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**The Embodiment of Bakhtin's Polyphony in
Faulkner's novel *The Sound and The Fury* (1929)**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of 'Masters' in English Literature and Civilization**

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Declaration of Authenticity

The work reported in this dissertation was carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Souhila Korichi. Department of **English**. Faculty of **Letters and languages** at Amar Telidji University Laghouat, Algeria.

I hereby declare that the title of the dissertation “**The Embodiment of Bakhtin’s Polyphony in Faulkner’s Novel *The Sound and the Fury* (1929)**”, and the contents of this dissertation are the product of my own research and no part has been copied from any published source (except the references, standard mathematical or genetic models/equations/formulas protocols etc.). I further declare that this work has not been submitted for award of any other degree/diploma. The University may take action if the information provided is found inaccurate at any stage.

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Dedication

First and foremost, I dedicate this work to my dear parents, Mohamed Bedj and Fatna Rahmania, for their unconditioned love and precious support throughout my life. Thank you for giving me the strength to chase my dreams;

To my brothers Ilyes, Mustapha and Abdelmedjid for being every time next to me. To my dear sisters, Wassila, Soumia, and Amina for their support. I'm truly thankful for having you in my life;

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Razika

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Abstract

Each literary era claims a unique style and philosophy of literature, to which many authors ascribe. William Faulkner is a well-known American writer whose fiction stands for literary modernism. The present dissertation examines the literary modern experimentation in William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). It aims to study the modern narrative techniques employed by Faulkner to achieve this experimentation with polyphony and different narrative devices. More accurately, this research seeks to examine the proper use of polyphony as well as fragmented narration in the studied novel. Mikhail Bakhtin who researches the works of the Russian writer Dostoevsky proposes the theory of polyphony to literature. According to Bakhtin, many independent and unmerged voices and valuable types of consciousnesses in a work compose the true polyphony. This investigation suggests that the use of different modernist techniques serve Faulkner to achieve his goal of presenting a highly modernist novel. Additionally, to better achieve his innovative techniques, Faulkner uses four radically different narrators, each one of them tells the story from his own perspective. Ultimately, the concept of polyphony is employed effectively in Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury*.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

American Literature at the beginnings of the 20th century changed and took a new form of expressing the ideas like never before. It was characterized by breaking the traditional way of writing and dealing with the unconscious mind. The American Modernist writers used the interior monologue or stream of consciousness, as well as the use of multiple points-of-view. One of the greatest and successful writers at that time was William Faulkner who was a Nobel Prize-winning novelist of the American South who wrote a challenging prose. He is well known novel *The Sound and the Fury* was the most innovative and experimental American novel, not to mention its difficulty of both meaning and style.

Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* is considered to be a classic in American Literature, in which he used new techniques to express his views of the American modern world, taking place in the imaginary Yoknapatawpha County, situated in the American South. The novel relates the life of the Compson Family in the aftermath of the Civil War. In accordance with his observations of the world he lives in after the Civil War, he experimented on new narrative techniques. In fact, he attempted to imagine the realities of the inner working mind of his different characters.

This dissertation will employ the theory of Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian philosopher, essayist and literary critic (1895-1975) who was the central figure of an intellectual circle that focused on the social nature of language, literature, and meaning in the years between World War I and World War II. Though, his major works were not widely read until after the 1960s, his ideas were later adopted by many academic spheres and have contributed to new directions in philosophy, linguistics, and literary theory.

General Introduction

This research attempts to shed light on William Faulkner's use of modernist techniques in his novel *The Sound and the Fury*, particularly by discussing Bakhtin's theory of the Polyphonic novel in the study of Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury*, as well as the experimentation of Faulkner with modern narrative devices such as fragmentation, stream of consciousness and multiplicity of points of view. Through the use of these narrative techniques, William Faulkner sought to present the thoughts and memories of the Compson family.

This present study is an attempt to examine and analyze the fictional narrative. It aims to demonstrate the way in which Faulkner uses modernist techniques to provide the different perspectives of the Compson family, as well as a fragmented narration of their story in his novel, *The Sound and the Fury*. This research shows how Faulkner attempts to challenge the reader, in order to reconstruct the chronology of the events and make sense of the different narrations; the reader has to work hard and completely focus on the narrative despite its fragmented and disordered narration.

One of the reasons of our choice to study William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* within this research is because the novel represents a classic of American Literature, which is radically different from other traditional American novels. In addition, this novel is considered a modernist work *par excellence*; hence, it offers a good example of modernist techniques notably due to its distorted chronology, its fragmented nature and its narrative structure. There are some objectives to discuss this research; first, to establish an understanding of the polyphonic feature and to show that the novel is a combination of perspectives, second, to differentiate between the voices inside the novel. Our teacher of Literature gave us the motivation and paved the way for us to read further about Faulkner's works and his embodiment of Mikhail Bakhtin's Concepts.

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The main concern of this study is the modern narrative technique of polyphony that permitted Faulkner to use the multiplicity of voices during the narration of his novel *The Sound and the Fury*. This research has given rise to this fundamental question: how does William Faulkner use the Bakhtinian concept of Polyphony in his novel *The Sound and the Fury*? Accordingly, this question has thrown up sub-questions in need of further investigation:

- 1/. What are the narrative techniques shown in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*? And how are they applied?
- 2/. What does the term Polyphony refer to both in art and literature?
- 3/. How did Faulkner employ the Bakhtinian concept of Polyphony in his novel *The Sound and the Fury*?

In consideration of finding out answers to the questions mentioned above, we hypothesize that this research claims that Faulkner employs several characteristics of modernism in its narrative technique that foreground the use of fragmentation, stream of consciousness and multiple points of view. Faulkner used them to insist on the fact that human consciousness is fluid; therefore, characters are presented through their inner thoughts rather than their actions. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner's narrative is disordered and fragmented. Faulkner chooses to tell his story in a complex way. The polyphonic technique is used effectively to represent inner worlds rather than the outer one. The mind styles of the narrators in this research differ greatly; therefore, their style of narrative is relatively different.

In a novel, polyphony is in most cases metaphorical, as is the term "voice". According to Lodge, a polyphonic novel is a "novel in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being

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placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice” (Lodge 86). Polyphony is nothing new. Bakhtin coined the phrase “the polyphonic novel” in his 1934 paper “Discourse of the Novel”. He argues that Polyphony is a feature of narrative, which includes a diversity of points of view and voices.

This paper tries to analyze the language and the dialogue between characters in William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* and its conflict with the reality of the author. Faulkner does not focus on specific perspective. He uses different perspectives and narratives that create difficulty in conveying Faulkner’s real voice; this is called ‘Polyphony’. It is a term that is created by Bakhtin, and Faulkner tried to apply it in the novel to show the Compson’s different perspectives.

The Sound and the Fury resembles a Greek tragedy, telling the story of Caddy, the "lost woman", from the point of view of her three brothers, each of whom is also in an important way, lost, and then, finally from the perspective of the Compson's servant, Dilsey. *The Sound and the Fury* remained Faulkner's favorite; it was his fourth novel, and many scholars and critics have done quantities of studies on the novel from various levels.

The first authoritative reference about the fictional polyphony appeared in Bakhtin’s famous book “*Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*” (1984). His study will further advance in the idea of polyphony in the novel as a new kind of artistic thinking, which means many people saying one story; each one tells the story from his own perspective. The reader finds himself lost in a multiplicity of authors not only one. In *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Bakhtin developed the concepts, which were to inform much of his work. The concept of ‘polyphony’, which is borrowed from music, is central to this analysis. Polyphony literally means multiple voices.

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Moreover, another study by Nalbantian in a chapter entitled “Woolf, Joyce and Faulkner: Associative Memory” published in her book *Memory in Literature: From Rousseau to Neuroscience* (2003). She tries to scrutinize Faulkner’s narrative techniques, especially his reliance on a mentally disabled narrator, Benjy Compson, in the first chapter and looks for the motives of such a choice. The writer combines literature and neuroscience in her study of memory, which offers a helpful insight for our current study as we try to examine disordered memories of the different characters in the novel.

Yanli’s dissertation entitled: “On The Polyphonic Features of the Sound and the Fury” (2011) tries to analyze *The Sound and the Fury* thoroughly from the polyphonic point of view. The main body of this thesis mainly introduces the proposition, characteristics and the development of the theory of polyphony, and discusses the profound influence of the theory on literature. “The emergence of the polyphonic theory not only opens a new world of literature, but also changes the way of thinking of mankind” (Yanli). It analyses the polyphonic features in *The Sound and the Fury* in depth.

Thus, this study is a descriptive critical study, which is based on a critical reading of Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*. Leaning on the New Critical School’s concept of “close reading”, this analysis essentially relies on extracting samples from the novel representing the themes related to the use of polyphony which best portrays modernist narrative techniques such as fragmentation, stream of consciousness and multiple points of view. And accordingly, analyze these extracted passages, which are representative of the ways in which Faulkner used modernist techniques.

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The present study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter attempts to offer a literary background needed for this study. It mainly focuses on the introduction and explanation of modernism as well as the major modernist techniques used by Faulkner. Afterwards, the second chapter sheds light on the idea of Polyphony as a Modern technique used by American writers and the influence of Bakhtin on the American Literature. The chapter represents a close reading of the way the American modern writers used Polyphony in their novels, and it mainly introduces the concept of Polyphony. Subsequently, the third chapter focuses on the analysis of how the language and the dialogue between characters are shown in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, and how Faulkner used the Bakhtinian concept of Polyphony inside the novel through the perspectives of the four characters.

Chapter One

The Modernist Techniques in American

Literature: A Theoretical Background

Introduction

Modernism is a movement, which started around the end of 19th century. Modernism had affected many specific fields and arts, especially literature. Literary modernism was characterised by breaking away from traditions of the previous century and the use of innovative narrative techniques and experimentation in writing. This chapter offers the literary background needed for this study. It focuses on explaining American Modernism. The chapter mainly aims to investigate the use of the major modernist literary techniques in some literary works of that era such as Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and James Joyces's *Ulysses*; an illustration of this, William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* is going to be the focus.

1.1. American Modern Literature

Understanding exactly what written literature is has always been a challenge for writers, but what is common is that written literature is an artistic kind that aims to discuss, criticize, analyse, or express the way a certain society lives and thinks through fiction. The authors of this kind of fictional writings generally use imaginary characters, settings and countries, and events to deliver their messages and ideas. The description of places, the attitude of the characters, and the flow of events in literature always have some parts from the reality, either through previous experiences by the writer, or through the ideas and theories that were/are famous in a specific period of time.

According to historians, the 20th century conveyed revolution in different fields in literature, which made America pass through different changes in psychological, social, and philosophical thought (Daniel 10). It was time for something new and time to break the traditions. By the turn of the century, as mentioned by Singal, Queen Victoria's reign¹ came to

¹ Queen Victoria's reign, in full Alexandrina Victoria, (born May 24, 1819, Kensington Palace, London, England—died January 22, 1901, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (1837–1901) and

an end and it represented a symbolic disruption from the 19th century. In addition to the symbolic disruption, this period witnessed the publication of many revolutionary theories, for example Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, Sigmund Freud's interpretation of dreams, and Henry Bergson's conception of time. This publication consolidated the break between the two centuries (Butler 13).

Women in America at that time were exasperated of their modeled roles in society. They sought to be independent; they longed to have the ability to vote, and most of all, they wanted legal equality. It was a period of changes that described a new world and new ways of living that was unlike anything that had gone before. It was time for Modernism (Khachibabyon 123).

