her lover, Dewey doesn’t object.

Vernon Tull is a delivers a balanced, objective narration, as he is not extremely religious or prejudiced as his wife, and instead sees things as they just are. He thinks on the lines of like: “I did help him so much already that I can’t quit now” (Faulkner, 1973, 29). As can be seen, he is a rather helpful character and steps forward whenever there is a critical situation for Bundrends. While he can’t understand some of the actions the family performs, like crossing the water, he still helps them achieve their goals, despite his disagreement: “they would risk the fire and the earth and the water and all that just to eat a sack of bananas” (Faulkner, 1973, 133). Cora, his wife, however, is a masterfully crafted contrast to certain aspects of the family, and her close proximity delivers great tensions.

Cora is very superficial, self-righteous, and delivers her thoughts with religious zeal. She finds Darl unpleasant but also has noticed he is able to achieve things without dissension. She believes Addie and Darl actually have a good relationship, despite Darl not calling her “mother”. She also realizes that Addie is proud of Jewel. Even though she delivers her lines with self-assuredness, she is still the least reliable observer. Her religious beliefs make her read the relationships within the family wrong, like the situation with Darl and Addie. Overall, she is stereotypical and flat, and feminine in terms of how he is helpful and full of care towards her husband and children. Her character thus presents quite a contrast to Addie and Dewey. Even her first action in the book, baking a cake, reflects her stereotypical motherly mindset.

Peabody, on the other hand, is actually one of the most intelligent and reliable observers in terms of evaluating the Bundrens. He believes Addie was “terribly alone”. Whitefield, Amrsted, Moseley, and MacGowan also deliver objective narrations, though their characters are quite varied, as is their distance to the family.



Faulkner uses numerous narration methods to deliver the story: interior monologues, personifications, symbolism, soliloquies, multiple perspectives, allegories, imageries, and flashbacks. In a character's mind, a human is represented by a fish, and also becomes a symbol for the hardships they will encounter. The coffin of Addie gets burned, then falls to a flooded river, and has holes in it, and so does the family. The journey tests the weakest sides of their personalities, and the way they interpret and react to Addie's dying wish reflects their characters, which Faulkner uses to tell the story of 20<sup>th</sup> century America.

Robert Humphrey has commented on the narration method, and the 59 segments of the story, with the following: "these monologues are internal meditations of the action and they, represent, psychic content and processes of character, partly or entirely unuttered, just as these processes exist at various levels of conscious control" (Humphrey, 1962:105 -107). As the novel lacks an omniscient narrator, the information the reader gets from the minds and words of the characters of the novel are not perfect by definition, in fact, most of the time they are either biased, lacking, flawed, or outright wrong. This creates beautiful tensions and shifting landscapes on the canvas of the story and presents quite a thrilling and enjoyable challenge for the readers. That being said, the novel is not just straightforward and the same from the beginning to its end. On the contrary, Faulkner shifts and alters his style with varying strengths to make it befitting for the character of that particular section. He does this so masterfully that these subtle changes become arguably the strongest achievements of the novel. His use of Stream of Consciousness technique was commented on by various critics: "It is a technique whereby the author writes as though he is inside the mind of the characters. Since the ordinary person's mind jumps from one event to another, this technique tries to capture this phenomenon. Thus, in many sections, notably in the Vardaman and Darl sections, everything is presented through an apparently unorganized succession of images" (James L, 1971: 25). Faulkner uses the technique with his own experimental variations and draws the reader into the consciousnesses of the characters as they deliver their narratives. The story is not delivered by the author or any kind of intermediary medium, instead, it's told by the actions of the different characters that make up to it. Faulkner thus can focus on how they deliver the story, and the

common parts and the differences between characters' narratives, and their inner reactions and comments on the events accumulate up to the account of the story, or the subject matter. It is the fact that this subject matter can prevail over the objects of the story that sets aside the works of Faulkner. Furthermore, the reader experiences the inner and outer reactions of the characters as they occur and as the first witness to it, and there is no one that is interpreting them for the reader. This idea opens up new ways of thinking about the view of the thoughts and motivations about the characters. Finally, since the characters thoughts and actions are speaking for themselves, even the vocabulary and the language used by the characters become tools of delivering information about them.

Like in other stories of Faulkner, the death in the novel is less tragic than the tragedies the characters have to endure as they live, resulting in a strange comparison of life and death. The tragedies of characters are deeper than the simple resolution of death, even so much that some characters in Faulkner's stories see death as a means of coming over character flaws.

As established by now, the Stream of Consciousness technique differentiates itself with its focus on the flow of thoughts and ideas which makes it a great medium to deliver incoherent narrative structures. Characters, locations, and time periods become tools for providing new dimensions for the same story. Authors use it to represent the story over the canvas of a psychological battlefield and to deliver minute details of character psychologies and opinions otherwise ignored in more classical forms of writing. As such, it becomes a tool to discover subjective aspects of each individual character in the story. Every routine activity otherwise would be excessive in other mediums, like a simple breakfast, riding a vehicle, or the process of getting ready for the day, become a field of depiction for the thought streams of the character. While the Stream of Consciousness technique is employed by writers to convey the impressions of the characters in their stories, William Faulkner has experimented on several ways to approach the technique and arguably delivered the greatest American works using it. There is always an invisible barrier between the story and the reader, and Faulkner believes this barrier is the author itself. Thus, he completely removes his objective self from the story, and instead enters, and carries the readers, into the minds of the characters. This study hopes to evaluate Faulkner's

approach and try to understand how he modifies and utilizes it by focusing on two of his works, *The Sound and Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*.



