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THE PATTERNING OF VOICES IN THREE OF FAULKNER'S YOKNAPATAWPHA NOVELS

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> I decline to accept the end of man . . . even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking . . . The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.
>
> –William Faulkner ("Nobel" 348)

I. VOICE AND ITS PROMINENCE IN FAULKNER

The present article starts with a conviction that voice occupies a particularly prominent place in Faulkner. It is often the case that after completing a Faulkner novel (especially one of his Yoknapatawpha novels), the reader may not be able to remember the exact details of fragmented plots and settings, but chances are that he or she will long remain impressed by a mysterious force originating from Faulkner's tragic stories of the old South. This mysterious force does not come from a single narrative voice in Faulkner, as we shall demonstrate later, it is rather the combined effect of a number of distinct voices which often confront and contradict each other and yet, together fuse to compose an *orchestration* that transforms local cacophony into an overall harmony. Voicing and the patterning of voices, therefore, is one of the essential

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elements of Faulkner's art of story-telling.

As far as Faulkner himself is concerned, his fascination with voice is evident in his Nobel acceptance address at Stockholm in 1950. The poet's voice, he insists, can articulate "a soul, a spirit" that reminds man of "the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past" (see Hoffman and Vickery, 348). Faulkner's finest literary creations, the Yoknapatawpha novels, are indeed resonant with such enduring voices of the past—enduring not merely because Faulkner's fictional voices are undoubtedly "records" of Southern history, but more because these voices sometimes embody the very substance of human consciousness. " 'Consciousness' cannot serve us as a presence," Stephen Ross thus argues, "for consciousness itself is constituted by voice rather than revealed by it" ("Voice" 304).

The prominence of voice in Faulkner thus demands our special critical attention. The present article is a study of the patterning of voices in three of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels—*The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying*, and *Absalom, Absalom!*[1] We are not, however, attempting an overall mapping of voices in Faulkner, since Ross has just accomplished such a task in his recent book, *Fiction's Inexhaustible Voice: Speech and Writing in Faulkner.*[2] Instead, we are interested in discerning the patterning of voices in these three Faulkner novels, as well as in exploring the epistemological concerns that have generated and sustained Faulkner's patterns. For the purpose of such discernment and exploration, the present article will operate on a fairly abstract level and

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[1] *The Sound and the Fury* is hereafter abbreviated as *SF*; *As I Lay Dying* as *AILD*; and *Absalom, Absalom!* as *AA*.

[2] Ross (*Fiction*, 12-17) classifies voices in Faulkner into four major groups: the phenomenal (which is depictive of speech or writing as an event), the mimetic (which is imitative of talk), the psychic (which is expressive of the silent inner discourse of consciousness), and the intertextual (which contains within it the oratorical voice).

concentrate on such major issues as the confrontation and interpenetration of voices, the spatialization of temporal movement, the transgression and appropriation of alien territory, and Faulkner's conceptualization of truth in his patterning of voices. It is hoped that this article will help the reader further comprehend and appreciate Faulkner's contribution to world literature as an imposing piece of modern architecture, which draws the reader again and again into its fascinating labyrinth of words/voices, and which in the end rewards the reader with an experience of the uniqueness of its overall structural beauty.

II. *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*: THE ARTICULATION OF LOSS

> That is the substance of remembering—sense, sight, smell: the muscles with which we see and hear and feel—not mind, not thought: there is no such thing as memory: the brain recalls just what the muscles grope for: no more, no less . . .
>
> —Rosa Coldfield (*AA* 178)

The Sound and the Fury starts with a peculiarly disjunctive voice, a voice that is literally "given" to an idiot man-child, Benjy. Through Benjy's narration, which significantly lacks a clear linear logic in its account of events, we come to know the Compson family bit by bit. We know, for instance, that Benjy is incapable of providing reliable information and that he is in fact distrusted by everyone in the family. His constantly confused mind is only made more confused by the typical response he always gets from others—"Hush!" Thus forced to turn more inwardly to himself, Benjy seems to rely more on what he hears than what he sees—

> *I could hear the clock, and I could hear Caddy standing behind me, and I could hear the roof. It's still raining, Caddy said. I hate rain. I hate everything. And then her head came*

> *into my lap and she was crying, holding me, and I began to cry. Then I looked at the fire again and the bright, smooth shapes went again. I could hear the clock and the roof and Caddy.* (*SF* 69)

Rather emotional and even somewhat sentimental, Benjy's voice is yet rich with all kinds of associations; these associations, to be sure, tend to verge on the obsessive, as is illustrated by this passage: "*She [Caddy] smelled like trees. In the corner it was dark, but I could see the window. I squatted there, holding the slipper. I couldn't see it, but my hands saw it, and I could hear it getting night, and my hands saw the slipper but I couldn't see myself, but my hands could see the slipper, and I squatted there, hearing it getting dark*" (*SF* 88-89).