1.2. Definition of Modernism

'Modernism', generally, refers to modern thoughts and characters (Butler 4). The term modernism encapsulates the practice of breaking away from the traditions and established rules, and hence, from the previous traditional ways of writing. Originally it was created in Europe during the early 20th century and, later on, spread to the United States. Modernism is a cultural movement that impacted different fields such as art, architecture, science, music, and literature. Modern artists sought to break from realism and the predefined conventions of writing through radically altering traditional forms as well as expressing sense of modern life.

In *the Oxford dictionary of Literary Terms*, Baldick defines Modernism as

a general term applied retrospectively to the wide range of experimental and Avant-garde trends in the literature (and other arts) of the early 20th century, including Symbolism, Futurism, Expressionism, Imagism, Vorticism, Dada, and Surrealism, along with the innovations of unaffiliated writers. (159)

empress of India (1876–1901). She was the last of the house of Hanover and gave her name to an era, the Victorian Age.

Avant-garde initiatives involved a revolution of artistic forms and aims that turned ideas of creativity against the old ones. Literature was no longer following the traditional ways of narration, but making new ideas and new modern world. The Avant-garde's formal strategies expanded in literature to include social critics of the writers. The era of the 20th century passed through a series of movements and genres such as; Symbolism, Futurism, Expressionism and others, and all of them fall under the umbrella of Avant-garde and Modernism.

Accordingly, modernists sought to oppose former conventions and invent new trends. Furthermore, Bladick notices that: "Modernist writing is described mainly by a dismissal of the 19th century customs and of their agreement in the middle of a writer and pursue" (159). Therefore, it is evident that modernists' main purpose was attempting to achieve a split from Victorian traditions. The modern era witnessed the emergence of innovative styles and experimentations. Among the pioneers of experimenting with these techniques, James Joyce (1882-1941), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), William Faulkner (1885-1962), in addition to poets such as T.S Eliot (1888-1965), and Ezra Pound (1885-1972) who is best known for his slogan of "make it new"(Weinstein 7) in regard to modernism.

In 1949, William Faulkner was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for his "powerful and artistically unique contribution to modern American novel" (Polk 31). As a matter of fact, Faulkner used several modernist narrative techniques in his fiction. These narrative techniques include stream of consciousness, multiplicity of narrative voices: omniscient/ first person narrator, fragmentation, flashbacks, foreshadowing and disordered time, polyphony, as well as other techniques.

1.3. Historical Background of Modernism

It is challenging to locate the dates of the American Modernist Movement, but it is precarious to use the year 1900 as the date in which modernism started (Butler 6). In fact,

“Some historians locate the beginning of the modernist revolt as far back as the 1890’s, but most agree that what is called high modernism, marked by an unexampled scope and rapidity of change, came after the First World War”(Abrams & Harpham 226); accordingly, works produced in the late 1800’s and exhibit modernist tendencies are still included.

Despite the fact that the end of the Second World War symbolises a change in political, social, cultural and literary values, and subsequently, it should represent the endpoint of modernism since it is regarded as “a long-lasting period in art and literature of the twentieth century, grows out of the Anglo-American experience, which took place between the years 1910–1940. Sometimes its beginnings are shifted, and its *caesura* is moved up to 1945 or even beyond 1950 [the writers’ italics]” (Eysteinnsson & Liska 15). However, the year varies from one state to another, as a matter of fact, modernism thrived in many and different places in the world, and each place marked a period of its flourishing: “in France from the 1890s until the 1940s; in Russia during the prerevolutionary years and the 1920s; in Germany from the 1890s and on during the 1920s; in England from early in the 20th c. and during the 1920s and 1930s; in America from shortly before the First World War and on during the interwar period”. (Cuddon 442)

Thus, it is difficult to determine a precise date as it changes from one country to another. It is noteworthy to admit that most literary critics use the year 1939 as the endpoint of Modernism (Hanna 48).

1.4. Characteristics of Modernism

Modernist literature is characterised by its tendency to break away from the established rules and traditions, as well as its interest in all what is constructed rather than what is natural. In effect, “[m]odernist literature is characterised chiefly by a rejection of 19th century traditions and of their consensus between author and reader” (Bladick 159).

In addition, the progress made in different fields led to a rejection of old certainties. This is why modernists consider everything to be relative and tried to reject absolute truth, unlike realists who tend to believe that reality could be attained by a process of observation (Ibid 162). Modernists then, tend to believe that truth is relative as each individual can make his/her own meaning of what is true. In other words, meaning is dependent on individual perspective, which renders it personal; therefore, modernists usually use different narrators with different perspectives to tell a story in which the truth is implied in the middle of the different perspectives. To explain more, multiple points of view were used as well as a rejection of a single omniscient point of view for a narrative to highlight that the consciousness of one character's point of view is limited. Therefore, modern fiction has a tendency to limit the reader to one character's point of view on a given action. In many cases, the selected point of view is often that of a naïve or a marginal person, for instance a child, an outsider, or a mentally disabled character to better express the confusion of reality instead of certainty (Withworth).

According to Butler, modernism witnessed a decreasing level of experimentation in writings; modernists used a language that conveys several meanings and diverse connotations as well as open endings or ambiguous endings since it represents better modern life. Their writings are also characterised by the absence of a coherent chronological order and leaps in time. In that, most modernist narratives did not have a proper beginning, middle and an end. Therefore, readers, as put by Butler, get confused to some extent in regard to what the writer is attempting to convey. Modernists, no longer, used linear plots with abrupt climatic turning point and pre-determined resolutions; actually, the plot, the theme and characters were not necessarily linear and ordered. Instead, modernists used discontinuous fragments, multiple plots, no appropriate beginning, middle and end, which included open unresolved endings (Butler 27).

According to Nair, modernism was a reaction to the way of life that was becoming dominant in society at large, the dominance of the way of the city. And maybe that was the reason that unlike Romanticism, which was a reaction to experience, this form has always been a conscious recognition to the surroundings and atmosphere. Stylistically, modernism was very different from its predecessors in the literary world. There was the free use of indirect speech and allusion to myths and stories from another time. Another characteristic was the overwhelming use of figures of speech like personification, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, etc. Many Modernist writers such as Scott Fitzgerald and James Joyce used the method of stream of consciousness in their works. Also predominant was the use of comparison, symbolism, discontinuous narrative, and psychoanalysis. Often the works had multiple narratives. However, thematically, works in this style often depicted a breakdown of social norms, depressive behavior in the face of uncertain future, loneliness, alienation from known things, etc. There was a sense of disillusionment and a rejection of social and cultural systems that seemed outdated (Nair).

1.5. Themes of Modernist Literature

Modernists tried to convey the essence of modern life through a plethora of themes they used. Usually implied and not directly revealed, themes such as breaking down social and cultural norms, alienation of individuals, meaninglessness of modern life and uncertainty were used by modernists as a goal to push readers to make their own conclusions (Farley). As a result, modernist novels usually begin and end arbitrarily without a clearly defined resolution, instead, they tend to give a lot of possibilities to draw attention to the nihilistic disorder that lays down beneath the Idyllic reality (Anselmo). In this concern, Butler advances that the modern character becomes “a perfect instrument for registering the variety, the flux, the interpenetration, the simultaneity and randomness of experience” (64).

Saylar in his article sees that the major literary themes of the Modernist Era are confusion, isolation, and disillusionment. These themes reflect the mindset of the American people and the feelings that plagued them throughout the early 1900s. T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* is a good representation of the theme of confusion by not only being confusing to read because of its fragmentation, but also by showing a man, as Prufrock explains, who is grappling with decision making and trying to figure out what class of society he belongs in, like many during this time period did.

The theme of isolation shows not only in everyday relationships, but also as the American people's take on world affairs. The United States desired to remain neutral through both World Wars, but eventually was forced into participation. *In Another Country* by Ernest Hemingway portrays the isolation felt by soldiers and common Americans.

The theme of disillusionment is arguably the most common theme of the Modernist era. There was disillusionment³ in the American people that the First World War would be quick and painless. *The Great Gatsby* displays the theme of disillusionment in that, Jay Gatsby, the protagonist of the novel, truly believes that he can recreate his past with Daisy. Katherine Anne Porter's story, *The Jilting of Granny Weatherall* shows confusion and disillusionment that accompanies growing old and dying. Overall, this widespread disillusionment reflected the loss of values and faith that suddenly occurred in the American people at the turn of the century (Saylar).

1.6. Modernist Literary Techniques

In their attempt to break away from traditions and conventions, American modernist writers, such as William Faulkner, Joseph Conrad, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, experimented with

³ Sense of disillusionment is a thematic Modernity/Modernism characteristic, which means a feeling of disappointment resulting from the discovery that something is not as good as expected.

new literary techniques to produce a new body of literature. They aimed to revolutionize the form and content of their work, and to grasp the essence of modern life. According to Eysteinsson, the American modernist writers used mainly in their works fragmentation, stream of consciousness and multiple points of view. (Make it new)

1.6.1. Fragmentation

Modernists used fragmentation as a literary form. Through its use, they sought to affirm the fragmentation of modern reality and the modern world. Julian asserts that American modernists' work was created out of scattered fragments instead of full explanations, coherent transitions and clear resolutions that were traditionally used before modernism. Narrative forms, plot and themes are broken down to fragments. For instance, William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* represents an example of fragmentation. The novel is fragmented in form; it is primarily constituted of disordered and nonlinear narrative. Faulkner's novel is full of fragmentary sentences that are connected to other events (Chapter two entitled: Elements of Modernism in The Sound and the Fury). The first chapter of *the Sound and the Fury* starts with Benjamin (Benjy) Compson's narration. Benjy is the Compson son who is mentally disabled and has poor cognitive skills; he cannot differentiate between the past and the present. The words that he uses in his narration are a juxtaposition of changes that occur in images, sounds and smells. The following passage is taken from Benjy's narration:

[...] Hush, now." Luster said. "Ain't I told you you can't go up there. They'll knock your head clean off with one of them balls. Come on, here." He pulled me back. "Sit down." I sat down and he took off my shoes and rolled up my trousers. "Now, git in that water and play and see can you stop that slobbering and moaning." [...] Caddy was all wet and muddy behind, and i started to cry and she came and squatted in the water "Hush now." She said. "I'm not going to run away." So I hushed. Caddy smelled like trees in the rain. (Faulker 16)

Accordingly, Benjy narrates an event with his servant, Luster; hence, readers deduce that at this moment he is thirty-three years old. His narration, suddenly, shifts to his childhood. The river reminds Benjy of his sister Caddy when she smudged her underwear with mud. This passage exhibits Faulkner's technique of juxtaposing two separate events without proper introduction, leaving the narrative up to the readers to make necessary connections and relate the two separate events. Throughout Benjy's narration, the readers can distinguish a fragmentation of time and memories. Benjy during the novel reconnects present events with past ones as his disability renders him incapable of distinguishing time.

1.6.2. Stream of Consciousness

Stream of consciousness is a literary technique that was used by modernists in their attempt to capture the essence of the fragmented modern world. Through the use of stream of consciousness, modernists wanted to express their belief that people should be more concerned with their inner thoughts, and F.Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* is the best example. As a matter of fact, American modernists attempted to trace the non-linear process of thought of the modern character. These thoughts are not logically connected; they are characterized by their disordered flow. Stream of consciousness as a literary technique better captures the unorganized flow of insights, flashbacks, reflections and memories (Mathuramani & Ganesan).