## CHAPTER IV

### COMPARING *THE SOUND AND THE FURY* AND *AS I LAY DYING* IN TERMS OF HOW STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IS USED

#### 4.1 An Overview of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*

Faulkner is considered one of the modernist authors due to how he arranges his themes, narrations, and handling of the subject of the story. He is far from the traditional methods and instead experiments new approaches to his literary arsenal. His usual themes are built on the feeling of loss, disappointments, and despair; he focuses on the fractures of historical continuity, and how people become alone, either individually or as a society. Both novels deliver their narrative with Stream of Consciousness technique, but they have somewhat of an exceptional contrast: *The Sound and the Fury* looks down on the aristocratic castes of the South, while in *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner criticizes back wood people who ignore the realities of life and instead stick to their shortcomings. As such, two novels somehow compliment, and complete, each other. In both novels, women act as the nucleus of the story, a sister in the first, and a mother in the second. Both stories are nihilistic, and follow the Cubist methodologies when conveying their idea of reality. *The Sound and the Fury* came out first, approximately one year prior to *As I Lay Dying*, and it has fewer narrators. The story of *The Sound and the Fury* is delivered from only four perspectives, but each of them is given more space, delivering events and interior accounts of the characters with more detail. The first novel also has a completely disjointed timeline, while the second novel is more traditional in terms of temporal construction, except for the insertion of Addie's part into the middle of the novel even though she dies prior. Both novels have simplistic, direct language.

The characters in the two novels are also quite comparable to each other.

Mrs. Compson -- Addie Bundren

Mr. Compson -- Anse Bundren

Quentin (first son) -- Darl (second son),

Benjamin (Benjy) -- Vardaman (youngest son) (Youngest)

Jason (second) -- Jewel (next to Darl)

Candice (Caddy) -- Dewey Dell (only daughter)

Cash, on the other hand, is a unique character with his own set of personal traits and thought patterns.

Symbolic details handled in the novels are also comparable and similar to each other. Inner voices of the characters, particularly in the monologue form, are used to deliver the contrast between the thoughts and ideologies of the characters, even though they are family. Darl is close to Quentin in terms of their ideologies and deeper cognitive capabilities, while Vardaman and Benjy are childish and almost idiotic, and see the world from a completely different perspective than other characters. The young women, Dewey and Caddy, are lonely girls with immoral behaviors and are under close surveillance of their somewhat reserved brothers. Jewel and Jason are both spoiled by their mothers and are alienated from the others due to how they see the world. (Fualkner, 1985).

The similarity between Mrs. Compson and Addie Bundren is less obvious, yet both are complaining figures whose selfish natures are partially responsible for the destructive obsessions of their children. Even Anse and Mr. Compson are comparable in their unhappy marriages and relative isolation from the world's affairs (Swiggart, 1963:108).

*The Sound and the Fury* provides the dates for each of the section in their beginning, but the narration and the actions that take place do not necessarily coincide during the narrative, as it is delivered in the past tense. Even though *As I Lay Dying* also has quite the number of sections with past tense narration, it still also has a variation: the beginning is in present tense and sometime after the midpoint of the section it changes to past-tense. In the second novel, Addie's consciousness is scattered over the significant events of the story, creating sort of wheel spokes for the spinning story, like the flooded river, barn fire, and the arrival to destination. Due to this, *As I Lay Dying* has a chronology and spatial awareness much simpler to follow compared to *The Sound and the Fury*, as the second one is quite challenging to deduce the right time and place during the narration, particularly for the chapter of Quentin. Darl's

section in the second novel is an exception to its temporo-spatial framework, as Darl seems to be able to describe Addie's death or how Cash makes the coffin.

The names of the narrating characters are given at the beginning of the sections in both novels. These characters then convey their ideas, thoughts, collections, monologues and the words they say to others, but readers quickly realize that they are not always accurate, or agree with each other, even for the obvious events. The information provided by them is also lacking and in conflict with each other. Due to this narration formula, the reader is challenged in creating a clear picture of the series of events. It takes quite a while to completely understand why the family members agree on fulfilling Addie's last wish, for example, in the second novel. Is it because they value her so much and want to honor her wish, or do they have their own set of reasons behind it? Even when the reader reads through all of their chapters, their reasoning is still not one hundred percent clear, but at least there is a picture on the canvas now, and it's a marvel to behold, because it reveals the complicated relationship between the family and the unspoken dimensions of human character.

