



WILLIAM FAULKNER AS AN INNOVATIVE NARRATIVE ARTIST

Dr.S.M. Chillur, Associate Professor & HOD, Department of English,
Nehru Arts, Science, Commerce College & PG Centre, Hubballi -Karnataka, India

Abstract: This paper deals with the innovative narrative techniques employed by Faulkner in his writings. His experimentation with Stream of Consciousness technique, Multiplicity of narration, Unreliable narration, Interior monologues, View point, Symbolism, Allegory, Imagery, Irony, Flashback, Foreshadowing, Disordered time sequences, Counter point or Juxtaposition, in a unique manner makes him the leader to the new generation of fiction writers. All the above techniques can be witnessed in his works. The special emphasis has been given to these techniques in his Yoknapatawpha novels.

Index Terms - Yoknapatawpha, American South, Stream of consciousness, *As I Lay Dying*, *The Sound and the Fury*

Introduction

William Faulkner, one of the noble prize awardees for tremendous contribution in the field of literature has been recognized as the innovative artist as he has used variety of techniques including stream of consciousness to present the thoughts of his characters. Forty years after his death, 'The New York Times' ran an article citing Faulkner as "...more than of his time. He is not just our greatest twentieth century novelist....Faulkner is No-1"(Gussow 6). The author of great novels of Yoknapatawpha County, Faulkner deserves virtually every literary award, so, he has been honored the prestigious Nobel Prize for his literary writings in the year 1950. More honors were showered upon him, for his genius by establishing himself as a writer who viewed the American South as the right background to project his fiction. He holds a unique place in the history of American literature as an innovative artist.

The problems of race, identity, power, politics, and family dynamics, were preoccupied in his thoughts, he wished to present them to his readers through his fiction by using different narrative viewpoints. He found a better channel to artistically present them using his unique narrative techniques. Through his novels, short stories, and lectures, he influenced the readers which further proved to shape the understanding of the promises and problems of Yoknapatawpha County the background to all his novels.

William Faulkner demonstrated artistic talent at a very young age. He was influenced by English poets such as Robert Burns, Francis Thomson, A.E. Houseman, and Algernon Charles Swinburne. His earliest literary efforts were romantic, conscientiously modelled on those English poets. At a very young age, Faulkner made the acquaintance to two individuals who would play an important role in his future: a childhood sweetheart, Estelle Oldham, and a literary mentor and good friend, Phil Stone.

As I Lay Dying (1930) is nevertheless a masterfully written successor to *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). As with the earlier work, the novel focuses on a family and is told in Stream-of-Consciousness style by different narrators, but rather than an aristocratic family. The focus in this novel is on the lower-class farm laborers from Southern Yoknapatawpha County, the Bundrens, whose matriarch, Addie Bundren was dead and before her death she had asked to be buried in Jefferson, 'a nine days' hard ride away' to the north. The journey to Jefferson is loaded with perils of fire and flood (from the rain-swollen Yoknapatawpha River) as well as the family members' inner feelings of grief and loss.

Faulkner stresses the new generation writers to write using innovative thoughts, techniques that would make their writing different from their predecessors. He was awarded the 'National Book Award' for *Collected Stories*, and in May 1950, shortly after having delivered the commencement address at his daughter's high school graduation ceremony, French President Vincent Auriol bestowed the award of *Legion of Honor* upon Faulkner on April 6, 1961. As he completed the writing and revision of *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), Faulkner received several offers to stage the play, both in the United States and in France, but problems of financing prevented its full productions.

William Faulkner enriched the world of fiction with the variety of narrative techniques. It is very much witnessed in his novels and short stories. He transformed his 'postage stamp' of native soil into an apocryphal setting in which he explored, articulated, and challenged 'the old verities and truths of the heart'. The period of his literary work from 1929 to 1942 is called the 'period of the artistic excellence and achievement of Faulkner.' During this period, whatever Faulkner produced using innovative narrative techniques and devices helped him to bring out the best in him.