To Benjy, it may be clear by now, what appears valuable and endearing is that which can be rendered in concrete terms of touch (holding the slipper), sight (sometime even "seen" by hands!), sound (hearing it getting dark), and smell (Caddy smelling like trees), rather than in abstractions of the mind. These clusters of imagery, as it were, dominate his world of consciousness. Two primary groupings of such imagery may be singled out: those that represent Caddy or accompany her—rain, trees, slipper, fire—and those that are associated with privation, loss, and death (see Kinney, 142). Although not yet fully specified, the loss in question is strongly felt in Benjy's section, as can be seen from his persistent crying and longing for consolation, especially from Caddy. As if by focusing on the symbols of loss (which always come in the form of an association at the present moment), Benjy may forget for a while the lost object itself (which belongs to a past that he, as an idiot, cannot fully comprehend).

The sense of loss is even more dramatically articulated in Quentin's section. If the "lost" Caddy represents to Benjy a loss of the love and warmth of his childhood (and therefore he can never grow up beyond that very moment of loss), then it represents, to a great extent, the loss of pride and Southern honor to Quentin. The first thing Quentin does in his section

is an action pregnant with special meaning—he deliberately listens to the watch which his father gave him, not just to "remember time," but to "forget it now and then for a moment" (*SF* 93). It is as if only by forgetting time that Quentin can forget the "lost" Caddy and the enormous impact that loss has inflicted on him. For Quentin, unfortunately, oblivion of time is something he can never achieve, for Caddy's loss of virginity weighs heavily on his consciousness. "Why couldn't it have been me and not her who is unvirgin," he asks himself at one moment; then, immediately afterwards, he recalls his father's voice, "That's why that's sad" and "it's like death" (*SF* 96).

Quentin's predicament is thus symbolically tied to the watch, a watch that represents to him not only a family tradition (Grandfather-Father-Quentin) but also "the reducto absurdum of all human experience" (*SF* 93). Ironically, it is a watch that always points Quentin to a past that is forever lost (his Southern heritage) and promises no future—a watch, in Father's words, that is "the mausoleum of all hope and desire" (*SF* 93). In a very real sense to Quentin, therefore, this watch becomes an intruder in his daily private existence, an existence which is readily forfeited to various invading voices—first from his Father (who offered him a good deal of old wisdom), then from Shreve (who always brings him back to his present situation at Harvard), from an unknown little girl who leads him into trouble, and, finally and above all, from that haunting memory of Caddy. Ross's comments on this point are worth quoting—

> All of Quentin's major experiences, as remembered on this last day, take the form of dialogical confrontations: arguments between his mother and father, arguments with Caddy, with Herbert Head, with Dalton Ames, with his father. ("Voice" 180)

All these arguments, articulated in these alien and the not-so-alien voices, constantly assail Quentin's consciousness. With practically nothing to claim as his own—not even his speaking

voice—and therefore with nothing to resist the invading voices, Quentin is doomed to lose all his conceptual and existential horizons. In utter desperation, he breaks the watch in order to forget (if not conquer) time; yet the broken watch continues to tick, reminding Quentin of his folly and despair, and finally driving him to end his own life—a life that may not be exclusively his own at that point.

The third section of the novel marks a sudden change in the tone of voicing. After two heavy doses of the fragmented utterances of the idiot Benjy and the mixed-up voices of the half-crazy Quentin, Jason's vindictive voice loudly calls to us. It is full of fury, to be sure: "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say" (*SF* 223)—begins his monologue; "Like I say once a bitch always a bitch" (*SF* 329)—he curses again near the end of his section. Jason's fury may be traced back, among other factors, to a loss of face and decent job because of Caddy's disgrace. His furiously articulated voice, with all its egotism, pragmatism, false sense of pride, and utter intolerance, vividly creates a comic situation in the middle of the novel, forming a stark contrast with the two previous voices on the one hand, and providing comic relief to the reader on the other.