Quentin's ideas on the day he commits suicide are quite similar to the vision of Darl, and Darl's monologue delivers the drama of personal breakdowns for the character: In a strange room, you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep, what are you. And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were. I don't know what I am. I don't know if I am or not. Jewel knows he is because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not. He cannot empty himself for sleep because he is not what he is and he is what he is not. Beyond the unlamped wall I can hear the rain shaping the wagon that is ours, the load that is no longer theirs that felled and sawed it nor yet theirs that bought it and which is not ours either, lie on our wagon though it does, since only the wind and the rain shape it only to jewel and me, that are not asleep. And since sleep is not and rain and wind are was, it is not. Yet the wagon is, because when the wagon is was Addie Bundren will not be. And Jewel is, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty for sleep in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am. How often have I lain beneath rain on a strange roof, thinking of home? (Falkner, 1930:76). Darl follows through to become completely

disassociated from his personality and delves into madness, directly comparable to how Quentin's perception is disrupted and loses any semblance of order.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, the alienation and the downward spiral of the members of the family start with the existing generation leads of the family, Jason, and Caroline Compson. Jason is bitter and distanced, and while he speaks highly of the family name, his actions do not contribute towards it, in fact, ends up working against it. He is not the ideal father figure either and ignores his children when they need him the most. Caroline is also too self-centered and can't care for her children, instead of letting Dilsey take care and raise them. The parents don't, or can't, show their emotions towards their children, which starts a domino effect leading to the alienation of the family members and the downfall of the family. Quentin feels betrayed and that his idealized dreams of a proper, honest, pure family will never be true, and since he lacks the support of his parents, his depression leads him to suicide. Jason is also alienated, but his version of loneliness comes from his character's earlier years of shaping up, as he was prone to bullying the weak even as a child. Caddy is arguably the loneliest, but it's not easy to completely analyze her because she doesn't have her own narrative. Being a female in the South comes with problems, and the misogyny of the family and the society itself are challenges enough. Even though she is adored by Quentin and Benjy, she is actually too passive, and the only hope of her gaining any semblance of status is through marriage. She even spoils that chance she gets as she marries Herbert Head, who is rich and has social status as a banker, as she is carrying the child of another man. (Faulkner, 1930).

The characters of the second novel are also alone and alienated. Anse the father is egoist and self-centered, and he doesn't fulfill the simple of fatherly responsibilities. Addie is alone because she has lost her belief towards all kinds of love, including motherhood, and even having an affair can't fix that. Cash is alone because he's too focused on his work, at least at the beginning sections of the novels, and doesn't care much about other causes. Darl is alienated and alone because he is able to "know" many things when he shouldn't be, and others fear him for it. Dewey is alone and afraid because she is pregnant and is not ready to let her old self go for the responsibilities of being a mother. Jewel is alone and alienated because he feels

he's not the same as others, as his father is someone else, and particularly feels bad for not being the brother of Darl. Vardaman is alienated and alone because he's too small to comprehend his mother's death, and because he's afraid. As can be seen, Faulkner plays with the themes of fear and loneliness as a master craftsman, and he admits to his affection to these themes in his Nobel acceptance speech: "man must teach himself that the bases of all things are to be afraid."

Faulkner also uses religion and biblical themes in his novels and takes the subject very seriously while doing so. In the *As I Lay Dying*, the affair between Whitefield the priest and Addie the mother plays a central role, conveying the feeling of spiritual loss for Whitefield. In the Christian religion, death is not something to be afraid of but is another form of birth, yet in the novel, Addie's death is terrifying and ugly. The events also primarily take place during the Easter period. This kind of handling of the religious subjects also emphasizes the modernist style of the novel. Some critics believe Benjy is a likening of Christ as he was born on the Holy Sunday, and the placement of the novel's ending on the weekend is not a coincidence either, as it's associated with the crucifixion of Christ.(Faulkner,1930).

Journeys are commonly used story canvases in literature, which is full of examples of it: Homer's *Odyssey*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and *On the Road* by Kerouac. *As I Lay Dying* can now also be counted amongst them, and some critics claim it to be "Quixotic". (Brooks, 1945:79). Journeys and storytelling have similar compositions, the beginning-departure, the story-journey, and the ending-destination. The novel as such acts as the canvas for the story of the Bundrens, both as a family and the main theme of the story and as individual Bundren family members in terms of their character development. That being said, the Bundrens' character development is not necessarily in the positive direction, in fact, it's arguably quite the opposite. The family gets disintegrated over the course of the story against the backdrop of modern society, failing to put up with forces that pull them apart and to get rid of chains that tie them to their pasts. In the other novel, this theme is also present, mostly with the contrast between the brothers Quentin and Jason, where Jason focuses only on his own gains and doesn't care about the family unit at all, and Quentin is more occupied with the code of conduct of the old South. In the Old South, a family's honor was measured with the chastity of the women in it, and as



her sister gives her virginity just for the sake of it, Quentin feels betrayed, because his beliefs in an idealized society and family get violated. Jason, losing his job because of this act, grows bitter and becomes even more selfish, and begins to see the family as something that gets in his way. In Faulkner's arsenal, this kind of decline of characters is also in connection with slavery and its rippling effects on the society after it was left behind. (Faulkner, 1930).

That being said, Compson brothers all see to fail the world as it is, their prejudice, pride, fears, and ambitions getting in the way of it. And whereas the classical journeys contribute to the moral growth and development of the characters, for the Bundrens the development is not progressive but regressive. Darl is sent to an asylum, Anse quickly finds another wife, etc. As can be seen, both families are deteriorating, disintegrating, and becoming further away from their real selves.