Stream of consciousness is a term coined by the psychologist William James in 1890⁴ to refer to the continuous succession of experiences. The term is used to describe the flow of one's internal thoughts, and it is used to refer to the psychological features of

⁴William James was an American philosopher and psychologist, and the first educator to offer a psychology course in the United States. James was a leading thinker of the late nineteenth century, one of the most influential U.S. philosophers, and has been labelled the "Father of American psychology".

characters in fiction⁵. Stream of consciousness is used by writers in their works to capture what the mind is thinking about. This technique better shows the natural flow and random movement of character's thoughts. In addition, this technique helped writers to remove the logical transitions traditionally used; instead, the connection between character's thoughts is left to the reader who is required to make the necessary associations between them. Stream of consciousness was used extensively in modernist fiction. It is defined in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* as:

the continuous flow of sense-perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and memories in the human mind; or a literary method of representing such a blending of mental processes in fictional characters, usually in an unpunctuated or disjointed form of interior monologue.

(Bladick 244)

Stream of consciousness was used extensively in modernist fiction. It was pioneered by Dorothy Richardson in *Pilgrimage* (1915-35) and by James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922), and further developed by Virginia Woolf in her novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and William Faulkner, in *The Sound and The Fury* (1929) (Ibid 244).

William Faulkner, for example, employs this technique in order to display the subjectivity in one's thoughts and the variance between individual's perspectives. Mathuramani and Ganesan in their research paper "*Technique of Stream of Consciousness in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury*" analyzed that Faulkner in his novel uses the stream of consciousness differently in each chapter. Benjy's section is challenging to many readers, as they hardly understand his narration because of his mental disability. Benjy relies heavily on images, smells and sounds to convey his narration, even if he uses very simple words making

⁵ Adopted from Britannica.

out of his section becomes very difficult. For example, Benjy uses the smell of trees every time he refers to his sister Caddy: “[...] Caddy smelled like trees” (Faulkner 6).

In contrast to Benjy’s section, Quentin uses very complex language in his section. The vocabulary that Quenin uses reflects his higher education. However, his narration is centered on his sister’s mistakes and his father’s neutral response to it (Julian). His stream of consciousness is very rich with indicators of time; one can even deduce that he is obsessed with time and this obsession continues until when he commits suicide.

1.6.3. Point of View (POV)

In their experimentation with literary techniques, modernists employed shifting points of view in their narratives. American writers favored the use of first person and third-person limited narrators as an alternative for omniscient narrators⁶. In modernism, reality and truth are considered as subjective concepts since they cannot be regarded objectively. They are shaped according to each person’s perceptions. It is for this reason that modernists opted for the use of limited points of view in their narratives. In fact, as explained by Wilson, the use of limited narrators permitted modernists to deliver the sense of uncertainty as well as a lack of awareness *vis a vis* the nature of human existence; it also allowed them to juxtapose conflicting and sometimes contradicting perspectives of multiple narrators to mirror the versatility of truth, and the flexibility of reality that many modernists praise.

Chaudhary states that ‘Point of view’ is something through which the writer permits you to “Feel”, “See” and “Hear” what is happening. Expert writers can get their audience consideration on the detail, feelings and opinion easily by manipulating the point of view of any story in an amazing way (Chaudhary). Point of view, thus, is the lens through which a

⁶ Every story has a perspective, though there can be more than one type of point of view in a work of literature. Adopted from literarydevices.

story is told. It is the narrative voice through which one can easily understand the plot of a story, can comprehend the nature of its characters, can discover the background and feel the depth of relations, complexities and emotions. In simple words, point of view permits one to experience the writing as it unfolds (Javeria).

There are different types of point of view: First person, Second person and Third person point of view. In the first person point of view, one character in the story plays the role of narrator, and readers understand the story details through that performer's eye. It is easy to identify the first person point of view, because the narrator or the character talks to readers directly in his/her own voice by using the pronoun "I". A famous example of first person point of view is Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* which is a story told by the main character (Wilson).

As compared to first person point of view, the second person point of view is comparatively unusual, because it makes the reader itself a character of the story and narrates the events by using "You". It permits the readers to take decision by understanding the plot the way she/he wants. On the other hand, in third person point of view, the narrator has no involvement in the story. The narrator is considered someone outside the novel, and pronouns used like "He", "She" and "They" to narrate about the characters (Chaudhary).

Accordingly, it became common for modernist writers to use different limited narrators. To illustrate, the poet T.S Eliot used different speakers in his modernist poem "*The Waste Land*"; moreover, William Faulkner used several narrators in many of his novels. In his novel, *The Sound and The Fury* for example, Faulkner employs four different narrators to tell the story of the Compson Family.

According to the analysis of Milgate, the novel is divided into four chapters; each one has a specific narrator: Benjy, Quentin, Jason and Dilsey. The latter's narration works as an omniscient third person narrator. In other words, Faulkner starts with Benjy's mental disability. Afterwards, it shifts to two subjective narrations: Quentin's and Jason's, and concludes with their servant Dilsey's objective narration. Through the use of this modernist technique, Faulkner sought to represent each character's mind and clarified the difference with which different characters perceive a single event (Saylar). In modernism, there is no single truth but multiple truths that depend upon the perspective of narrators, all the narrators tell the story of Caddy Compson (their sister). However, each one of her brothers gives readers a small parcel of what truly happened because their narrations are subjective. Faulkner leaves it up to the readers to collect these parcels of truth about Caddy and deduce her entire story (Milgate 35).

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the use of literary modernist techniques. It attempted to lay a theoretical background by explaining literary modernism: its definition, historical background, characteristics and themes. Likewise, the chapter explained the modernist literary techniques used by writers, such as fragmentation, stream of consciousness and multiple points of view. All along, this chapter included examples of these literary techniques in William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury*. Indeed, Faulkner's modernist tendency is fully noticeable in his narrative. He used modernist techniques such as fragmentation, juxtaposition, stream of consciousness, polyphony and multiple points of view to mirror the feelings of uncertainty, loss and disillusionment that characterised modern times.

Chapter Two

Bakhtin's Polyphony in Modern

American Novel

Introduction

The 1920's brought sharp changes to American Literature, in both style and content. Many writers used literature as a form of human expression to frame the image of the society at that time. American Literature at the beginnings of the 20th century had changed and put an end to the realistic novels. It was a kind of literature that flourished in the new capitalist art market during a period of time where writers were no longer pointed when it comes to what they write by any constrictions. They signified their allegiance to all what is new and ignored the old system. It took a new form of expressing the ideas like never before. They used many literary techniques, such as fragmentation, stream of consciousness, multiplicity of points of view and polyphony. This chapter highlights the idea of Polyphony as a Modern technique used by American writers and the influence of Mikhail Bakhtin on the American Literature. The chapter mainly introduces the concept of Polyphony and gives its definition and its main features: Dialogism, heteroglossia and unfinalizability. The chapter represents a close reading of the way American modern writers used Polyphony in their novels, such as James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922); Virginia Woolf in her novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and William Faulkner in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929).

2.1. Mikhail Bakhtin and Modern American Literature

Mikhail Mikailovich Bakhtin was born in 1895 in Orel, a town South of Moscow, Russia. Mikhail is a Russian literary theorist and a philosopher of language whose wide-ranging ideas significantly influenced Western thinking in cultural history, linguistics, literary theory and aesthetics. Bakhtin is especially known for his work on the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Problemy tvorchestva Doestoyevskogo*, retitled *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. In the book, Bakhtin expressed his belief in a mutual relation between meaning and context involving the author, the work, and the reader, each constantly affecting and

influencing the others, and the whole influenced by existing political and social forces (Britannica).

As one of the greatest Russian ideologists in the 20th century, Mikhail Bakhtin's contribution to the American modern literature is so great that the study on his literary heritage has formed a worldwide academic activity. Bakhtin creates and proposes a large quantity of golden and significant ideas all his life, and polyphony can be considered as the most representative and brilliant one (Britannica).

According to Yanli in his dissertation entitled "*On The Polyphonic Features of The Sound and the Fury*", many Bakhtin school theorists start to emphasize their study focus on the concrete utterances of people in special social background. In effect, the dialogue always accompanies the word, while the dialogue and the stretch of discourse is just the basic element of language in Bakhtinology.¹

2.2. An Overview of Polyphony

The word Polyphony originates from an ancient Greek word *Poliphonia*; *poli* refers to many, *phonia* means voice, and thus, the initial meaning of polyphony is many voices.² At first, it was used as a musical concept, which describes the music composed of several independent tunes, multiple-voice. Each distinct while connected harmoniously, and each voice shares the equal position. It is quite different from monophony, which characterizes the only dominant voice accompanied by chords. Borrowed from music, the term polyphony is adopted as a possible fictional mode, which is completely different from the monologic authoritative discourse (Yanli 5).

With the publication of *the Problems of Doestovesky's Poetics*, the theory of polyphony was introduced formally. According to Bakhtin, the polyphonic novel can

¹ The ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin have received a great amount of scholarly interest both in his homeland and in

² A style of musical composition employing two or more simultaneous but relatively independent melodic lines: counterpoint. Adopted from Merriam Webster.

represent a multiplicity of voices or ideas to a large extent, and it is only polyphony, which owns the ability to give the characters freedom. Polyphony is basically “a new theory of authorial point of view” propounded by Bakhtin (Clark and Holquist 3). According to Bakhtin, Polyphony literally means “multi-voicedness”. It arises in fiction when the special position of the author allows great freedom of interaction to the characters. The characters in a polyphonic novel are allowed maximum freedom; so that, they could argue with each other even with their author. In other words, in the polyphonic novels, different centers of consciousness are allowed to interact on the plane of the novel.

According to Bakhtin, a polyphonic novel could be a “novel in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice” (Bakhtin 86). Lodge states that the multi voiced nature of fiction permits different ideological perspectives to enter the novel. Bakhtin's theory is typically referred to as “dialogic”. Dialogic or dialogism, according to Bakhtin, means the process by which meaning is evolved out of interactions among the author, the work and the reader. These elements are in turn influenced by the context in which they are placed, i.e. by the social and political forces influencing them.

Bakhtin states that the polyphonic novel could explore perfectly the essence of the truth. In other words, the author's point of view cannot be expressed directly in the polyphonic novels, or at least it is not an easy task for readers to find the writer's opinion from so many different consciousness and ideas that emerged in the work. The author's position is equal to the heroes. He no longer owns the authoritative position in the story, and he has to talk and discuss with his heroes. In this way, the traditional situation that the author has the absolute control of the whole process of the story ruined totally (Yanli 5).

At the same time, the true thought will never exist within the mind of any character in the polyphonic novel; it is all the time confusing for the readers to work out the truth. However, there is the dialogic contact between the characters. In fact, there is no pure truth here; the truth only exists and changes in the relation to other people and other things, as well as the change and renewal of the relation. Such relative truth utterly betrays the standard and the ready-made truth within the typical novels and brings new ways of telling and narrating the events of the novel. This distinctive interpretation of the truth, also, became a selected characteristic of the polyphonic novels (Ibid 6).

To sum up, the polyphonic novel reflects all the possibilities through the dialogic form, and also the creation of the polyphonic novel could be a huge progress in the literary history. Meanwhile, the proposition of Bakhtin's polyphonic theory transfuses fresh blood to the study of literature, then enriches and expands the creative thinking manner of human beings.