In the fourth section of the novel (which is not unanimously identified to be Dilsey's),[3] we hear more of Dilsey's "authoritative" voice, authoritative in the sense that she emerges as the only one that dares to confront all the other characters in the novel. "Dont you dare to come in dis do widout a armful of wood," she says to Luster (*SF* 335); "Well, you tend to yo business and let her alone," she says to Jason, then the head of the family as proclaimed by Mrs. Compson (317); "You put it down and g'awn back to bed," she tells Mrs. Compson in a commanding voice. Throughout the entire novel, Dilsey may be the only one least affected by a sense of loss, as is manifested in her understanding remark when she walks out of church after the Sunday service: "I've seed de

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[3] For a position against labeling the last section of *SF* as Dilsey's, see Slatoff (168-70).

first en de last" (*SF* 371). Whether or not Dilsey can be acclaimed so highly as "the intelligence, or rather the pitying and yet judging awareness, that encompassed the saga of the Compsons" (Warren, 258) is not a matter of our concern here, but one thing is clear at this point of the novel: the last section does embody an attempt at a synthesis, if not by any individual voice in the novel, at least by the voice of the author.

Faulkner's own account of the novel throws additional light on our discussion. For one thing, the story of the lost Caddy involves a special significance of personal loss for him, as he later realizes in "An Introduction to *The Sound and the Fury*"—"I was trying to manufacture the sister which I did not have and the daughter which I was to lose" (see Minter, 222). Faulkner's pathetic tone notwithstanding, we should not neglect an equally significant fact: Faulkner himself denies Caddy a distinct voice in the novel (she speaks only through the mouths of the others). For all her importance as a thematic center (all three brothers relate intimately to her), Caddy is not granted a section of her own. Nor does Dilsey enjoy the privilege, regardless of her reputed position as "the moral center" that Robert Penn Warren imposes on her (258). It can be argued, therefore, that both Caddy and Dilsey represent the idealized Others in the novel, in contrast to the three Compson brothers.

The novel, therefore, needs to be read from another perspective. Structurally, Faulkner does not design any center for *The Sound and the Fury.* We know from one of his interviews that he begins the novel with Benjy's section, then "decided to let Quentin tell his version of that same day," later adding Jason's section as "the counterpoint" to the other two, and finally completing the novel with "another section from the outside with an outsider, which was the writer, to tell what had happened on that particular day" (see Minter, 238). The resulting novel is not exactly a story told and retold "four times," but rather four interrelated and interacting stories articulated by four distinct voices.

The interrelationships among the four distinct voices in *The Sound and the Fury*, it may become obvious by now, are more *spatial* than temporal-linear. There are overlappings between the voices, of course, but no superseding of one by the other. The patterning of the novel, in a sense, resembles a *centrifugal* space, within which each voice flees from a central point, the initial event—"We watched the muddy bottom of her [Caddy's] drawers" as she climbed up the tree to look at dead Dammuddy (*SF* 47). Overall, we can discern in the novel a centrifugal progression from the innermost circle (the exclusively private domain of Benjy) toward the outer circles (the more and more public domains of Jason's and the last sections). The process of articulation in *The Sound and the Fury* can be understood as a flight from a guilty consciousness of loss on the part of the Compson brothers—a flight from that terrible *lack* which has driven Benjy to mental retardedness, Quentin to suicide, and Jason to infuriation.

3. *AS I LAY DYING*: THE CONFRONTATION WITH DEATH

> I knew that . . . we had had to use one another by words like spiders dangling by their mouths from a beam, swinging and twisting and never touching . . .
>
> —Addie Bundren (*AILD* 158)

Because of the centrifugal patterning in *The Sound and the Fury*, the dialogic interactions between voices occur in a more or less peaceful way, with the exception of Jason's voice which vents his fury by cursing anyone around him for anything that violates his personal interests. In *As I Lay Dying*, however, we enter into a more competitive world of "combating" voices. A typical expression of such a competition is uttered between two major protagonists, Darl and Jewel—

> "Jewel," I said, "whose son are you?"
>
> . . .

"You mother was a horse, but who was your father, Jewel?"