*As I Lay Dying*, on the other hand, characters come with strings attached. Darl is always questioning reality and his own identity, Jewel is only capable of function through his obsession with revenge, Cash only seems to care about the order and proper functioning of things, Dewey has become pregnant when she shouldn't and is not ready for motherhood, Vardaman is too young and inexperienced to fully grasp what's going around him, and Addie is frustrated and bitter about failing to live up to her own potential. And Anse is... well, he is Anse, the embodiment of inertia. The way the characters and their personalities and ideas on each other are delivered in a marvelous way, through Stream of Consciousness technique, and reading and exploring about them has this sense of exploring dark, forgotten, hidden secrets. Faulkner's keen sense of action also bolsters the reading, setting the novels *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury* apart from other works that employ the technique. These novels have a coherent story and understandable, relatable characters along with enough contrast material and different perspectives.

That being said, critics still like to compare and pick their favorite between the two novels. Harry M. Campbell says: "In every respect, *The Sound and the Fury* is superior to *As I Lay Dying*, in which the point of view shifts frequently and abruptly from one character to another. In *The Sound and the Fury*, the point of view is changed only three times. The first part is the "psychodramatic reverie" of the idiot

Benjy to whom sights, sounds, and smells recall childhood experiences which he confuses with present occurrences”( Campbell,1943: 305 - 320).

*As I Lay Dying*, on the other hand, has a more complex narrative structure than *The Sound and the Fury*, and critics comment on that as well:

fifteen perspectives overlapping, compensating and at the same time contradicting one another, it is extremely fragmented canvas where objects are multifaceted and merged with the elements of the background and where the gradation of colors does not follow a specific pattern but is shaped into a bold, strange or abrupt juxtaposition(Shu-mei Shih.1984: 37).

Due to this complexity, the reader has more to do, and has to engage in the novel with more attention, as there are more characters to compare the ideas of to deduce a more accurate depiction of events. Most of this challenge comes from the fact that Faulkner has a way of making past events keep influencing the present in his stories.

The critics also comment on similarities of narrative and form, and the manner Faulkner experiments of the use of Stream of Consciousness technique, of the two novels: “*In The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*, each character rolls from subject to object; from truth to fact; from being the center of almost infinite horizons of consciousness within his own monologue” (Strand berg, 1965:43).

#### **4.2 Similarities and Differences between Compsons and Bundren**

While critics like looking at the similarities between the two novels, Kartiganer claims William Faulkner himself commented on the subject by saying: “I had never thought of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* in the same breath” (Blotner, 1974: 1208). But it’s also known that he has said: “both of them happened to have a sister in a roaring gang of men folks” (Gwynn and Blotner, 1995: 113). Kartiganer then argues that “Most of the major characters of *The Sound and the Fury* are reborn in *As I Lay Dying*, in guises suited to their new social status”. As such, this study will further focus on the similarities between the characters.

The most obvious pair is Caddy and Dewey, as they are both promiscuous and they are both sisters to an otherwise introvert set of brothers. But Benjy and Darl also share similarities right beneath the surface of their characters. Kartiganer even

comments on this particular subject: “Quentin, the sensitive artist figure transforming his sister’s sex life into a Byronic tale of mortal sin, becomes the articulate and impotent visionary Darl” (Kartiganer,1994:325) He also points out another similarity and claims “And finally Benjy, childlike at thirty - three, becomes the real child Vardaman” (Kartiganer,1994:325). Most critics, and seemingly publishers, believe there are certain levels of similarities between the novels, evidenced by Random House bringing the two stories in a single-edition copy in, 1946. But does the difference go beyond the utilization of Stream of Consciousness to deliver the deterioration of two families centered on the women of the story against the modern society?

Benjy and Darl each have narratives with eloquent use of stream of consciousness where they depict their insight on the world that are beyond the other characters’, and they report their supernaturally gained knowledge of the world with articulate narrations. As such, they are used to deliver more information on other characters the others themselves. Amongst the two, Benjy is even more objective, as he only speaks the truth. Darl also sees the actual things as they happen but delivers the information with a small degree of interpretation, at least compared to Benjy. Darl is almost clairvoyant, omniscient even, whereas Benjy’s means of obtaining knowledge he otherwise shouldn’t get access to is associated with his sense of smell.

The period which the stories for the two novels unfold also coincides: both families are facing their challenges after the Civil War. The period no doubt contributes to the downfalls of the families. Both stories also take place in the fictional county of Yoknapatawpha in Mississippi. But *The Sound and the Fury* opens up with a much more challenging section to read, as Benjy delivers the story with an erratic, jarring narrative that changes time and location too quickly and too often. Benjy’s mind skips between childhood memories and the current time without skipping a beat, and reading the chapter is a staggering experience that challenges traditional methods of storytelling. Benjy is also not particularly potent with the concept of time, in fact, he seems unable to recognize what it is, and for him the past and the present are always intermingled together, increasing the level of confusion and difficulty faced when reading his chapter. The story then moves on to the chapter of Quentin, and while his chapter is easier to read, this time it’s the language and the

deep personality of the character that becomes a challenge. Quentin is obsessed with the virginity of his sister and the promiscuous acts of the latter start a chain reaction of the mixture of his character, leading to his suicide. The story then moves on to the section of Jason, this time a bitter, revenge-focused character that acts immorally by stealing the money sent for his niece. The final section is attributed to the Dilsey character, the cook of the house that attended the children more than their own parents did. Overall, there are four distinct sections with quite a wide variety of narration techniques. Kartiganer summarizes the book: “*The Sound and the Fury* portrays family tribulation as a decline from greatness: idiocy, madness, alcoholism, promiscuity, and theft as symptoms of a tragic Fall of Southern Princes” (Kartiganer, 1994:324).