2.3. Typical Features of the Polyphonic Novel

According to Bakhtin, the reader can hear many several voices in the polyphonic novel, and these voices all joined the dialogues. They declare their own opinions equally, and there is never a final word in the story. The characters own their right to oppose the author's management in the novel. They are free and stand with the writer along together. Then, the author in the polyphonic novel is additional like another hero; he is aware of nothing regarding what the characters do next. Sometimes, the hero's words and dialogues may even surprise him. So as to form the substance of polyphony and make it clearer, Bakhtin defines several characteristics to differentiate the polyphonic novel from alternative literary forms. Among these features, the foremost typical ones are dialogism, heteroglossia and unfinalizability. (82)

2.3.1. Dialogism

Dialogism as the most representative characteristic of the polyphonic novel, particularly, displays Bakhtin's point of view on the world's existing state, composing code and the whole process of its creation. According to Bakhtin, the truth was conferred within the dialogic relationship between the characters. The dialogic communication exists here and there inside the novel; it appears in the human standard life and in the consciousness of everyone. In other words, once the consciousness begins, the dialogue begins with it, and all the relationships among the internal and external parts are dialogic. It can be said that an entire polyphonic novel may represent a great dialogue (Yanli 7).

In this context, Bakhtin has got to say on how meaning is generated in Dostoevsky's dialogic novel:

It is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for other; this interaction provides no support for the viewer who would objectify an entire event according to some ordinary monolog category (thematically, lyrically or cognitively) and this consequently makes the viewer also a participant.

(Bakhtin 18).

According to Yanli, Bakhtin makes an important affiliation between a "polyphonic" novel and a "dialogic" novel. He explains, "The polyphonic novel is dialogic through and through" (Bakhtin 40). Clark and Holquist additionally see that the two terms are interchangeable and assert: "The phenomenon that Bakhtin calls 'polyphony' is simply another name for dialogism" (242). Lodge also sees synonymity between the two terms. He further argues that "In Bakhtin's theory, 'polyphonic' is virtually synonymous with 'dialogic'" (Bakhtin 86).

Thus, the exploration of the true events and story of the novel in an exceedingly polyphonic work depends on the author, characters and even the readers. The artistic position of the author, and therefore the heroes, exist totally within the dialogic relationship. In the polyphonic novel, the dialogue does not simply refer to the conversation among the characters; it is also the dialogue between various consciousnesses. Dentith once pointed that: “dialogue for Bakhtin is a general sort of interaction. Unfortunately, it has often been taken as a synonym for interaction, or verbal interaction in general, and is thereby trivialized” (49).

From the quote, Bakhtin's distinctive interpretation and the importance of the dialogism may be seen clearly. The arguments and therefore, the contradictions are mainly reflected in the use of the plot of the novel; that is, the plot is the key point and the main purpose in the monological novel. However, for the polyphonic work, which is plot-independent, the dialogue exists definitely beyond the plot, and the potential endless of dialogue suggests the necessity of the plot-independent arrangement in a polyphonic work.

Therefore, for Bakhtin, the truth forever depends on various consciousnesses, and therefore, the author himself cannot reach the goal sufficiently, he stated: “dialogue in Dostoevsky is always external to the plot, that is, internally independent of the plot-related interrelationships of the speakers, although, of course, dialogue is prepared for by the plot”(Bakhtin 297). To precise and express the truth well, it needs more than two voices, meanwhile, the author obliged to play two roles simultaneously in the novel; first, he creates a fictional world, during which a lot of different opinions and actions enter into the dialogue. Second, he conjointly participates in this dialogue, and becomes a member of the interlocutor of the dialogue, which he created (Hanneele).

Besides, the heroes receive the right to behave randomly, and they successfully escape from the writer's control (Polk 1). The readers, at the same time, also participate into the

dialogue, for it is just the audience's response that endues the novel with significance. Thus, the dialogic connection exists everywhere and needs the participation of all the elements, and they are juxtaposed contrapuntally (Yanli 8).

From the analysis above, the importance of the dialogue as the base of the polyphonic novel can be obviously seen in the polyphonic novels, and it is the dialogue that makes the polyphonic novel possible. The dialogism then becomes the most brilliant part of polyphony since it is endless.

2.3.2. Heteroglossia

In the polyphonic novel, the voice or the language is the real image of the character. The readers are able only to hear them, however, not read them. These voices and languages not only represent the hero's opinions on some trifles in the daily life; they also express the "convictions" or "point of view on the world" (Bakhtin 78). Bakhtin introduces another idea called "heteroglossia" or in different words, "many-voicedness" in his book *The Dialogic Imagination*. It is an absolute indispensable characteristic for any polyphonic novel. Dentih once presented this "many-voicedness" phenomenon in his work,

The character becomes the bearer of a language, one of the many languages whose struggle and competition make up what we know as a national language. A language is not symptomatic of a person, but a person is a bearer of a language, with the specific set of social and ideological valuation that it details (69).

Dentih sees that the heroes within the polyphonic novel live free and independent life. The characters suppose and act in their own ways, and therefore, the author never praises or criticizes their behaviors. It is a new narrative technique in which the narrator knows the emotions and thoughts of each character in the story. Through omniscient narrative, the author brings an entire world of his characters to life, and moves from character to character,

permitting completely different voices to interpret the events. Omniscient narrative tells the story of each character by demonstrating that only the narrator possesses information, and therefore, the author is not able to play the role of the omniscience any more.³ He must participate in the novel, and the voice of the characters expressed is simply the author's own language (Yanli 9).

In a word, Heteroglossia is a basic feature of polyphony. When one read a polyphonic novel, many different voices and consciousness will flood in his mind, and then he cannot only hear these individual voices or language, he should learn to feel them as a whole. This is also the key point to understand the significance of heteroglossia.

2.3.3. Unfinalizability

In a polyphonic novel, dialogue exists everywhere; therefore, the dialogic relationship is unfinished, with no real ending. Such characteristics, thus, push the readers to notice another feature of polyphony; in different words, unfinizability. As the third characteristic of the polyphonic novel, it is truly determined by the previous two features. In other words, unfinalizability is the requirement for dialogism and heteroglossia, particularly for dialogism. Bakhtin once claimed that the dialogue is the minimum requirement for existing people and their consciousness, and if the dialogue continues, then, everything cannot finish. Once Bakhtin mentioned the position of dialogue and described it as,

“This is no stenographer's report of a finished dialogue, from which the author has already withdrawn and over which he is now located as if in some higher decision-making position: that would have turned an authentic and unfinished dialogue into an objectivized and finalized image of a dialogue, of the sort usual for every monologic novel. The great dialogue in Dostoevsky is organized as an unclosed whole of life itself, life poised on the threshold”. (Bakhtin 63)

³ Omniscient Point of View is when a narrator has knowledge about all the characters in a narrative; it is an omniscient, or in other words all-knowing point of view.

According to Yanli, the interacting consciousness and various voices within the polyphonic work interpret appropriately the unfinalizability. These voices never exist only in one consciousness; however, they may act with quite totally different views on the story of the novel. In effect, the unfinalizability of the polyphonic work is a requirement for the external dialogue, since the voices of the characters still participate in the unfinished dialogue. Once there are two voices, the conclusion is uncompleted and open. Dentih in the same context states, "Bakhtin advances the term 'Unfinalizability' as an all-purpose carrier of his conviction that the world is not only a messy place, but is also open place" (13).

Bakhtin finds that the unfinalizability of the consciousness is simply the goal of the polyphonic novel. Due to the implications of the unfinalizability, polyphony becomes not merely a technical characteristic of the novel, but also a principle of the creative process of moral philosophy. Besides, the unique sense of time and space is also an important quality in a polyphonic work. It provides the background for the events of the polyphonic plots. Totally different from the traditional literary forms, the time became visible and concrete in human's consciousness in polyphonic novels, whereas, the space reacted and changed in the processes of the history and the eternal character of a person (84).

The Russian formalist sees that because of to polyphony, the characters are given enough freedom in the novel, and that they got special right to narrate the story like the author. It is the polyphonic work that provides a new artistic way for both the author and the readers.

2.4. The Impact of Polyphony on Literature

In Dostoevsky's works, the complicated consciousness and voices of the characters are considered as the general concept of Bakhtin's polyphonic poetics, and the proposition of polyphony really influences widely the literary field in the whole world. It is an effective and

powerful interpretation for literature, and its significance extends even on the human's way of thinking, as Dentih wrote in his book:

“With so many of Bakhtin's descriptions, there is an evident evaluative accent in all that he writes about polyphony, which takes consideration of the issues raised well beyond Dostoevsky's novels alone. For polyphony operates as a true aesthetic description: that is, it not only describes a particular aesthetic object and distinguishes it from other aesthetic objects”.

(Dentith 57)

Although Bakhtin found polyphony in Dostoevsky's works, his novels are not the only ones, which could contain the whole polyphonic features. Nowadays, more and more writers and scholars create the polyphonic works, and the theory of polyphony is unceasingly developed and practiced by many other great theorists and novelists, especially by Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and William Faulkner (Yanli 14).

With the development of the polyphonic theory, the researches on the concept of polyphony has become deeper and richer than before, and also the focuses have changed from polyphony on voice to polyphony on narrative mode, then to polyphony on style. Every step of those narratives construction is surly and closely connected with the development of modernism. In fact, the development of the polyphonic fiction is just the symbol of the forming of the modern novel, then the readers have the reason to believe that the application and development of the polyphonic artistic way of thinking will provide larger a creative space for the modern novelistic style (Yanli 14).

According to Jud House, in Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway*, Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia is exposed line by line, as the voices of the characters continually interweave throughout the progress of the one day. It is a truly unique style, guiding the reader to follow

the lives of the two main characters, Mrs Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith, as their day unfolds, interrupted by the thoughts and voices of other subsidiary characters, and cameo-characters who cross their paths. It exposes not only the characters' voices, but also the language of a cross-section of social groups, their attitudes to life, each other, and other classes. And it exposes Woolf's voice, sometimes as inserted commentary, often bracketed, and sometimes merged within the voices of her characters. There is a multiplicity of voices and polyphony in the novel

Also, In *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf, the arrangement of the changeable points of view and the pluralistic reflections of the life embodies the unique scenery of the many-voicedness, and the successful design of the various narrative strategies of *The Sound and The Fury* shows its extremely remarkable charm as a polyphonic novel, while *Ulysses* with its achievement of multiplex dialogical situation displays its important position in modern novels (Yanli 14).

James Joyce's *Ulysses* is among the original interpretations of the polyphonic features, which is the greatest novel of the twentieth century (Prasad). The variety of the voices and consciousnesses that each offers a world-view specific to its own in the novel and Joyce's ingenious use of the stream of consciousness technique and interior monologue can add *Ulysses* to the list of polyphonic novels favored by Bakhtin. *Ulysses* mainly mirrors Bakhtin's main ideas and theories especially the fundamental concept in Bakhtin's thought, namely polyphony (Meghdadi).

The readers can see that the narrative perspective, mode and structure of many great modern novels are full of various kinds of dialogical patterns and the polyphonic elements or dialogical forms, together with the new school of modernism announce the emergence of the splendid modern polyphonic world. Furthermore, there are large quantities of works carrying

polyphonic features and influenced by the polyphony in the world of literature, such as *A La recherche du temps perdu* by the greatest French novelist Marcel Proust, Eudora Welty's *The Losing Battles*, William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom*. Though it is hard to say that in the process of creation of such works like mentioned before, whether their author considered painstakingly the application of the polyphonic theory of Bakhtin or not, it is obvious that they all own the characteristics of polyphony and can be called the polyphonic novel (Yanli 15).