"You goddamn lying son of a bitch." (*AILD* 195)

The intensity with which the two brothers compete with each other is at first quite shocking to the reader; in time, however, cues are provided which suggest that a possible target of this sibling rivalry is their mother's affection. As Cora remarks to Addie, "the only sin she ever committed was being partial to Jewel that never loved her and was its own punishment, in preference to Darl that was touched by God Himself and considered queer by us mortals and that did love her" (*AILD* 153). Colored by her bias, Cora furnishes us with an explanation of the Darl-Jewel competition which is set in motion, as a matter of fact, at the very beginning of the novel. As we follow Darl and Jewel the first time up the hill, our attention is drawn to their striking differences–Darl is intuitive, imaginative, flexible, whereas Jewel is direct, rigid, and active. Their competition, if Cora is right, seems to be focused primarily on winning their mother's love.

But what exactly is the meaning of love? Addie has this to say to us: "I knew that that word [Love] was like the others; just a shape to fill a lack . . . So that it was Anse or love; love or Anse: it didn't matter" (*AILD* 158). What apparently troubles Addie in her only section (which is the longest in the novel) is the unbridgeable gap between speaking and doing. As she puts it, "I learned that words are no good; that words dont ever fit even what they are trying to say at" (*AILD* 157). Realizing that words can rarely touch the real experience they refer to, Addie then turns to the pleasure of acting (in an extramarital affair with Whitfield), without bothering much about the meaning of her acts–meaning always referring to a *lack* to be filled by word. In this way, Addie's resolution signifies a repudiation of the empty loving words of Anse, her husband.

Unlike Addie, however, Darl never gives up his desperate pursuit of the meaning of existence. Actually more akin to

Quentin in *The Sound and the Fury*, who is rendered helpless whenever words fail to suffice, Darl is deeply concerned with the relation of words to reality. Confronted with his mother's death, Darl thus reflects on his own life–

> 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 dont know what I am. I dont know if I am or not . . . And since sleep is is-not and rain and wind are *was*, it is not . . . And so if I am not emptied yet, I am *is*. (*AILD* 72)

Here, Darl is caught in one of several self-reflexive moments in which he attempts in vain to figure out the meaning of his worldly existence. His concerns with time ("was" versus "is") and being ("is" versus "is-not"), with life (not-yet-emptied) and death (sleep), is so persistent that he even speaks to his naive younger brother Vardaman in the same philosophical voice–

> "Then what is your ma, Darl?" I said.
>
> "I haven't got ere one," Darl said. "Because if I had one, it is *was*. And if it is was, it cant be *is*. Can it?" (*AILD* 89)

Admittedly, Darl's tendency toward the metaphysical has been time and again checked by the presence of other intruding voices, not necessarily only that of Jewel. For instance, his above-mentioned contemplation on emptying oneself for sleep is immediately followed, and actually counterbalanced, by Cash's thirteen-point argument on making the best bevel for Addie. Cash's peculiar admixture of the abstract and the concrete is in turn followed by Vardaman's eye-catching one-sentence section–"My mother is a fish" (*AILD* 74). The image of the fish, striking enough by itself, relates further to Addie's trust in Jewel–"He is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save me from the water and from the fire"

(*AILD* 154). Needless to mention, it is the action-oriented Jewel, not the self-contemplating Darl, that eventually "saves" Addie's body from both the water and the fire.

In this closely intertwined manner, the novel *As I Lay Dying* proceeds with alternate utterances of various voices, each serving as either a commentary on, a rejoinder to, or a digression from, the previous ones. If we accept Darl as representing a tendency toward the metaphysical (i.e., thinking, or words), and Jewel as representing a tendency toward the pragmatic (i.e., doing, or action), then the whole novel can be viewed as moving along two lines, almost in the same way as visualized by the dying Addie–

> I would think how *words* go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly *doing* goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other . . . (*AILD* 160; emphasis added)

Addie's reflection on the discrepancy between words and actions predicts, in a sense, the tragic fate of Darl: like "words," he soars too high in the imaginative sky to ever be reconciled with his physical being on earth. Listen to Darl's terrible double voice near the end of the novel–

> Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on the train, laughing, down the long car laughing . . . "What are you laughing at?" I said.
>
> "Yes yes yes yes yes." (*AILD* 235)

Darl's vision of himself as two separate persons–one that acts and one that recounts in words–is too "crazily" metaphysical for other "mortals" in the novel. "This world is not his [Darl's] world," so Cash concludes in the final section of the novel; "this life [not] his life" (*AILD* 242)–implying that Darl is better off when he "empties" himself and eventually "sleeps."