*As I Lay Dying*, on the other hand, is easier to read comparatively, based on the more streamlined use of time and location indicators. On the other hand, it delivers the streams of consciousness of 15 characters over 59 sections. Faulkner himself comments on the difficulty, or lack thereof, writing it: “Well, I judge my books by how much work and agony went into ‘em. Something like *As I Lay Dying* was easy, really easy. A tour de force. It took me just about six weeks. (With a grin) I could write a book like that with both my hands tied behind my back” (Meriwether and Millgate, 1968: 222). Even though it also seems to tell the story of a deteriorating family similar to *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying* is about the action and pacing. Whereas the first novel confuses the reader with its timeline shifts, it’s clear that the Bundren's, the family in the second novel, live in the present and naturally progress towards the future. For Compsons, the family name matters a lot, and their internal monologues and memories keep shifting back and forth because of this. Bundrens, on the other hand, are looking towards delivering Addie to her final resting ground as she requested as a dying wish, even though they also have their own reasons to go there.

Interestingly, Darl and Benjy both deliver the facts as they are, leaving nothing out, and in the case of Darl, even providing deep and insightful comments on things. Yet, their families have labeled both of them with words like “idiot, looney, different” etc. Both characters have quite a different mindset compared to their other siblings, but Benjy’s “disability” is more apparent, as he is a 33-year-old childish

man. He yells and moans when he's hurt or upset, but his stream of consciousness is almost aristocratic. While he was mostly raised and taken care of by Dilsey the "negro" cook, his inner voice is still quite well-spoken, though sometimes jarring. Benjy is reliable as it gets, though, as he has no prejudice against people or even events. Faulkner himself claims that Benjy doesn't even know good or evil, and can't even tell right from wrong, just speaks the truth. His only disposition, perhaps even fixation, is towards his sister. Faulkner himself comments that the interests of the brothers for Caddy are in both good and bad ways.

Darl perpetually swaying between an existential crisis and his own critique, but in return, he is able to gain great insight about his own reality. Like Benjy, Faulkner uses the "disability" of him to isolate him, and his alienation and labeling by others as "idiot" might be an indication that he is indeed reincarnated version of Benjy.

Everything considered, is Darl more like Quentin, or like Benjy? While Kartiganer leans towards the latter, it's also possible that Benjy and Darl is a better coupling. The greatest difference between them is perhaps the level of their disorder: Benjy is autistic, while Darl is in depression. They otherwise are quite similar, as they deliver the most profound and reliable information regarding their family, both are concerned with the honor and infidelity issues, and both are used to provide a similar set of story accessories. Benjy's mind is full of memories to convey to the reader, and Micheal Berube believes that everything is not as bad as it seems: "Benjy seems to have a formidable memory; in that respect, he is an ideal narrator for a novel whose characters are obsessed with the past (...)" (Kartiganer, 1994:575).

Darl, on the other hand, is quite a complex character who is in psychotic depression, and is jealous of Jewel, as he shares something with his mother he never could, or will. This complexity is not lost in delivery or narration either, as his chapter is not spatially or temporally fractured like Benjy's. Like Benjy, Darl delivers the narration of how other members of the family disregard Addie's body and instead go on the journey for their own reasons, particularly for his father Anse, and provides the details of their actions. His ability to know everything with clairvoyance adds a layer of suspense and curiosity for the reader. This is perhaps

due to how Faulkner uses him to deliver the roots of his story, and he might be a curiosity just for the sake of the storytelling medium. Overall, this thesis surmises that in *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury*, Benjy and Darl are similar characters. The way they deliver their narrative, inner discourses and disabilities in quite similar ways, along with their omniscient capabilities. Faulkner has provided them with the strongest voice and uses their disabilities to bring out their demises.

We also believe that Faulkner uses the disabilities of the characters to their advantage in certain aspects of their lives, at least for himself and his storytelling. Darl's depression for his mother's affair, her lack of love towards him, and her death before any of these problems come to a conclusion, are all used as hindrances by Faulkner, and to counterbalance these he can give him means of changing and "knowing" things as if he was omniscient. A similar balance is also true for Benjy, his idiocy and disability to disclose himself externally return him as a sense of scent that he can use to gain insight on things he otherwise shouldn't be able to. His lack of a notion of time also returns to him with the ability to recall everything perfectly. It is also interesting to note that while Benjy can recall every memory with perfect detail, Darl is able to notice every detail of the environment he is in.

Kartiganer says: As a newcomer to Faulkner, one may think it natural to compare *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. Both novels exhibit individual first-person narratorial sections overflowing with internal discourse from major characters. Like diary entries, each novel is broken into these sections that show the reader a specific point of view of each family and their downfalls. But Faulkner never thought of these two novels "in the same breath (Blotner, 1974:1208).