William Faulkner except for his peers, Herman Melville, and Henry James, has excelled himself as the most profound experimenter particularly in the novel that America has produced. In the beginning of his literary career, Faulkner was conventional in the use of style, plot, characterization, setting, symbolism, and structure. In the later period when he inherited and was influenced by the great writers of the twentieth century like T. S. Eliot and James Joyce, he started adopting the unconventional strategies and the most troublesome techniques which are best understood as adaptations and extensions of certain artistic experiments and innovations. In the use of narrative techniques, it is Faulkner who has presented a series of novel fragments, each in turn disintegrated by separable passages of verbal experimentation. Faulkner's techniques were not only fundamental to an understanding of the modernist form, but heralded much of what would come later. The appropriate nature of the episodes in a story, the jumping from one point of view to another, the lack of apparent connection between parts of a whole, use of unreliable narrators and multiplicity of narrators, show how Faulkner's texts helped establish those practices that would become his trade mark. According to Faulkner, "narrative technique is a literary technique that presents the thoughts and feelings of a character as they occur. Psychologically, narrative is the conscious experience of an individual regarded as a continuous, flowing series of images and ideas running through the mind" (Faulkner, 2000. n.pag).

Technical innovations or narrative techniques provided Faulkner different ways of unfolding narratives which came to him unconsciously and instinctively and provided him with a form of automatic writing. "The important fact would still remain: his techniques of ordering, whether conscious or unconscious, whether original or borrowed did create effects which help him to guide and control the reader's awareness of relationships between how he told a story and what he made that story mean" (Lawrence 17).

Faulkner has used a literary technique called 'Stream of Consciousness' to explore and expose the unspoken thoughts of his characters. The term Stream of Consciousness was first employed by William James, the American philosopher and psychologist, in his book *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) to express the "unbroken flow of feelings and thoughts in the waking mind," (James, n.pag) since then, it has now been adopted to describe a narrative method in the modern fiction. For example, Darl Bundren in *As I Lay Dying*, thinks: *I am I and you are you and I know it and you don't know it and you could do so much for me if you just would and if you just would then I could tell you and then nobody would have to know it except you and me and Darl* (Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* 50). In *The Sound and the Fury* when Quentin Compson remembers: *A face reproachful tearful an odor of camphor and of tears a voice weeping steadily and softly beyond the twilight door the twilight-colored smell of honeysuckle* (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 58)

These thoughts of the waking mind are the perfect examples of 'Stream of Consciousness' which is a literary technique widely used in narrative fiction to show subjective as well as objective reality. It reveals the character's thoughts, feelings, and actions, often following an associative rather than a logical sequence.

To uphold their suffering and problems and to make people in the world to understand the pitiful conditions faced by their fellow beings in the American South, Faulkner used a variety of narratives and perspectives in his novels and short stories in dealing with the life of the people and their worst conditions after the Civil War. The novels and short stories which he wrote during the great period of his literary excellence were all set in the small Southern County called 'Yoknapatawpha County' which stands as the microcosm of the American South.

William Faulkner innovated some techniques that suited his themes. Despite of all the adoptions and borrowings of techniques, Faulkner has emerged as an original master of the craft and has made a significant contribution to the art of fiction. It is Faulkner who has experimented extensively with various fictional devices in his work. As with James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, the reader has to learn the Faulknerian idiom, which is individual and therefore unintelligible to the uninitiated. His technique and experimented devices are difficult. He has not only modified to his particular need of the technique to that of European peers but also extended it. Faulkner has also extensively used the technique of interior monologue. His plots usually do not follow any chronological order. He holds up the revelations and creates nerve racking suspense. The plots within plots are created to add to the weight of its meanings. His stories are complicated and oblique. They unfold themselves in a manner which determines both the subjective world of the character as well as his relationship with the outer world. Faulkner compels the reader's maximum participation in his experience.

With the purpose of involving the reader in the process of thought and engage him in the act of unfolding the truth along with the character-narrators, Faulkner took advantage of an innovative narrative structure which utilized multiple viewpoints, most often expressed by a character's shift from conscious to unconscious thought, time-shifts that are not always presented sequentially, and Stream of Consciousness technique. Instead of recounting the events himself in the traditional sense, Faulkner employs a narrator within the tale, who reveals the plot, situated most often in the past based on his own experience or what the others tell him. He uses several character narrators to provide different insights into specific events.

In all his works, Faulkner has used his narrative techniques to express his views of man's position in the modern world. In his early works such as *Soldier's Pay* (1926) and *Mosquitoes* (1927) he views man's pathetic position in the universe with despair. He sees man as a creature incapable of rising above his selfish needs. But in later works Faulkner places man as potentially great. This point is repeatedly spoken by him in his memorable Nobel Prize acceptance speech; 'Man will not merely endure; he will prevail.'