It is a significant fact that Cash "speaks" the last section of

the novel, as it represents an attempt by Faulkner at a synthesis after the diffusion (and indeed confusion) of voices in his novels. In fact, if we read carefully, we can ascertain that near the close of the novel, Cash's sections become longer and longer, gradually replacing the role of narration that has been assumed mostly by Darl's voice in the first half of the novel. With his capacity for both idea and execution, Cash may be seen, in Arthur Kinney's opinion, as "the first fully unifying force in the family" (175). Situated between Darl and Jewel, he succeeds where Darl fails: he locates "by instinct and thought a response to Addie's distress over the fundamental division between doing and speaking" (Kinney, 176).

We can argue that the journey theme lends a remarkable linear-temporal continuity to *As I Lay Dying*, which is in part derived from its persistent use of the present tense, and in part from the frequent references to changes of location in the course of the novel. "The entire structure of *As I Lay Dying* is dialectical," as Richard Gary rightly points out, "involving a continual and fructifying movement between inner world and outer" (225). The patterning of voices (inner as well as outer), by and large, is effected along two *parallel* lines–one representing "speaking," and the other "doing." There is little doubt that Darl's voice, at least in the first two-thirds of the novel, dominates all the other voices and, due to its domination, little by little draws first Vardaman and later Cash closer to his sphere of vision. In the end, ironically, it is the voices of Jewel and Anse that bring the reader back to the reality of the Jefferson world–"Meet Mrs. Bundren" (*AILD* 242), Anse thus proudly announces to his bewildered children.

In this last "comic" situation–with "Dewey Dell's and Vardaman's mouth half open and half-et bananas in their hands and her [their new mother's] coming around from behind pa" (*AILD* 141), the novel seems to align itself finally to the "doings" of the world. "The achievement of *As I Lay Dying* is that, with thoughts dwelling on death and burial, reality is achieved, not lost"–Kinney's conclusion (177) is

valid inasmuch as Jewel and Anse (sane?[4]) triumph over the crazy Darl by the end of the novel; but at the same time we should not forget that Darl's haunting voice throughout the rest of the novel leaves behind a proliferation of meanings, something which is best examined together with *Absalom, Absalom!*

4. *ABSALOM, ABSALOM!*: THE APPROPRIATION OF HISTORY

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention.
>
> –M. M. Bakhtin (293)

Absalom, Absalom! significantly begins and ends with descriptions of voices. In Chapter One, we are invited into Rosa Coldfield's "office," listening with (and actually through) Quentin to Miss Rosa's story of Thomas Sutpen. This is Quentin's recollection:

> Her voice would not cease, it would just vanish . . . vanishing into and then out of the long intervals like a stream, a trickle running from patch to patch of dried sand, and the ghost mused with shadowy docility as if it were the voice which he haunted where a more fortunate one would have had a house. (*AA* 4)

The mood of the novel is marvelously conveyed in these few lines of description. The image of ghosts persists not only in the speaker, in the tales "about the old ghost-times," but also

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[4] Kinney speculates that "Anse's name may be an anagram for sane, illustrating as he does the essential rightness of the forces of life" (173). The same can also be argued for the character Jewel in the novel, and Jason in *The Sound and the Fury*.

in the listener as well—"Quentin Compson who was still too young to deserve yet to be a ghost but nevertheless having to be one for all that, since he was born and bred in the deep South," the deep South that is "peopled with garrulous outraged baffled ghosts, listening, having to listen . . ." (*AA* 5). This is exactly why the speaking voice will never cease in the novel *Absalom, Absalom!*; instead, it persistently permeates the entire space (whether at Jefferson or at Harvard), transcends a whole range of time (from June 1833 up to the present narration), and constantly revives itself by turning almost every listener into a speaker (and thus a teller) of the story.

So Rosa begins her version of Sutpen's story, which is apparently distorted by her uncontrolled and uncontrollable emotions, and further by her inaccurate memory retained from the age of three onward. For her, Sutpen is nothing but a "demon," acting as God's punishment of the South. The next three chapters piece together many fragmented elements of Sutpen's story, narrated as they are by Quentin's father, who claims a certain degree of credibility because most of his information is obtained from his father, Sutpen's only friend in the community. Father's voice in these chapters, therefore, counterbalances Rosa's earlier distorted version. Though it is itself flawed by prejudice against Rosa, it nevertheless adds to the advancement of the story-telling by introducing the intricate relationship between Henry and Charles Bon. On the subject of this intricacy, Rosa has much more to say (in Chapter Four), for she is both Henry's aunt and a secret admirer of Bon ("*Charles Bon, Charles Good, Charles Husband-soon-to-be*" [*AA* 184]). Her account of Bon's death creates an element of suspense in the novel, thus ushering in the concerted efforts of Quentin and Shreve to recreate the already-told and the as-yet-untold episodes in the fascinating Sutpen story. Their stories are the best attempts at a synthesis in Faulkner's three novels under discussion.