He also comments that: "not a sequence of bizarre incidents happening to a single hero, but a sequence of bizarre heroes happening to a single incident" (Kartiganer, 1994: 325). He also comments on why he feels the reason to compare the two novels and why there are so many underlying similarities between the two, Most of the major characters of *The Sound and the Fury* are reborn in *As I Lay Dying*, in guises suited to their new social status. While we agree with this statement, the reason for

doing so is not the same as Kartiganer's reasoning. He assuredly claims who he believes the pairs between the two novels are, and he starts with the females, which are rather obvious. They are both young, sisters to introvert brothers who have complex obsessions about them. They both do immoral actions involving sexual actions and pregnancy. But when he proceeds to the lists of the brothers, we believe some of the pairings are questionable. He comments on Darl and Benjy and how he pairs them with others with the following statement: Quentin, the sensitive artist figure transforming his sister's sex life into a Byronic tale of mortal sin, becomes the articulate and impotent visionary Darl (...) and finally Benjy, childlike at thirty - three, becomes the real child Vardaman. By no means has an idiot, Vardaman yet owned a child's perception that enables him to identify his dead mother as a fish— as remarkable in its own way as Benjy's ability to smell his grandmother's death or the feeling of guilt in his sister (Kartiganer, 1994:325). We humbly believe that this insight of the situation is rather shallow, and there are further aspects to consider in terms of the semblances of the families and their members.

Kartiganer's view of Darl and Quentin is only from the self-reflecting inner discourse perspective. From this point of view, they can be grouped together, but there is nothing else to continue the logic with. To take another look at the characters, one should start with the earlier novel, and examine how Benjy is used in terms of narrative and character complexity. Only when doing so the subtle hints and similarities between Benjy and Darl can become more apparent. Harry M. Campbell delivers a good example of this approach with simple and clear voice, and compares the two novels in this perspective: While the point of view in *As I Lay Dying* shifts frequently and abruptly from one character to another, the point of view in *The Sound and the Fury* is changed only three times with dates only a day apart prefixed for the sake of unity to the three of the four divisions of the book. Appropriately the story entitled *The Sound and the Fury* begins literally with a tale told by an idiot — the psychodramatic reverie of a thirty - three - year - old idiot, member of a degenerate aristocratic Southern family. Sights, sounds, and smells recall to Benjy, as vividly as to Proust's Swann, whole sections of his childhood, but he confuses these memories with present occurrences. Through Benjy, we learn about other members of the family. (Campbell, 1943:311)

The novels have the same central theme: Southern American families with immoral and unwelcome qualities like idiocy, alcohol addiction, affairs, promiscuity, thievery, on a journey towards their demise in the early 1910s. At this, Faulkner creates the canvas of the tragic downfall of the South. Kartigener comments on this canvas as well: “come to us as a succession of the stream - of - consciousness monologues, each novel a version of Faulkner’s usual reversed picaresque structure” (Kartigener,1994, 324).

Darl Bundren deserves additional mention, as he is one of the most linguistically capable and interesting characters ever created by Faulkner. Darl is quite different from his brothers and sister. His character goes in so well with the premise of the story of *As I Lay Dying*: Addie Bundren, the mother of the family, is on her deathbed, and as she gets closer and closer to her demise, her final request from the members of the family begins to take its shape in their minds: she wants to be buried in her hometown of Jefferson. Darl, Cash, Jewel, Dewey Dell and Vardaman, and Addie’s husband, and father to others except for Jewel ponder about the situation and they all seem to agree on the journey, albeit for different reasons involving their own character storylines. Interestingly, the title of the novel also comes from a story about a journey, from Homer’s *Odyssey* “that occurs as Agamemnon, in Hades, relates to Odysseus the manner of his death: ‘*As I lay dying*, the women with a dog’s eyes would not close for me my eyelids as I descended into Hades’” (Fowler, 1997:48). Faulkner says the title got stuck on his mind for quite some years, and he believes death has a disgrace to it when the life is disgraced as well.

As discussed before, despite many similarities between the two novels, *As I Lay Dying* is different as it’s more about action. The journey the family has to undertake is perilous: flooded rivers, barns on fire, injuries, diseases, and hampering conditions take their toll on the family. They do have a future, but their journey is not giving them positive developments in the end, on the contrary, the path they take carry them to further into degeneration. Even the reasons they accept to undertake the journey is arguably selfish. H. Waggoner comments on this: “The structural metaphor in *As I Lay Dying* is a journey through life to death and through death to life” (H.Waggoner, 1959:62). The family carries Addie’s body to Jefferson to be



buried, and then Anse Bundren finds life once again through new, wooden teeth and a new Mrs. Bundren". And as discussed before, reading the journey of the Bundren family is much easier than reading the story of Compsons. Their chronological journey is in parallel to reality, and they even rarely delve into memories of the past. Compsons, on the other hand, are jarred in every narrative aspect, and they don't even get a capable mother like Addie, to begin with, as Caroline only cares about her hypochondriac attacks and the family name. Even though Addie is though, at least she has some affection and even love for her children, at least for some of them. Olga W. Vickery comments: "Centrifugally, each section establishes the relationship between Addie and the character whose thoughts and observations are being recorded" (Vickery, 1964:51- 55). In terms of fathers, though, both families are equally unlucky: Anse can't take any useful actions during the story, while Mr. Compson is alcoholic.