Faulkner's experimentation of the narrative techniques has given him immense joy as a successful writer. During the time he wrote *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) he was undertaking a radical, new departure. Three of the four sections take the form of interior monologues. *As I Lay Dying* (1930) is entirely made up of a series of interior monologues radiating from the central story. In other books of the 1930's and 1940's the experiments were of many different kinds; chiefly stylistic in *Pylon* (1935), chiefly structural in *The Wild Palms* (1939) and both stylistic and structural in *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), *The Hamlet* (1940) and *Go Down Moses* (1942).

It is the study of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*, which has long been cited as an exemplary modernist work which provides a critical ground for placing Faulkner along with Eliot, Joyce, and Proust in the tradition of modernism. We see in them a variety of narrative experiments and innovations such as multiple voices, viewpoints, Stream of Consciousness, the disruptions of logical or temporal sequence, juxtapositions, repetitions, elaborate speculations on language, sophisticated rhetorical complexities, all easily found in the works of the modernist writers. Faulkner's use of the multiplicity of voices is the most audacious, and thus frequently noted as the most notably modernistic among the modern technical innovations. There are as many as fifteen different narrators who serve to coordinate the fifty-nine divided sections into a workable pattern of meaning in *As I Lay Dying*. These narrators work not only to move the action of the novel forward but also participate as characters in the main action of the novel. The funeral journey of the Bundren family provides the novel with singular depth and intensity.

Robert Penn Warren opines that Faulkner has systematically attempted to deal with the narrative techniques in his novels. "His experiments were developed out of – that is, were not merely applied to –anguishing research into the Southern past and the continuing implications of that past". (Penn Warren 5). Faulkner's techniques were not only fundamental to an understanding of the modernistic form but heralded much of what would come later. The imitation nature of the episodes in a story, the jumping from one point of view to another, the lack of apparent connection between the parts of a whole show how Faulkner's texts helped establish those practices that would become associated with the modernist novel. He has his characters engage in long extended monologues, often internal, in which their passing thoughts seem to appear in their totality. This technique allows Faulkner to write about the narrators and characters in his major novel *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936).

In addition to his narrative complexities and stylistic puzzles which are often objected as complicated, obscure and challenging, Faulkner frequently coins new words by combining some words together. Now and then, his long sentences, containing parentheses within parentheses, run on for pages without punctuation. At the same time, he drops some of capital letters to increase the obscurity of the thoughts. Michael Groden in his book *Literary Theory and Criticism* argues "that the lack of punctuation and often capitalization is significant for Faulkner as he attempts to break through the restrictions of the sentence to reveal confusion in character's mind" (Groden.n.pag).

His use of characterization, narration, foreshadowing, and symbolism are the four key factors which make Faulkner's work to be idealistic and something new to all readers. In some of his novels, Faulkner does not set the events according to the conventional natural and scientific lines; he merges the past, present, and the future with one another. Through the Stream of Consciousness technique, he allows his readers to penetrate into the depth of his characters' minds.

The narrative techniques which Faulkner has introduced in his fiction are as follows; Stream of Consciousness, Direct interior monologue, first person narrative mode, Omniscient point of view, Soliloquy, Multiplicity of narrative voice, Symbolism, View point or point of view, Allegory, Flashback, Imagery, Unreliable Narration, Foreshadowing, Temporal Repetition, Disordered time, Sequences, Counter point or juxtaposition, and Elaborate speculation are the techniques used by Faulkner.

In '*The Sound and the Fury*' and '*As I Lay Dying*', Faulkner employs the Stream-of-Consciousness technique in his characters through a series of thoughts, emotions, images, and memories in spontaneous and illogical order as they occur in life. Faulkner has Benjy, the mentally retarded son whose mother is ashamed of him, uses Stream of Consciousness. Nevertheless, for Benjy, time was not a continuation, it was an instant, there was no yesterday and no tomorrow, it all is this moment, it all is now to him. In Stream of Consciousness, the speaker's thought processes are more often depicted as overheard in the mind and is primarily a fictional device.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, William Faulkner uses Stream of Consciousness as a distinctly American flavor as he tells the story of the disintegration of a once aristocratic Southern family. True to the modernist ideal, *The Sound and the Fury* abandons traditional character and plot development in an attempt to mirror the fluid nature of time and memory. Benjy, a developmentally disabled thirty-three old, is the first of four narrators to tell the Compson family story.