One important aspect of Faulkner's voicing needs more elaboration at this point. The dominant story-telling situation

in *Absalom, Absalom!* entails: "Mr. Compson's voice speaking on while Quentin heard it without listening" (*AA* 159). Significantly, Mr. Compson appears in Quentin's memory always and only as a speaking voice, never being described in physical detail. Everything he says thus seems rather unreal; yet it assumes at the same time such a familiarity to Quentin that it is *internalized* in him without much effort. Indeed, this kind of "familiar" unreality can be located in the speaker(s) as well, an unreality that reminds us of Darl's reflection of IS-WAS in *As I Lay Dying*. Thus in Bon's letter to Judith we read, or rather hear—"*I cannot say when to expect me. Because what IS is something else again because it was not even alive then*" (*AA* 163). Such unreal reality is later more eloquently articulated by Rosa—

> *Yes. One day he [Bon] was not. Then he was. Then he was not . . . Yes, more than that: he was absent, and he was; he returned, and he was not; three women put something into the earth and covered it, and he had never been.* (*AA* 190)

Rosa has never seen Bon alive (was), and when the first time she came close enough to him (carrying the coffin) he was dead (was-not). In this paradoxical manner, the existence of Bon (that very special "something") appears questionable to Rosa; moreover, the whole reality of Sutpen's story that she has built is put at stake. Ilse Lind's observation is pertinent here: "Projecting their distortions upon their narrations, [each narrator] achieves a reality which rests upon unreality" (276). What must be added here, however, is that the very "unreality" in the novel itself often promises more meaning to the speaking voices. Hence Rosa's insistence—"*there is a might-have-been which is more true than truth*" (*AA* 178). And it is exactly in pursuit of the truth in "a might-have-been" that Quentin and Shreve, unsatisfied with either Rosa's or Mr. Compson's version, continue their reconstruction of the Sutpen story.

Shreve's voice, beginning from Chapter Six, signifies an

invasion of an "alien" voice (the North) that endeavors to understand, and perhaps also to appropriate, the history of the deep South. *"Tell about the South. What's it like there. What do they do there. Why do they live there. Why do they live at all"* (*AA* 218)–Shreve's somewhat naive questions constitute an obviously threatening conceptual force which Quentin has to resist again and again. One example of such invasion-resistance is Shreve's insistence on calling Rosa "Aunt Rosa" (which may imply a "subconscious" claim on his share of the Southern heritage) and Quentin's repeated correction of it to "Miss Rosa." To be sure, Shreve's voice, unlike that of Quentin who has *"learned, absorbed it* [the Sutpen story] *already without the medium of speech from having been born and living beside it, with it"* (*AA* 266), often misses the real points of the story, sometimes even to this dramatic extent:

> So he [Sutpen] just wanted a grandson . . . That was all he was after. Jesus, the South is fine, isn't it. It's better than the theater, isn't it. It's better than Ben Hur, isn't it. No wonder you have to come away now and then, isn't it. (*AA* 271)

However, as Quentin and Shreve carry on their task of the reconstruction of the Sutpen story, especially the crucial part concerning the relationship between Henry and Bon, Shreve's voice becomes more and more assimilated into the Southern value systems. They take turns re-telling the story, putting under their verbal control all other previous voices, and tracing back step by step to the very core of the Sutpen experience–Sutpen's own story told to Grandfather ("He was telling a story . . . just telling a story about something a man named Thomas Sutpen had experienced" [*AA* 309]), which is re-told to Father, then to Quentin, then to Shreve, and then back to Quentin again. Thus mesmerized by Shreve's voice, Quentin gets totally confused once as to who is speaking to him: *"Maybe we are both Father . . . Or maybe Father and I are both Shreve, maybe it took Father and me both to make Shreve or Shreve and me both to make Father or maybe*

Thomas Sutpen to make all of us" (*AA* 326-27). At this particular moment, it seems as if they are not speaking of the past, but rather *the past itself speaks in and through them.* This phenomenon is revealed in the climactic moment of their joint efforts:

> They stared—glared—at one another, their voices (it was Shreve speaking, though save for the slight difference which the intervening degrees of latitude had inculcated in them (differences not in tone or pitch but of turns of phrase and usage of words), it might have been either of them and was in a sense both: both thinking as one, the voice which happened to be speaking the thought only the thinking becomes audible, vocal; the two of them creating between them, out of the rag-tag and bob-ends of old tales and talking, people who perhaps had never existed at all anywhere, who, shadows, were shadows not of flesh and blood which had lived and died but shadows in turn of what were (to one of them at least, to Shreve) shades too) quiet as the visible murmur of their vaporizing breath. (*AA* 378-79)

This extended quotation furnishes us with the best place to sum up the patterning of voices in *Absalom, Absalom!* We discern a spatial, as well as a temporal relationship, among the various voices in the novel. For Quentin and Shreve in particular, the act of speaking (or thinking aloud) is an act of appropriating the Sutpen story (or, to a larger extent, Southern history). The parentheses within parentheses in the above-quoted passage graphically denote the conceptual spaces that Quentin and Shreve have *transgressed* in order to reach the center of the events. Temporal relations exist in every (present) act of telling or re-telling, the target of which is often not the reality of the past, but rather the "shadows" and "ghosts" of "a might-have-been." Schematically, we can argue that the patterning of voices in the novel is a *centripetal* one, with the voices from the outer spaces (Shreve, Quentin, and Rosa) appropriating the already uttered voices in the inner spaces, usually more remote in time (Quentin's father, Henry, Bon, Quentin's grandfather, Thomas Sutpen the man, and Sutpen

the child). The spatio-temporal relationships among these voices are complicated by each act of appropriation which destroys some elements of the original voice while at the same time creating something new. Through numerous encounters at multifarious levels of voicing, *Absalom, Absalom!* emerges as a novel some critics deem Faulkner's best.

5. CONCLUSIONS: VOICES IN RELATION TO SPACE, TIME, AND TRUTH

In this concluding section, we can now re-state our findings concerning the patterning of voices in Faulkner's three novels and re-examine them in relation to other major critical issues such as space, time, and truth in Faulkner.

We discern three patterns of voicing in three of Faulkner's novels: (1) in *The Sound and the Fury*, a spatialization of voices, with typical centrifugal movement away from a moment of loss in the past; (2) in *As I Lay Dying*, a basically linear progression along two parallel lines (speaking and doing); and (3) in *Absalom, Absalom!*, a patterning of voices on both the temporal and the spatial axes, with centripetal movement toward the core of the events. Taking these three novels together, we can discover yet another patterning: a gradual progression from the clearly drawn territory of four distinct voices in *The Sound and the Fury*, to the numerous small segments of individual voices in *As I Lay Dying*, and finally to the intersected, interdependent units of voices in *Absalom, Absalom!* In other words, voices in Faulkner's later novels claim less autonomy in themselves, probably because they concede more pieces of territory to the invading "alien" voices.

The arguments in this article concentrate mostly on the underlying relationships between the spatial and temporal aspects of voices in Faulkner. We should not forget, however, that the bulk of Faulkner criticism focuses more on the problem of time than of space.[5] Jean Pouillon, for one, has of-

[5] The classic expression of time in Faulkner is perhaps J-P. Sartre's "On *The*

fered an insightful comment: "The past is a whole receiving nothing from the present, the very presence of the past disqualifies the present as such, and therefore eliminates or at least upsets chronological relationships. Even the most remote past affects the present, not through any series of temporally arranged causes, but by its immediate presence" (see Warren, 84). In criticism such as this, preference is given to the past (which is always present in one way or another), and not to the present (which is negated, as it were, by the presence of the past). Nevertheless, from our space-oriented perspective, we may argue that important as the past is in Faulkner's novels, the act of voicing and the relationships between these acts should be given its due emphasis. While what has been uttered quickly recedes into the past, the very act of utterance itself always points to the indisputable significance of voice at the present. Thus, when Rosa says, "*That was all. Or rather, not all, since there is no all, no finish*" (*AA* 187), she means that any temporally "finished" story is open yet to a further re-telling, or to a possible appropriation by the future listener/reader. That is perhaps why at the beginning of the novel, before telling Sutpen's story, Rosa frankly invites Quentin to "write this and submit it to the magazines" (*AA* 6).