2.5. Faulkner and polyphony

Many critics maintain that "*The Sound and the Fury* is the quintessential American high modernist text" (Polk 1), as a matter of fact, it was through this novel that Faulkner introduced, for the first time, the technique of multiple narrators who used stream of consciousness, interior monologues, polyphony and fragmentation to tell their stories. However, William Faulkner himself tended to consider his novel *The Sound and the Fury* as "his most splendid failure" (qtd. in Gwynn and Blotner 77) because Faulkner considers that the outcome of his narrative did not offer a satisfactory result for him. He explains that:

And I tried first to tell it with one brother, and that wasn't enough. That was Section One. I tried with another brother, and that wasn't enough. That was Section Two. I tried the third brother, because Caddy was still to me too beautiful and too moving to reduce her to telling what was going on, that it would be more passionate to see her through somebody else's eyes, I thought. And that failed and I tried myself--the fourth section--to tell what happened, and I still failed.

(Gwynn and Blotner 1)

Accordingly, *The Sound and the Fury*'s chapters are not logically arranged. The narrative covers a span of four days, each of which is narrated by a different character. The first part of the novel presents the stream of consciousness of Benjy Compson on the date of April 7, 1928, the day before Easter. The second part of the novel relates Quentin's

monologues on June 2, 1910, the day of his suicide. The third part of the novel is devoted to Jason's narrative on April 6, 1928, which corresponds to Good Friday, which takes place a day before Benjy's part. The fourth and final part of the novel occurs on April 8, 1928, which corresponds to Easter Sunday (Hollister 1).

According to Hollister, three of the four parts in the novel occur in the three consecutive days of Easter weekend of the year 1928, while one part occurs years earlier in the year 1910. Readers can notice that the four parts of the novel are not chronologically arranged, therefore, the tragedy that befell the Compson family is gradually told through fragmentation that will eventually make sense for readers despite its disordered chronology.

The story told in Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* is not complex but the narrative techniques used to tell the story are complex. This difficulty stems from many factors such as the disordered chronology; events are not sequenced chronologically but psychologically. This is why it is often considered as a complex novel for readers because they struggle with different parts of the novel to grasp the whole story (Kartignar 12).

It can be noticeable that Faulkner's technique consisted of presenting the same events and characters from different perspectives. Subsequently, readers discover the same event and characters in all chapters but each time with a different point of view, as each narrator offers his own impressions, which is for the most part subjective. By using this technique, Faulkner keeps the attention of his readers by slowly unfolding the story. It is until the end of the novel that readers grasp the whole story.

Conclusion

This chapter investigated in the American Modern Literature in brief and introduced the Russian essayist Mikhail Bakhtin and his contribution to literature, which is The Polyphonic novel. Chapter two mainly represented a brief survey of Polyphony. It highlighted the proposition, definition, characteristics and the three main features of the Polyphonic work; Dialogism, Heteroglossia, and Unfinalizability. The chapter showed the development of the theory of Polyphony, and discusses the profound influence of the theory on literature in the world. Finally, it gave a short explanation about Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*.

Chapter Three

The Embodiment of Polyphony in The Sound and the Fury (1929)

Introduction

American Modernism emerged as a literary movement that sought to breakdown with old conventions and represent effectively the changes occurring in modern times. One of the main characteristics of modernism is the attempt to represent the prevailing state of anarchy and chaos. Consequently, the representation of time, as well as memory in modernism, was done in a disruptive linear manner. William Faulkner, one of the American famous writers of that epoch, relies on time and memory to narrate the story and decline of the Compson family¹ in his novel *The Sound and the Fury*. In this chapter, the polyphonic features of *The Sound and the Fury* will be discussed in depth. A detailed analysis is given through three aspects: the polyphony in the structure, in the theme and in the image of Caddy, the heroine of the novel. Also, the chapter presents a close reading of the way in which Faulkner used polyphony in his narrative that results a non-chronological time and disordered memory of what happened with the Compson family.

3.1. Faulkner and Modernism

William Faulkner's fiction displays many modernist characteristics. Firstly, he is famous for experimenting with narrative structures as well as narrative voices, and his use of discontinuous narrative; consequently, the events of the novel move back and forth in time. Secondly, he heavily invested on the use of stream of consciousness in his writing. Furthermore, he uses intertextuality, which is one of the modernist techniques through which a writer's text is connected to one or more texts (Weinstein). This connection is made implicitly by alluding to meanings or explicitly by quoting from the other text. Thus, the title of Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* is associated with William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606). The title is taken from the closing lines at the end of his play, *Macbeth*: "it

¹ Compson family, fictional characters created by William Faulkner in his novel *The Compsons* are principal characters in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) in the Yoknapatawpha County.

Chapter Three: The Embodiment of Polyphony in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929)

is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing” (*Macbeth*, Act V, Scene v). Moreover, Faulkner broke some rules of syntax and structure in his novels *Absalom! Absalom!*, *As I Lay Dying*, and *The Sound and the Fury*. As an attempt to eradicate the conventional forms and rules of language, he invents new words, invests heavily in experimental modernist narrative techniques such as first-person narrator and stream of consciousness, and the most important technique, which is Polyphony (Bleikasten). William Faulkner ranks among the most celebrated and most studied of Southern Gothic novelists, and critics over the decades have taken his most renowned works as exemplary models of what American Modernist fiction could achieve, as asserted by Wikipedia.

William Faulkner started to write his novel *The Sound and the Fury* in the fall of 1928. The novel represents the decline of the Southern American Compson family who live in Yoknapatawpha County², in northern Mississippi³. Often considered as Faulkner’s best novel, *The Sound and the Fury* exhibits many modern and innovative techniques. Actually, these techniques allow the main characters to narrate the story of the Compson family through the use of stream of consciousness and fragmentation to better reflect the characters disordered memory and subjective point of view (Bleikasten 62). Faulkner’s obsession with innovative experimentation with the concept of time is observed not only in *The Sound and The Fury*, but also throughout his other novels, such as *Absalom Absalom!* And *Light in August* (ibid 80).

3.2. The Polyphonic Features of *The Sound and the Fury*

According to many critics such as, Kuminova, Polk, and Lockyer, *The Sound and the Fury* is the most representative work of William Faulkner, which has acquired the widest

² Yoknapatawpha County is a fictional county in northern Mississippi. It was created by American writer William Faulkner and forms the setting for most of his work.

(<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/yoknapatawpha> county accessed on May 7th 2017)

³ Adopted from Cliff notes.

critical attention in the literary field, and it shows perfectly the writer's unique innovative writing consciousness and creative talent. *The sound and the Fury* is a tragedy about the decaying of the Southern aristocratic family, the Compsons. It reflects the conflicts of the tradition and the modern civilization in the American Southern society. Besides, the novel is narrated in a non-chronological way with disordered events. Faulkner divided the story into four parts: Quentin's part, Benjy's part, Jason's part and Dilsey's part; each character tells the story of Caddy from his own perspective. The story is the best example of a Polyphonic novel in the whole American Modern Literature (Lockyer 40).

3.2.1. Polyphony in the Structure

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner abandons the traditional linear time-space framework, and changes the position of the authoritarian narrators with the independent and limited narration. He adopts a unique symphonic structure to lead the readers into a relative free subjective world, in other words, the quartet (Swiggart 141). The novel is composed of four main narratives, each one tells the story in a different way.

According to Dentih, the phenomenon of heteroglossia in the novel is composed of the narrations of Benjy, Quentin, Jason and Dilsey, and their monologues are the unmerged voices in the polyphonic realm. If there is no many-voiced narration of the protagonists, the natural polyphonic dialogues cannot exist. These voices form the distinguished dialogues, which happen in a specific time-space kingdom, and such unique carnivalesque chronotope⁴ has really provided the sound background of this novel.

Thus, different narrator's voices and consciousness appear and clash in the polyphonic actions and dialogues; they compete dialogic sense of truth in the polyphonic realm, for the consciousness of the characters are not given the finalizing judgments, and every thought of

⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin developed the concept of chronotope on the basis of Emmanuel Kant's philosophy and Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity. They focus on the idea that time and space are both pure forms of intuition, and are indispensable to the human being to perceive and structure the surrounding world.

them is only one voice of the unfinished great dialogue. It eventually leads to the open end of the novel. In this way, the polyphonic features embodied and interpreted in this meticulous structural design (Jianbo 25).

3.2.1.1. The Quartet World

The polyphonic protagonists own the right to think by themselves and speak for themselves, and the writer only discusses with them equally in the novel. Therefore, it is somehow hard for the readers to understand the author's real intention, as Yanli puts it. When one reads *The Sound and the Fury*, he/she may feel that various voices are around him/her, and he/she may be at a loss immediately. To break such cloud, readers should interpret all these voices as a whole, having one great symphony.

Jianbo sees that heteroglossia in this novel is displayed by the quartet⁵ or the narrations of the four Compson family members: Benjy, Quentin, Jason and Dilsey. Their monologues are also viewed as “four movements of symphony” (Swiggart 141). Readers can hear their voices, then know and judge the heroes through their narrations. The same situation also exists in the Dostoevsky's works, and just like Bakhtin said:

Dostoevsky's hero is not an objective image but an autonomous discourse, pure voice; we do not see him, we hear him; everything that we see and know apart from his discourse is nonessential and is swallowed up by discourse as its raw material, or else remains outside it as something that stimulates and provokes.

(Bakhtin 53)

The first section in the novel, which is generally known as Benjy's narrative, happens on April seventh, 1928. Faulkner uses the stream of consciousness and the multiple voices to describe Benjy's mind, and creates him as “an image of idea” for searching love and order.

⁵ a group or set of four. (<http://www.merriam-webstar.com/dictionary>).

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Benjy, in the novel, is an idiot who cannot talk. He is thirty-three; yet, he only can behave as a three years old boy, and he can express his feelings just through crying, howling, groaning or keeping silent. Because of these features, Benjy's narration must be hard to understand; in fact, it is (Yanli 17).

According to Yanli's analysis, Benjy's narrative extends with his jumping consciousness, and the space and time changes frequently and randomly without noticing. Nothing is clear for readers, Yanli further displays, and they can only recognize ambiguously the changes by the transformation of different objects and people around Benjy. Thus, many readers really suffered a lot when they read Benjy's monologue. Yet, it is just the purpose that Faulkner wants to reach; he is satisfied with it. "Benjy's monologue is presumably the one Faulkner wrote in the initial burst of freedom he referred to in his 1933 introduction" (Polk 79). Obviously, Faulkner himself really intoxicates in Benjy's narration, while he also doesn't forget to provide some clues and hints for his readers.

Through Benjy, Faulkner manages to make readers infer the views from the pictures that his mind records, and exposes a confusing world by displaying the consciousness of an idiot. However, his narration is only one of the voices; its random and confused description strongly lured the readers' curiosity to hear more voices in order to make their own judgments (Jianbo 30).

The second voice is Quentin's ambivalent monologue; he is an intelligent but oversensitive disappointed and suicidal idealist, who feels life is only a dream. Quentin is the eldest boy of the Compsons; he lives because of his memory, and "if Benjy's prose suggests an absolute openness of mind to the sensual thrusts of a real world, Quentin's reflects the capacity and willingness of mind to set the real world aside, substituting a fantasized one that repeats it in a finer tone" (Polk 82).