Three of the four sections of *The Sound and the Fury* use interior monologue whereas the fourth section is narrated from an omniscient point of view through Dilsey. The first section is devoted to the Stream of Consciousness of Benjy, a thirty-three-year-old idiot. This section clearly qualifies as a direct interior monologue, representing as it does the psychic content and processes just as they exist before they are formulated for deliberate speech. As a matter of fact, Benjy is unable to speak, being forced to communicate "by howling, moaning, or remaining placid" (Volpe 87). The monologue ranges in time as far as Benjy's memory can carry him. These memory scenes, sometimes very long, sometimes only a flash within another memory, are triggered by external stimuli in the present, which is April seventh, 1928.

The second section of *The Sound and the Fury* which belongs to Quentin Compson is also in the form of an interior monologue used continuously. It is much nearer to the standard form of the Stream of Consciousness method, characterized by discontinuity, privacy, lack of inhibition, free associations and lack of punctuation and formal syntax. *How can I control any of them when you have always taught them to have no respect for me and my wishes, I know you look down on my people but is that any reason for teaching my children my own children I suffered for to have no respect Trampling my shadow's bones into the concrete with hard heels and then I was hearing the watch, and I touched the letters through my coat* (Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* 59)?

It may be noted that this passage is in italics. The monologues are used generally in this part to relive past scenes. The present time of this section dated June 2nd 1910 and contains monologues of even more discontinuity.

Quentin section, like that of Benjy, combines the psychic content with external action. The outer events actually are few in number but are detailed; covering his actions on the day he commits suicide. Such minute accounting for his actions provides a tangible framework for the continuous and erratic flow of consciousness.

In the Jason's section of this novel, we find another type of interior monologue. In keeping with his character, Jason's narration is much more coherent and saner but it is also self-revealing. There is a great deal of external action involving directly other characters who, until now, have been seen only through the consciousnesses of Benjy and Quentin. The passage which reveals the typical nature of this section is given below: *Well, Jason likes work. I says no I never had university advantages because at Harvard they teach you how to go for a swim at night without knowing how to swim and Sewanee they don't even teach you what water is. The ground was hardKeep your hands in your pockets, Caddy said, or they will get froze, you don't want your hands froze on Christmas, do you. It's too cold out there. Versh said. You don't to go out of doors". What it is now, mother said (The Sound and the Fury 2).*

Faulkner has used the first-person narrative point of view which is expressed through the narrator referring to the central character. We find third person voice in most of the first-person narratives. The story is told from the main character's point of view. This point of narrative sacrifices omniscience and omnipresence for a greater intimacy with one character in particular. In this case, the narrator is also a character who is part of the story, sometimes even the main character. First person allows the audience to see what this main character is thinking. In other words, it is called teller-character narration.

It is the omniscient author method which has made Stream of Consciousness technique more popular to the readers of novels of some kind. Consciousness or psychic life of the characters is the main subject of the description of this omniscient technique. It may be defined "as the novelistic technique used for representing the psychic content and process of a character in which an omniscient author describes that psyche through conventional methods narration and description" (Humphrey 34). This technique is sometimes combined with another basic technique of Stream of Consciousness within any novel as a whole and occasionally it is used alone in extended passages or in the sections of a novel.

The third person omniscient mode or point of view has been most commonly used historically. It is seen in countless classic novels including the works of Jane Austen, Leo Tolstoy and George Eliot and William Faulkner. The last section of the novel *The Sound and the Fury* is narrated by Faulkner through Dilsey, the maid servant of the Compson. Here, the tale is told from the point of view of a story teller who plays no part in the story but knows all the facts, incidents including characters' thoughts. An advantage of this mode is that it enhances the sense of objective reliability i.e., truthfulness of the plot. So, the narrator of this mode is the most reliable one compared to the other narrators.