Darl and Benjy have both the role of laying the foundations of the story where the true intentions and moralities of the family members slowly begin to unravel and the moral fibers of the families get stretched to their limits. That being said, Darl is capable of talking for himself with others, while Benjy is unable to. Darl searches his inner world for something to hold onto regarding the unsolved and unclosed relationship between him and his mother, but can't find anything more than life has to offer. He uses his inner language and his focus on detail, combined with his omniscient powers, to get to know everything. But even then, he's unable to find a solid answer to his own inquiries and ends up in an asylum, finally losing his connection with all reality. His lack of maternal love and love from the other members of the family alienates him from his own character. At the focal point of his pains is the knowledge of Jewel's father not being Anse, but instead the preacher, and that his mother seems to love Jewel more than him just for this simple, but immoral, fact.

As part of this study, we would like to surmise that, while most critics don't look at them from this perspective, Benjy Compson and Darl Bundren are similar in numerous ways. Benjy, while seen as an idiot by others, is actually acting as the storytelling device of Faulkner. Benjy is an all-seeing character and has no understanding of the concept of time to use and distinguish now from the past. Since

Compsons are all living in the past, his perfect recollection of events and lack of chronological meanings cast him as the perfect candidate to deliver the roots of the story. And since he's an "idiot", he's not even able to provide his own opinions about the subject matter, making them quite the objective character. He sees and perhaps even understands that the family is destroying itself, but is unable to do provide his own opinions to stop it.

Darl, on the other hand, is even more vocal compared to Benjy, yet still, he is still mostly a watcher of events and provider of commentary. He has quite the keen eye for detail, which includes the inner worlds of his siblings, but this gift makes him jealous of them, particularly his mother's affection towards Jewel, and his brother. At one point he becomes the container about too much information, and with the events climbing at a crescendo since the mother's death, he is unable to cope with the void that keeps growing. He also sees the other members of the family are in similar situation and delivers his opinions about them, their inner worlds, and their character. Thanks to him, no secret of Bundrens is safe from the reader. Since he isn't an "idiot" like Benjy, he provides valuable insight to readers.

Besides the "disability" of these two, Quentin Compson can also be argued to have a disability. Quentin also feels confined to the limits of his mind and is unable to cope with what he has lain at his own core regarding the sexuality of his own sister. In the end, he can't find the resolution to his obsession about escaping time and succeeding himself, or achieving the idealized dream-like reality he fancies and commits suicide. While some people criticize him for going insane at the end, he actually achieves his desires to escape time, delivered through fantastic imagery of his shadow falling onto the river.( Kartiganer, Donald M. (1929).

Even Anse could be argued to have a disability, or at least, a "condition, as he literally believes he could die if he sweated. His inertia is like a superpower but drains every drop of character he could have developed. The only meaningful action he takes is to accept taking her wife to her hometown for burial, but even that is for his own gains. Handy provides a great comment about Faulkner's writing style that encompasses his use of stream of consciousness as well: "He is writing out of a

conviction that what is most real in human experience is the kind of inner world man inhabits” (Handy, 1959:437-451).



## CONCLUSION

One of a typical example of Modernist movement is Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. The novel tackles many themes related to modern age, namely the characters' desires, their actions' moralities, rambling timelines and above all the technique of stream of consciousness. The novel does not have a straight plot therefore the reader can face difficulties as it presents multi-dimensional stories depicted through the characters' inner world. While the novel consists of four chapters and the stream of consciousness technique occurs in each, such a technique does not recur in the same form. Because the author aims to change the narrative structure in a way that narration process becomes a part of the characters' life; this is to deliver human consciousness in a highly unique manner so as to let the reader experience what the characters go through.

The manner and the tone of the change of the narrative are very interesting. For example, Benjy's persona is quite simple and clear, which is shown through the simplicity and clarity of his usage of language; whereas, in the second chapter such manner becomes very complex as he repeatedly struggles with finding a moral solution for seemingly unsolvable dilemmas. Such a change also continues in chapter three because in this chapter Jason has an involved mind, being affixed to money and the appearance of the other people around. Because while all other characters struggle with the intricacies of everyday life and the moralities of actions, Jason doesn't care about them at all and thus the chapter flows at a more uniform and quick pace.

The narration process continues in the last chapter of the novel, chapter four, yet this time in a somehow regular classic manner. Like the character it focuses on, Dilsey, the narration is quiet and dignified and carries the wisdom of the character, and perhaps to a degree, the author. In fact, the last chapter of the novel can be considered the concluding chapter as it gathers almost all the themes exposed in the former chapters. Although such a procedure had already been used by the other stream of consciousness authors like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, Faulkner made such a technique further complete and advanced. This technique is a challenging one, and novels written with it can be too complicated, unexciting, or difficult for the

masses to read. It is important to note that Faulkner's style is highly creative and compelling in story telling because the narration manner stimulates the reader's mind. What is unique about Faulkner is his manner of storytelling because he puts further emphasis on understandable and related psycho-actions while the other stream writers put more emphasis on psychological matters. That was this uniqueness for which he is awarded the Noble Prize.