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All Quentin's thoughts, memories, images and even reactions are concerned with time; that is, the good old days when his sister Caddy used to take care of him. The Compson is a dying aristocratic Southern family; while its decay, the family has experienced a long time of glory. 'Quentin' is indulged deeply in the past Luxury and considers that the present is nothing but a shadow of the past. Though the father sells Benjy's favorite land to support him study in Harvard; this seems to humiliate him. This is the reason why all his passions are on the past glorious life, not a study chance (Polk 87).

In Quentin's section, the whole narrative is full of the nostalgic unhealthy moods. Quentin is unwilling to see any changes in people's life and minds; the past is the best time, thus, to think and live conventionally is the safest way for him. During his last hours, he unceasingly breaks his watch to kill the time, stop the process which is isolated from the past, and to separate Caddy from 'the loud world' and live in a perfect world (Faulkner 160). However, though he struggles to be free of time ceaselessly; the efforts are all in vain (Yanli 19).

From Quentin's narration, readers can feel strongly his reminiscence. For him, the future is unpredictable, and the present is cruel and meaningless, only the past is real and valuable. This self-consciousness⁶ reinforces this character's pessimistic color. In fact, he also lives in an isolated world as Benjy, and his monologue is a terrible cry of despair. Therefore, it is partial, and such narration really leaves the readers another kind of confusion, and attracts us deeply to know what actually happened (Lockyer 55).

The third part is given by Jason. His narration is different from Benjy and Quentin; he is sane and healthy at the same time; so, people requests more from him, while because of his cunning personality, he reflects only the fall of the New South, and the Anger is the most notable characteristic of Jason. In this section, Jason's monologue fits perfectly Bakhtin's

⁶ It is the feeling that the character is nervous or uncomfortable about his disapproval from other people.

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description of Dostoevsky's narrators who speak "in a style defined by the intense anticipation of another's words" (Bakhtin 205). Jason doesn't quote others too much, while he paraphrases them and appropriates other's words to his own discourse, and then the reader can see a typical self-centered characteristic of him (Yanli 20).

In fact, Jason is the only so called normal person in the Compson family. However, his mental world is full of hatred and revenge. He hates everybody around him, especially Caddy. He even associates all his failures and advertises with Caddy. Jason believes that it is Caddy's failure in the marriage that causes his losing of the bank job which ever promised by Herbert Head. Thus, he hated Caddy deeply and takes revenge upon her; such hatred has even extended to her daughter.

For some readers, Jason's narration is easily accepted as an objective one. First, he is the only sane narrator; second, his monologue is simple and all about the present. However, when his character is further analyzed about, it can be found that he is not a balanced or impartial narrator. Finally, when little Quentin escapes with his money, he falls into extremely crazy and desperate state. The case declares Jason's ultimate failure. Through Jason, Faulkner exposes and criticizes the corruption brought by the new bourgeois. According to him, there is no future for such newly rising social pattern (Yanli 21).

Jason's narration is full of sound and fury, and all his hostilities and hatreds are shown in this part, and then, the positive image of Caddy that can be got from Benjy and Quentin's narrations has just been changed and drawn from Jason's negative comments. All his narrations would draw a big question mark about the truth in readers' minds.

With so much confusion, the readers really need to hear a real voice or an authorial judgment, and then, Faulkner gives these readers the last part told by Dilsey, the black servant of the Compsons, from a relative omniscient viewpoint. Indeed, the last part of the novel provides a fresh perspective for the readers to rethink the credibility of the previous two

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sections, because the author's voice is something forbidden in the polyphonic novel, the author's voice may break the balance among all the different voices (Jianbo 41). As a consequence, Faulkner borrows Dilsey's mouth to make the readers listen more clearly and completely. Dilsey is also a character in the novel, and her voice could not express total authoritativeness.

Thus, the position of Dilsey, Benjy, Quentin, Jason and the author are still in balance in the novel. For Dilsey, she is a non-participant of every story; her narration can help the readers to witness the whole process of the decline and collapse of the Compsons. This part is designed in traditional third-person narrative, and it happens entirely in the present day, the Easter Sunday⁷. Dilsey mainly tells the readers about Jason's pursuit of his stolen money, and the other is Dilsey's participation at an Easter church service. As she says, following the service, "I've seed da first en da last... I seed de beginning, en now I seed de ending". From the last part, readers can hear clearly a virtuous voice from Dilsey, a non-participant. The unavoidable contradictions of three brother's consciousness gather in Dilsey's narration and form many rich paradoxes, in other words, Dilsey's objective voice provides the reader a real and orderly description about the Compson family; yet, the final word isn't given by Faulkner, which makes the novel full of possibilities and paradoxes (Yanli 22).

The four parts in *The Sound and the Fury* create a quartet. They connect and dispute each other. In other words, these four voices should not be understood respectively, but as a whole, they are actually telling the same story

⁷ **Easter Sunday** is a Christian festival and feast that commemorates Jesus Christ's resurrection following his death and is observed with variations of date due to different calendars on the first Sunday after the paschal full moon.(<http://www.merriam-webstar.com/dictionary>).

3.2.1.2. Conception of Time in Faulkner's Narrative

Many literary critics have focused on Faulkner's use of time, among which one can cite the French philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980). In his article entitled "Time in Faulkner: *The Sound and the Fury*", Sartre observes that for Faulkner "the past is never lost, unfortunately; it is always there, it is an obsession". Indeed, the past and the present are intermingled in Faulkner's novel. When asked about his conception of time in his narrative, Faulkner admits that:

"there isn't time [. . .] In fact, I agree pretty much with Bergson's theory of the fluidity of time. There is only the present moment, in which I include both the past and the future, and that is eternity. In my opinion, time can be shaped quite a bit by the artist".

(Nalbantian 92)

Therefore, Faulkner's statement shows that his treatment of time and memory does not adhere to any preexisting theory and insists that it should depend on the artist's own wishes. Consequently, he opted for experimenting extensively with time and memory in his work. The results of his experimentation are evident in many of his novels and particularly in *The Sound and the Fury*, as asserted by Nalbantian.

The narrative structure of this novel is non-conventional and does not follow a clearly defined linear order. In other words, the past and the present are continually mixed to defy chronological order. Faulkner uses different narrative devices in order to defy the linearity of time. Thus, the use of stream of consciousness, multiple narrators, polyphony and other techniques destroyed the chronological order of time in his novel. The Literary critic Nalbantian explains, in this concern, that:

Faulkner explored multiple dimensions of time within the stream of consciousness of his characters who have an associative range of memories. He juxtaposes those characters who can retreat to the past in Bergsonian experiences of 'durée' with those who remain more strongly connected to the present by a 'mathematical' consciousness of time. He also alternates between voluntary and involuntary memory sequences in his work. (92-93)

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According to Nalbantian, throughout Faulkner's work, readers can notice the recurrent shifts between the past and the present and distinguish between two types of memory: the first voluntary while the second is involuntary. In *The Sound and the Fury*, the characters are obsessed with the past, and each one of the narrators develops a fixation on how the events of the past affect their present. In the three sections of the novel, Faulkner articulates the thoughts and voice of each one of the Compson brothers. Benjy, Quentin and Jason are deeply affected by the loss of their sister, Caddy Compson. Caddy's promiscuity, and later her forced departure leads to the decay of the Compson family. Each one of her brothers retells his own version of this event, but readers can clearly notice that the reality is still hidden and subverted (Nalbantian 93).

The plot of the novel is often regarded as confusing because the linear order is disrupted. This disruption highlights the importance of the past in shaping the present, and enquires about the significance of chronological order. Faulkner manipulates the chronological order in his novel. The first section of the novel takes place on April 7th, the third section on April 6th, and the fourth on April 8th. While the second section of Quentin Compson happens eighteen years earlier on June 2nd, 1910, the day in which he commits suicide, the narratives take place in different dates. Furthermore, not only the sections make of a lack chronological order, but also the scenes within each of the four sections display a lack of coherent time order, and the stream of consciousness is characterized by the absence of the limitations of chronology (Sartre 230).

3.2.2. Polyphony in the Theme

The Sound and the Fury, as Faulkner's first masterpiece that is full of creativity and earns him to the worldwide reputation, has really attracted wide critical interest. Different critics have different understandings and interpretations about the theme. These interpretations

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have ranged from Sartre's declaration that it is a metaphysical work concerned with time to Irving Howe's conclusion that it is a social story describing the decay of a family and of the American South (Yanli 30).

The scope of the novel is so wide that it can contain any specialized interpretations. However, most thematic critics such as Aliz Farkas and Norma Diana Hamilton, regard the story as a tragedy, which shows the decay from the past to the present. Through describing the deterioration of the Compson family, Faulkner reveals the whole process and essence of the decline and decay of the American South. The tragic sense pervades the whole novel, and it is so predominant and pervasive in every part and nearly felt in every detail that it can be universally considered the basic theme of the work (Farkas 174).

The novel mainly concentrates on an ever prominent and once distinguished family in the American South, and portrays the decline of the family from the viewpoints of the three Compson boys, the black servant Dilsey and the author himself. It is about the deterioration of the Compson family in the final two generations, which degenerates into stupid suicide, and neurosis (Mortimer 131).

All these represent the collapse of the people's morality and the Southern society and tradition. The story of the Compsons shows how the aristocratic family experiences these social changes and the decadence of the social status and traditional honor of the family itself. It is the microcosm of many such southern family, and the story also interprets Faulkner's ultimate goal "to seek out the nature of man", according to Ralph Ellison⁸, Faulkner uses this symbol to display the fall of the whole Southern society which finally leads to its failure in the process of the American history (Yanli 31).

⁸ Ralph Ellison was a 20th century African-American writer and scholar best known for his renowned award-winning novel 'Invisible Man.'

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In the story, Faulkner focuses on the theme displayed by four different narrators, especially through the three Compson brothers, their voice, their evaluation and their positions are equal in the novel. They make dialogues and compete the truth. All of them try to tell the story from their own angle and prove themselves are right, but they inevitably explore the same theme. This unique design, thus, makes the theme full of the polyphonic color (Mortimer 133).

According to Yanli, the decay of the family and the South can be observed in Benjy's monologue; using an idiot as a narrator and a character at the beginning of the story is actually a meticulous design by Faulkner. In the novel, Faulkner intends to display the fall of the Compsons and the whole South as a whole history. Therefore, Benjy is the most suitable person to narrate this process. As a matter of fact, Benjy is both a grown-up man; he can be seen as a grown-up man with the mind of a baby. Benjy recognizes the world in an abnormal way, at least for his age, and he cannot understand the world he lives (Richard 155). Faulkner thinks that it would be better as narrated by someone capable only of feeling what happened, but not knowing why.

Moreover, Benjy's monologue gives the readers some clues of the quality of the Compson household, because Benjy's part contains about almost every crucial piece of family "data" that later sections amplify; and from Benjy's injured sensibility and uncomprehending consciousness, the readers can feel the physical fall of the Compsons (Jianbo 56). In addition, through Benjy's consciousness and perception, Faulkner also sets the deaths and funerals of Quentin and Mr. Compson. Benjy seems to have felt the family's imminent collapse, but he can do nothing only moan and cry. He cannot prevent the downfall of the Compsons and the moral decline in the family.

Through Benjy, readers can realize that the loss of love is the main reason that causes the moral decay in the modern society, and all other aspects of degeneration, social and moral,

apparent in the experience of Benjy's childhood and adult life, are symptomatic. In fact, Benjy himself is also a symbol, which represents the disability of the Compsons, even of the whole South. Thus, the reader can feel strongly a hint at the decay of the family and the South through Benjy (Burton).