The last section of Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* focuses on Dilsey, but the account is an exterior one told from an omniscient point of view. Perhaps this point of view is used to emphasize the objectivity with which Dilsey is able to view the Compson family. For example: *She entered the kitchen and built up the fire and began to prepare breakfast. In the midst of this she ceased and went to the window and looked out toward her cabin, and then she went to the door and opened it and shouted into the driving weather (The Sound and the Fury 160).*

Faulkner has used Juxtaposition technique in *The Sound and the Fury* as it shows it's facts into temporary fragments. The story is not told in a chronological order. The fragments told by the characters belong to different moments happened in the past which take their correct place not in the writing but in the memory of the reader. In continuation, to create a similar narrative technique Faulkner uses inner monologues. Faulkner does not identify the character exactly who is narrating because each narrator presents different reality. It's the reader's responsibility to set each part of the story to find the essence of the writer's message

Faulkner has used soliloquy as a Stream of Consciousness technique in *As I Lay Dying*. This novel uses in a successful combination of interior Stream of Consciousness with exterior action. In other words, both internal and external character is depicted in the novel. It is composed entirely of the soliloquies of fifteen characters. "The plot is reduced to a minimum of complexity. It concerns the preparations for a dying woman's burial and the attempts to get her buried after she is dead. Most of the characters are the members of her family. Sometimes they reflect only the surface attitudes they have toward the proceedings; at other times there is a complex attitude expressed which reveals more of the workings of the whole consciousness" (Humphrey 36). Obviously this novel is greatly concerned with the attitudes that lie on the threshold of consciousness. A single excerpt from it will not reveal the Stream of Consciousness quality as a whole, but it will allow us to know the details of the techniques. For example, Jewel one of the sons of dying woman Addie is stimulated by the sight of his brother, Cash, making the coffin under the mother's death room window:

It's because he stays out there, right under the window, hammering and sawing on that goddamn box. Where she's got to see him. Where every breath she draws is full of his knocking and sawing where she can see him saying See. See what a good one I am making for you. I told him to go somewhere else. I said Good God do you want to see her in it. It's like when she a little boy and she says if she had some fertilizer, she would try to raise some flowers and he taken the bread-pan and brought it back from the barn full of dung (As I Lay Dying 14).

According to the above explanation concerned, the manner in which soliloquy is used as a Stream of Consciousness technique is not surprising to find this passage more coherent than the passages of interior monologue examined. Even here, some unmistakable signs of Stream of Consciousness are present which one would not find in conventional soliloquy.

The introduction of 'multiple narrative' is considered to be the innovative technique employed by Faulkner. It means use of multiple narrators or a greater number of narrators to narrate a single plot in a particular novel.

William Faulkner's use of multiple narrators in his works such as *The Sound and the Fury* and *Go Down, Moses* would seem to create novels that would support a more complete and accurate view of the story. The result of the same is more truthful; something, which historians would like for their accounts of history. In the first novel, four narrators narrate the story from their own perspectives. The perspective differs from one narrator to another. In the second novel, fifteen narrators narrate the fifty-nine sections of the short story in their own narrative perspectives. These two novels are told from multiple points of view in the first and third person, although the latter uses a less conventional chronology.

Among the narrative techniques of William Faulkner, one prominent feature of his fiction is to bring into juxtaposition multiple points of view within the same tale. He makes a frequent use of several character-narrators who tell the story from their own points of view or particular stand points depending on their own interests and biases. It is Faulkner's interest to tackle the reader with a series of changing

viewpoints of the narrators who, in reporting and sometimes evaluating the same set of events, are showing widely different reactions to them. In this respect, the reader witnesses the same incidents several times from several points of view. As Longley observes, Faulkner "was so incorrigibly creative that a major episode in his work may be told two or three times and be presented in a different version in each" (Longley 144-150)

Comparing to the conventional and passive omniscient narrator, Faulkner's narrator is very good and active as he is given the opportunity to take an active and dynamic role in the course of the story that is revealed by a set of sensitive voices, who are directly or indirectly involved in its circumstances. Faulkner does not want to make his reader to understand the meaning easily as he wants to make his readers as the author of what he or she reads. Faulkner presents the story solely through the minds of its actors and attempts to make his reader fully responsible for understanding and going into the minds of the characters. In Aiken's view, the reader of Faulkner's works, "must simply make up his mind to go to work...to cooperate" (Conrad 200).