What has been studied so far is that the stream of consciousness is a literary technique distinguishable from the other literary ones by its focus on the flow of thoughts and ideas in order to deliver incoherent narrative functions. Time, characters and places make a great contribution as a tool through various dimensions can be shown in the same story. The major function of the mentioned technique is to manifest the characters inner world either from his psyche or thoughts. As such, it becomes a tool to discover subjective aspects of each individual character in the story. This is why each and every single detail can be taken into account, even simple daily routines like breakfasts, daily plans, riding vehicles and so on, because any detail or signal carries a connotation in itself. While the Stream of Consciousness technique is employed by writers to convey the impressions of the characters in their stories, William Faulkner has experimented on several ways to approach the technique and arguably delivered the greatest American works using it. It should be understood that an invisible barrier between both the story and the reader is always present, and Faulkner argues this barrier is the author itself. Thus, he completely removes his objective self from the story, and instead enters, and carries the readers, into the minds of the characters. This study hopes to evaluate Faulkner's approach and try to understand how he modifies and utilizes it by analyzing two of his works *The Sound and Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*.

It can be concluded that while most critics don't look at Benjy Compson and Darl Bundren from this perspective, they are similar in numerous ways. Benjy, while seen as an idiot by others, is actually acting as the storytelling device of Faulkner. He is an all-seeing character and has no understanding of the concept of time to use and to make distinction between now and the past. Since the Compsons are all living in the past, his perfect recollection of events alongside the lack of chronological meanings cast him as the perfect candidate to deliver the roots of the story. Besides

this, since he's an "idiot", he's not even able to provide his own opinions about the subject matter; this puts him in a quite objective character. Although he apparently understands that his family is going to destroy itself, he is too weak even to be able to offer his own opinion so as to stop such destruction.

Darl, on the other hand, is even more vocal compared to Benjy, yet still, he is still mostly a watcher of events and provider of commentary. He has very sharp eyes in seeing and analyzing each and every detail through which his own and his siblings' inner world can be read. The power of understanding his and the inner world condition of his family makes him jealous, especially when he notices that their mother shows more affection to his brother, Jewel, than to him. At one point he becomes the container about too much information, and with the events climbing at a crescendo since the mother's death, he is unable to cope with the void that keeps growing. Also, he can see that the other family members are in the same condition as his own condition; this can be noticed in his comments about the inner world and the personality of his family members. Jewel, thus, can be seen as the stark contrast of Benjy in terms of his viewpoints as his comments make a significant contribution in the uncovering the truth of the characters and the events, while those of Benjy cannot be relied on.

Besides the "disability" of these two mentioned characters, Quentin Compson can also be argued to have been in an unstable situation. For like his brothers, Quentin also feels confined to the limits of his mind and is unable to cope with what he has lain at his own core regarding the sexuality of his own sister. eventually, he can't find the resolution to his obsession about escaping time and succeeding himself, or achieving the idealized dream-like reality he fancies, therefore he resorts to committing suicide. Though he is criticized by the people around for his suicide thus being considered as mad and insane yet the suicide can be seen as an achievement for him; because the only way by which he can escape from the time zone is suicide.

Not only this, but even Anse could be argued to have a disability, or at least, a "condition, as he literally believes he could die if he sweated. His inertia is like a superpower but drains every drop of character he could have developed. The only

meaningful action he takes is to accept taking her wife to her hometown for burial, but even that is for his own gains.

To sum up, Handy provides a very significant comment about Faulkner's writing style that is encompassing his use of stream of consciousness when stating: "He (Faulkner) is writing out of a conviction that what is most real in human experience is the kind of inner world man inhabits"(Handy,1959:451). Thus, the disability of the characters indeed can be seen as a reflection of the society they live in it.



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## ÖZGEÇMİŞ (EK-14 )

### Kişisel Bilgiler

Soyadı, Adı : IBRAHİM  
Uyruğu : Irak  
Doğum Tarihi ve Yeri : 22\05\1982 Erbil  
Telefon : 009647504609971  
E-mail : mohammadsalh835@gmail.com



### Eğitim

Derece	Eğitim Birimi	Mezuniyet
Yüksek Lisans	İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI	.....
Lisans	İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI	27\07\2007

### İş Deneyimi

Yıl	Yer	Görev
2008	Erbil Uluslararası Havaalanı	Hava Trafik Kontrolü

### Yabancı Dil

İngilizce

Arapça

Türkçe

**Hobiler:** Edebiyat, Felsefe ve Psikoloji Faaliyetleri . İnsan kaynakları



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Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

LİSANSÜSTÜ TEZ ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

VAN YÜZÜNCÜ YIL ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Date: / /2019

Tez Başlığı / Konusu

Technique Of Stream Of Consciousness In William Faulkner's *The Sound And The Fury* And *As I Lay Dying* Yukarıda başlığı/konusu belirlenen tez çalışmamın Kapak sayfası, Giriş, Ana bölümler ve Sonuç bölümlerinden oluşan toplam 85 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, / /2019 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Tunintı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtreleme uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezin benzerlik oranı %10 ( on ) dur.

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**Adı Soyadı** : Mohammad Salih İBRAHİM  
**Öğrenci No** : 159201501  
**Anabilim Dalı** : İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı  
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