"Unfinishedness" is admittedly a characteristic of Faulkner's novels. Walter Slatoff dwells extensively on Faulkner's avoidance of resolution in his endings, which eventually results in a "failure" to achieve a coherent form in his novel. According to Slatoff, the ending of *The Sound and the Fury* "is an ending which provides anything but a synthesis or resolution, and . . . leaves us with numerous conflicting feelings and ideas" (qtd. in Kartiganer, 189). However, we stand with Donald Kartiganer in contending that Faulkner's quest does not result

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Sound and the Fury: Time in the Works of Faulkner" (see Minter, 253-59). Recently, however, some studies have appeared concerning the problem of space in Faulkner. For example, Gail Mortimer insists that "Faulkner's world is presented in distinctly spatial terms and that concepts, personalities, situations, and even the passage of time tend to be spatialized and managed in terms of spatial assumptions" (39-40).

in failure but in form—for example, "this failure becomes itself the form, and therefore the meaning, of *The Sound and the Fury*. The four fragments, each a fully achieved expression of voice operating within the severest limitations, remain separate and incoherent" (19). In other words, the local incoherence in each separate voice can be brought together as a more meaningful whole (form) if we perceive the novel from a higher perspective, that of the overall patterning of voices.

The "unfinishedness" of Faulkner's novels and the fragmented, often dislocated, voices in them are the aesthetic product of Faulkner's unique epistemology. Since Faulkner is fully aware of what Michael Milligate calls "the problem of the elusiveness of truth" (106), he is never completely content with any single, exclusively dominating voice in his novels. The acts of telling or appropriation of the already told stories, as we have demonstrated, constantly shape the structures of meaning in Faulkner's novels. It can be argued that for Faulkner what is most important is to let every one involved have his or her own individual voice. If all these voices contend with, complement, and transcend each other, then we might hope to come closer to something like "truth." In one of his class conferences, Faulkner admits:

> I think that no one individual can look at truth . . . You look at it and see one phase of it. Someone else looks at it and sees a slightly awry phase of it. But taken all together the truth is in what they saw though nobody say the truth intact. (see Gwynn and Blotner, 273)

Faulkner's epistemological concern is celarly articulated here, but his approach to truth needs more elaboration. For one thing, truth in Faulkner is not something to be looked at primarily. In most cases, as Gail Mortimer rightly asserts, "Faulkner does not let us . . . forget that vision is ultimately deceptive. For his troubled characters it is hearing and smell that tend to convey truths infallibly" (7). Benjy's perception and Rosa Coldfield's definition of "remembering" (both quoted in our second section) testify to the importance of

other senses in knowing truths. Indeed, what matters most in Faulkner is not the ultimate Truth, but rather what he terms "the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths" (see Hoffman and Vickery, 348). Faulkner's conception of truths in the *plural* form explains why he wants to offer us a dazzling array of fragmented voices, because—as he firmly believes—"taken all together" and through their mutual confrontation and penetration, these voices will utlimately give us a vision of truth.

Having considered such issues as space, time, and truth in Faulkner criticism, we conclude that all concepts of the past, loss, death, history, are conceived in three of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels as the unrepresented or unrepresentable Others (thus the repeated references to lack or absence); and that the only way to approach or appropriate "the old verities and truths" in these Others is through the articulation of the "inexhaustible voice," the enduring voice that will always be present and will, as Faulkner wishes, be for ever and ever "talking."

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福克納小說的敍事模式

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摘要

本文探討福克納三部長篇小說的敍事模式。第一節為引言，描述福克納小說的「多聲部」(polyphony)特徵。

第二節分析≪喧囂與忿怒≫(*The Sound and the Fury*)的離心形空間結構。每位獨白者力圖逃離牢困他們的中心事件：凱蒂(Caddy)的「不貞」意味了傳統的喪失。

第三節分析≪彌留之際≫(*As I Lay Dying*)中「旅途」母題的線性時間結構。二條平行的敍事線索──居爾(Jewel)的「默默行動」與達爾(Darl)的「無止言談」──構成了小說發展的動力。

第四節分析≪押沙龍，押沙龍！≫(*Absalom, Absalom!*)中空間與時間合為一體的向心形結構。二位敍事者力圖突破他人的言語空間，據他人的故事為己有。整部小說以逆時間順序而展開。

第五節為結論，探討福克納的「聲音」與空間、時間、「真實」等概念的關係。