3.2.3. The Polyphony in the Image of Caddy

In the final chapter of the novel, one expects Caddy, the second oldest of the Compson children, to be the narrator, since her three brothers narrated the previous chapters. It would only seem fair and logical that Caddy is given a voice in the novel to expose her point of view and to defend herself against the allegations made by the others' voices. However, Faulkner in his novel creates a new logic in which Caddy, as a woman, does not have voice in her patriarchal and social context.

In fact, Caddy is certainly the real heroine of the novel, while the author doesn't describe her image directly; being the focus and obsession of her brother's world, Caddy is indirectly depicted through the eye of her brothers (Mortimer 140). Faulkner makes the three brothers give an image together in their fantasy world from murkiness to increasing enlightenment. Caddy is designed to be viewed mostly by the three brothers, they all fill with some kind of unreliability and with a personal point of view, but the author creates a Caddy far from more significant than she could possibly be by herself (Yanli 38).

Caddy in *The Sound and the Fury* mirrors the image of a tender mother, a lover sister and a caddish sister; 'Faulkner revealed a mother-figure through Benjy, a lover-sister through Quentin, and a caddish-sister through Jason, how much she is any or all of these depends on perception, not reality' (Karl 328). These three "fantasy figures" brighten the image of Caddy. It is difficult to understand the image of Caddy because it was described through different situations.

3.2.3.1. A Tender Mother for Benjy

Caddy means a lot for Benjy, and the tender mother-figure maybe the greatest significant role that Caddy plays to her idiot brother, Caddy's maternal love gives Benjy special warmth, and Benjy in turn presents a vivid image of Caddy to the readers in his unique monologue. He suffers a lot of loss; the loss of linguistic ability, normal thinking, maternal love, his sister, and even his manhood. According to Wagner, "Caddy's presence or absence does create or diminish Benjy's life" (42). Caddy has a very strong hold upon Benjy's memory throughout the first section. Although Benjy is an idiot, he can feel pleasure and sorrow; he needs love. The other members of the family cannot offer him, but Caddy can. Only Caddy can understand him and satisfy his wants. Her love was unselfish and she doesn't beg requite of Benjy.

Through the progression of Benjy's narration, readers can see Caddy's image as a loving and patient instructor. Caddy frequently goes to bed with him like a mother until he is thirteen. Also, Caddy is Benjy's translator. It is Caddy who translates his moanings and belonging into legible sentences that both the readers and the members of the Compson family need to understand for him. "Although Luster and T.P talk to Benjy, Caddy defends his name change. She translates his moans for others and even instructs their mother on how to deal with him" (Lockyer 54).

The readers of the novel can see a touching and tragic scene, when Benjy always grasps the fence and waits vainly for his sister at the gate for years. He really does not know what he waits for, but he knows that something is missing. In effect, what Benjy demands from Caddy is love and tenderness, which are naturally biological needs that all children expect from their mothers.

In a word, Caddy is a tender mother for Benjy, and all beautiful things for him. Yet, the readers can also get their own insights from his narration, because Benjy is not able to interpret what happened exactly; he gives the readers only a distorted interpretation and disordered events. In this unique and special way, Benjy offers a vivid and relatively full image of Caddy to the readers.

3.2.3.2. A Lover Sister in Quentin's Fantasy World

In Quentin's eyes, Caddy is another image. Quentin's narration gives an image of Caddy from another angle. Quentin the first time mentions his sister Caddy indirectly through the image of 'Little Sister Death' (Faulkner 94). The unusual environment of the Compson family causes Quentin's such extremely special emotion for Caddy; he likes Caddy since his boyhood because he cannot get love from his parents. Quentin cannot get due love in such a family; only his sister Caddy understands him and loves him. She gives him his spiritual consolation. Quentin's childhood feeling for his sister is, therefore, eager and strong. His love is not only the love between brother and sister; just like Benjy, Quentin wants Caddy to only love him forever (Jianbo 58).

In Benjy's consciousness, Quentin develops a strong detachment to Caddy since they are children and they often play together; he has a fight with the boy who only wants to put a frog into Caddy's desk, and when Quentin first hugs a neighbor girl, Caddy is jealous and called that girl dirty (Faulkner 98). Even 'Herbert', Caddy's husband, is jealous of their intimate relationship. When Caddy's marriage invitation comes, Quentin is the most disappointed one in the family. Through his narration, readers can notice Quentin's strong emotional dependence on his sister.

According to Hollister, the stream of consciousness in Quentin's part shows that his love for Caddy goes too far and to some expansion. It is him that should be responsible for

Caddy's suffering. Quentin wishes their intimacy remain forever, but when Caddy grows up, her sexual awakening and passion carry out of his world of affection. The turning point is Caddy's loss of virginity, which destroys his ideal world. He can't accept this heavy blow, and even says to Caddy, 'I wish you were dead' (Faulkner 157). As an elder brother, his attachment with Caddy's loss of virginity is the result of his patriarchal values (Yanli 42).

Quentin hopes Caddy to be his lover and wants to escape with her. But because of the traditional Southern morality, in the realistic world, Quentin dares not to love Caddy. He is so weak that he cannot defend anything even him; he takes his life in the river finally and commits suicide. Therefore, readers can get a vivid description of Caddy's beautiful mind and detailed emotional information from Quentin's obsessive mood and tortured fantasy world caused by Caddy's loss of virginity. Caddy appears in his fantasy world all the time; in his consciousness and unconsciousness, Caddy appears partly hidden, partly visible; in this way Faulkner make the readers come closer to Caddy by a careful analysis. On one hand, Quentin's narration proves Caddy's kindhearted and maternal personality; on the other hand, it makes the image of Caddy as a maiden perfect (Lockyer 62).

3.2.3.3. A Caddish Woman in Jason's Self-Exposure

The reason why Caddy can appear in Jason's consciousness is because of his hatred for her, but not because of his affection or craze for Caddy. Jason insists that it is Caddy's impurity that makes him lose the promised decent bank job. In fact, in Jason's section, Caddy is not directly mentioned too much, she only appears directly once in his monologue; that is, 'getting a glimpse of her daughter. She is replaced by her daughter, Miss Quentin who experiences the same as her' (Mortimer 151). In most of Jason's narration, the calm and careful readers will obtain a correct view of Caddy from his revenge. In Jason's monologue, the way of describing Quentin the image of Caddy is absolutely straightforward. 'The

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circumstances and events become clearer and clearer. There is no haziness, no clouds of mystery in the mental world that Jason inhabits' (Edmond 69). After all, Jason is the only sanely Compson child who does not escape from the reality.

Jason insists that only money can give him the compensation for the loss caused by Caddy and her daughter; it is Caddy's failure in her marriage that makes him lose the opportunity of that bank job; similarly, it is also Miss. Quentin's impurity that leads him lose face in the town. However, Caddy feels sorry for that and once said to Jason, 'oh, that job, I'm sorry about that, Jason' (Faulkner 202).

Jason is not bothered by failing to live up to his ancestors' greatness, because he is completely unconcerned with the past. Unlike Benjy and Quentin, Jason is wholly focused on the present and on manipulating the present for future personal gains. He does recall past events, but only concentrates on the effect those events have on him now. Jason dwells on Caddy's divorce, for example, only because it has left him in a menial and unfulfilling job. However, despite Jason's constant attempts to twist present circumstances to his own benefit, he does not really have any aspirations (Faulkner 135). He maintains overwhelming greed, selfishness, and focus on future gain, but does not use these to work toward any higher goal. Jason is all motivation with virtually no ambition. After this section, readers can make their right critics and analysis about the image of Caddy without being deceived (Yanli 44).

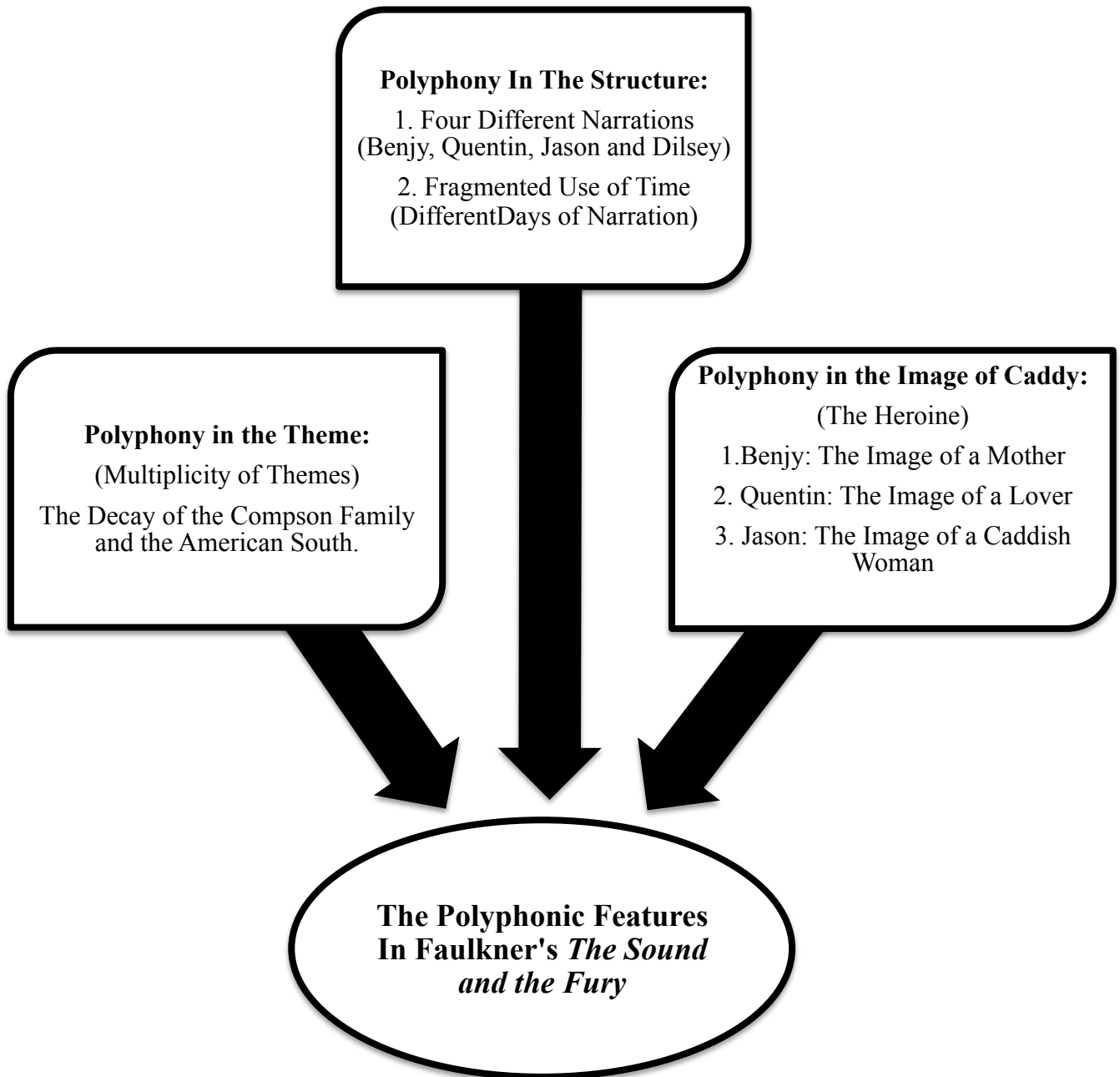


Figure 3.1. Polyphony in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

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This diagram introduces the Polyphonic features of Bakhtin in the novel of Faulkner. Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* represents the perfect Polyphonic novel that contains multiplicity of voices, themes and points of view. He used polyphony in the style of narrating the events of the novel; in other words, the novel is full of different perspectives told in a disordered chronology. Polyphony is noticeably found in the image of the main character, Caddy; each one of her brothers tells her story in a different way, using his feelings towards her.

Conclusion

This chapter mainly introduced William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury*, as one of his brilliant modernist works experimenting with voice to probe southern families under the stress of a family member loss. A detailed analysis of the use of the Polyphonic conception in the novel is given. Faulkner influenced many American Modern writers to use specific narrative techniques in their works such as fragmentation, stream of consciousness, disordered memory and the most important concept, which is polyphony. Faulkner's novel is full of the polyphonic features; polyphony in the structure, polyphony in the theme and polyphony in the Image of the heroine of the novel Caddy. The chapter attempts to lay the embodiment of polyphony in *The Sound and the Fury*.

General Conclusion

General conclusion

In accordance with the thesis statement, our task was to look at how Faulkner managed to use modernist techniques in his novel *The Sound and The Fury*. Throughout the dissertation, the main aim was to shed light on Faulkner's fictional narrative. The results of the research led to the conclusions that, indeed, Faulkner used innovative and modern narrative techniques in his novel *The Sound and the Fury*. Moreover, he employed the concept of polyphony, that is to say, he used different perspectives and voices to tell one story, which is Caddy's story.

In addition, Faulkner relied on fragmented narration to tell the story of the Compson family. We took a close look at the four narrations of Benjy who is mentally disabled, Quentin; a highly educated character, Jason and their servant Dilsey. This research has aimed to show how Bakhtin's concept of polyphony is used as a narrative technique in *The Sound and the Fury*.

Along this dissertation, three main questions were answered. The first part was descriptive and offered the literary background needed for this study and explained modernism. In addition, it investigated the use of major modernist literary techniques in William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury*. This chapter offered examples of modernist literary techniques such as fragmentation, stream of consciousness and multiple points of view. Faulkner narrated the story of the Compson family in a unique technique that represents their inner worlds rather than the outer one. The mind styles of the narrators in this research differ greatly; therefore, their style of narrative was relatively different.

The second part was analytical and descriptive chapter that explained the idea of Polyphony as a Modern technique used by the American writers. Bakhtin influenced the American Literature and brought new ideas and ways of narrating the novels. The chapter represented a close reading on some of the polyphonic novels, particularly, Virginia Woolf's

General conclusion

Mrs. Dalloway, James Joyce's *Ulysses* and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. The theory of polyphony mainly influenced the not only the American Literature, but also the literature of the whole world.

To put the polyphonic concept in practice, the last part focused on the embodiment of the polyphonic concept on William Faulkner's novel the *Sound and the Fury* in depth. In the structural design, Faulkner focused on a story narrated by four narrators in a disordered time-space background, and these four voices, evaluations and positions were equal, which form a multiple-voiced polyphonic structure. The work expressed the same theme from four different angles and voices of the characters, that is, the decay and collapse of the Southern aristocratic family the Compsons. In portraying the image of Caddy, the author never let the heroine Caddy appear on the stage directly, and her image was described through several different narrators' narration, because different narrators told different Caddy, thus, they mirrored the image of Caddy with a strong polyphonic color.

To conclude, it is quite reasonable to consider that *The Sound and the Fury* is a typical polyphonic novel, and the polyphonic interpretation, including the many-voicedness, the unique sense of time-space, the dialogue relationships, and the open-endedness of the novel absolutely helps the readers to get a further understanding of the essence of the work. Faulkner's perfect interpretation of the polyphony reflected in the novel, also proves his talent and greatness in the literary creation.

A future perspective is laid in the fact that this dissertation can be a starting point for further studies, especially concerning polyphony and different perspectives, not only in *The Sound and the Fury* but in all of Faulkner's works. At last, we hope that our study contributes to enrich our library, and that it maybe of a great help to English Department students interested in American Literature.

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Appendices

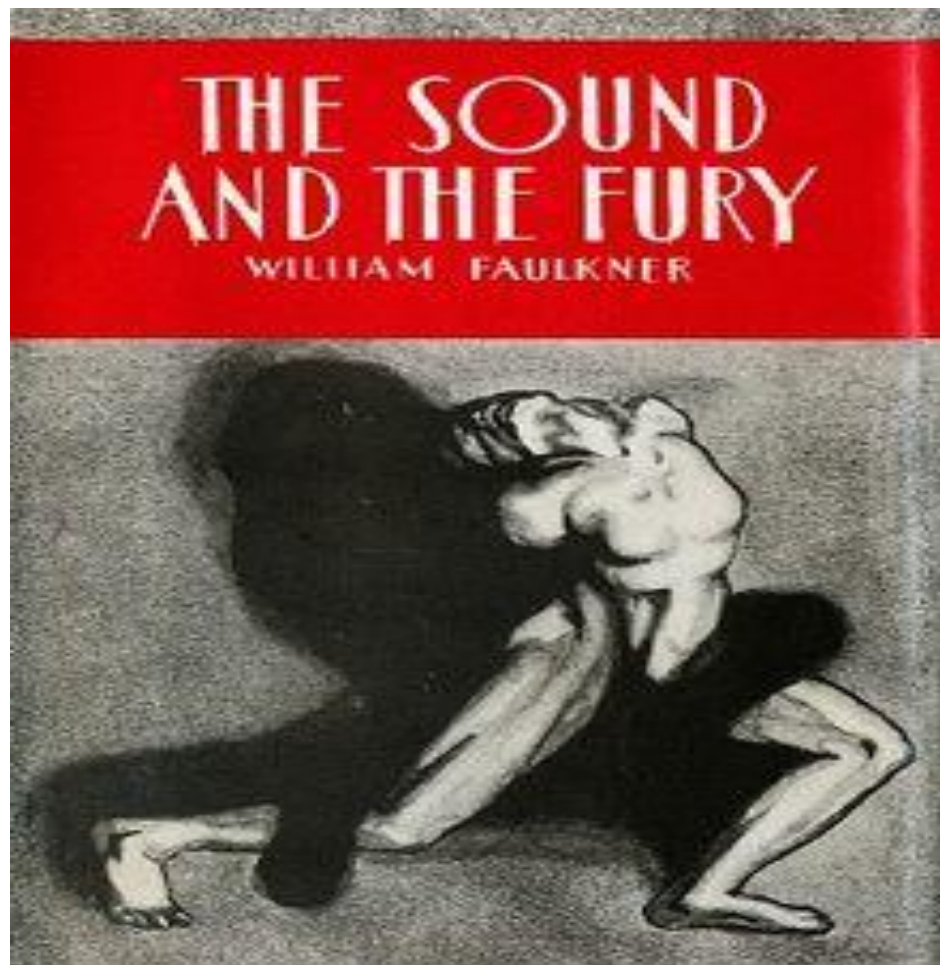
Appendix 01: William Faulkner (1897-1962)



William Harrison Faulkner was a Nobel Prize–winning novelist of the American South who wrote challenging prose and created a fictional Yoknapawpha county. Faulkner experimented brilliantly with narrative chronology, different points of view and voices, and a rich and demanding baroque style built of extremely long sentences full of complicated subordinate parts.

The best of Faulkner’s novels include *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *As I Lay Dying* (1930), two modernist works experimenting with viewpoint and voice to probe southern families under the stress of loosing a family member. Most of his novels use different characters to tell parts of the story and demonstrate how meaning resides in the manner of telling, as much as in the subject at hand. Faulkner created an impressive literary legacy and remains a revered writer of the rural American South, having expertly captured the immense complexities of both the region's beauty and its dark past.¹

¹ Faulkner, William. "William Faulkner". Biography, 2018, <https://www.biography.com/people/william-faulkner-9292252>. (Accessed May 20th 2018). 9292252. (Accessed May 20th 2018).



Appendix 02: Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975)



Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, a Russian theorist and philosopher of language whose wide-ranging ideas significantly influenced western thinking in cultural history. He wrote influential works such as *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* and *The Dialogic Imagination* in which he made significant contributions to the vocabulary of literary criticism, such as chronotope dialogism, polyphony and heteroglossia. These ideas and this new critical language allowed him to investigate the artistic style of the modern novel.

Résumé

Chaque époque littéraire revendique un style et une philosophie littéraire, auxquels de nombreux auteurs contribuent. William Faulkner est un écrivain américain bien connu dont la fiction est synonyme de modernisme littéraire. La présente recherche examine l'expérimentation littéraire moderne dans le roman de William Faulkner «Le Son et La Fureur». En conséquence, le but de cette recherche est d'étudier les techniques narratives modernes employées par Faulkner pour réaliser cette expérimentation avec les points de vue multiples. Plus précisément, cette recherche a étudié l'utilisation de la multiplicité des sons, ou comme on dit polyphonie, ainsi que la narration fragmentée dans le roman étudié. La théorie de polyphonie a été proposée par Mikhaïl Bakhtin à la littérature anglaise adopte de ses recherches à les livres de le Russisant Dostoievsky. A propos de Bakhtin, l'utilisation de multiplicité des sons individuels dans un roman constitue une vraie polyphonie. Cette recherche suggère que l'utilisation de différentes techniques modernes telles que le courant de conscience, la fragmentation et la multiplicité des sons servent tous Faulkner pour atteindre son objectif de présenter un roman très moderne. De plus, pour mieux réaliser ses techniques innovantes, Faulkner utilise quatre narrateurs radicalement différents. En fin de compte, la multiplicité des sons ou bien la polyphonie est employée efficacement dans le roman de Faulkner, « Le Son et La Fureur ».

ملخص

كل حقبة أدبية تستدعي أسلوباً فريداً و فلسفة أدبية تنسب للعديد من المؤلفين. ويليام فولكنر هو كاتب أمريكي مشهور يظهر خياله في الحداثة الأدبية. تدرس هذه الرسالة التجربة الأدبية الحديثة في رواية ويليام فولكنر "الصوت و الغضب". وبناء على ذلك ، فإن الغرض من هذا البحث هو دراسة تقنيات الرد الحديثة التي يستخدمها فولكنر لتحقيق هذه التجربة مع تعدد الأصوات والآراء. وبشكل أكثر دقة ، يسعى هذا البحث إلى دراسة استخدام تعدد الأصوات، او ما يسمى "بوليفونيا"، بالإضافة الى الأحداث المتجزئة في الرواية المدروسة. ميخائيل باختين اقترح نظرية بوليفوني طبقها على الأدب الإنجليزي أثناء بحثه في أعمال الكاتب الروسي دوستويفسكي. يرى باختين بأن استخدام العديد من الأصوات المنفردة غير المدمجة أن العمل شكل من أشكال بوليفونيا . يشير هذا التحقيق إلى أن استخدام تقنيات حديثة يخدم فولكنر مع تيار الوعي يدل على لتحقيق هدفه في تقديم رواية حديثة للغاية . بالإضافة إلى ذلك، من أجل تحسين تقنياته المبتكرة، يستخدم فولكنر أربعة رواة مختلفين بشكل جذري ، كل منهم يروي القصة من رأيه الخاص . في نهاية المطاف ، وظفت تقنية الأصوات المتعددة بشكل فعال في رواية فولكنر "الصوت والغضب".