A closely related technique is the use of 'counterpoint' that is the juxtaposition or alternation of superficially unrelated matters, in such a way that aesthetic tension is built up between them. Faulkner's *The Wild Palms* is an excellent example in which two completely separate series of events take place in the alternative chapters. The three main stories that make up Faulkner's *Light in August* are not as closely tied as the two in *The Wild Palms*; the four narrators of *The Sound and the Fury* are so different in their attitude, temperament and point of view, that they give quite different versions of the situation. Similar effects are achieved by the several narrators of *As I Lay Dying and Absalom, Absalom!* by the various points of view in 'Hamlet' and by the assembly of loosely related stories in *Go Down Moses*, all these devices serve the same purpose.

In *As I Lay Dying*, Cora is the first to touch on Addie's eyes, which she calls *two candles when you watch them gutter down into the sockets of iron candlesticks* (*As I Lay Dying* 08). Peabody says the same thing: "*Her eyes look like lamps blaring up just before the oil is gone*" (*As I Lay Dying* 44). Then Darl puts in his very similar two cents to describe the moment of Addie's death: "*She looks at Vardaman; her eyes, the life in them, rushing suddenly upon them; the two flames glare up for a steady instant. They go out as though someone had leaned down and blown upon them*" (ibid. 47).

The use of flashback in *The Sound and the Fury* is to make the reader see the decline of a Southern family clearly through the memories of its character, Benjy. Readers must reconstruct the story by themselves because it is not in chronological order. The fourth part of the novel is told in the third person, by the Compson's maid Dilsey, this being the most coherent part of the narrative. Faulkner presents *The Sound and the Fury* as in real life, pieces of story, fragments that make no sense on their own.

Despite occasional flashbacks, and Faulkner's decidedly decorative writing style, the plot of *As I Lay Dying* is resolutely linear. The initial chapters chronicle Addie's death and the preparations for the funeral journey. The bulk of the chapters that follow present the journey and its obstacles. The last chapters outline the Bundrens' arrival in Jefferson (and in true Faulkner style, the ostensible purpose of the journey, Addie's burial, is not presented).

Interior Monologue is a form of Stream of Consciousness technique and also it is a kind of presenting a character's inner thoughts and emotions in a direct sometimes disjointed or fragmentary manner. This technique admits the presence of the author acting as a kind of mediator between the characters' mind and the reader, and at the same time keeping control over the whole story in its progress.

In *The Sound and the Fury* there are interior monologues that create a similar narrative technique. In this work the writer does not identify exactly who is narrating because each narrator presents a different reality. It's the reader's responsibility to set apart each part of the story to find the essence of the writer's message. This is a technique that the writer shares on his works.

Faulkner's monologists are also narrators of the physical events taking place around them. In many cases Faulkner creates characters who are themselves detached witnesses of the main action and whose monologues are interior in form only. Even in genuine Stream-of-Consciousness passages there are many shifts to ordinary discourse and conventional flash-back description. For example: "*Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree*" (*The Sound and the Fury* 2). Many of the interior monologues of *As I Lay Dying* are more rational in their appearance. Frequently these interior monologues seem like conscious and rational dramatic monologues. The monologues of neighbors and people met in or along the journey to Jefferson generally have the appearance of dramatic monologues, while the monologues of the Bundrens particularly those of Darl, Vardaman, Dewey Dell, and Jewel share the features of the interior monologue. Faulkner uses the interior monologues of his rural folk to convey the action in the novel. One of the interior monologues of Darl is, "*I cannot love my mother because I have no mother. Jewel's mother is horse*" (*As I Lay Dying* 89).

On more than one occasion, William Faulkner used an unreliable narrator for one of the perspectives in his novels. Faulkner's method of combining Stream of Consciousness, multiple narrators, and unreliable narrator's results in a narrative that is both a commentary on history and a reflection of history. In William Faulkner's landmark novel, *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner uses (Benjamin) Benjy Compson as the first narrative voice in the novel. Benjy is the mentally impaired youngest Compson child. The novel has no introduction to prepare the reader; it simply begins with Benjy's thoughts. "*You are not a poor baby. Are you. Are you. You have got your Caddy Haven't you got your Caddy?*" (*The Sound and the Fury* 6).

In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner has employed many unreliable narrators to reveal the progression of the novel. One of the most interesting of these narrators is the youngest Bundren child, Vardaman. Like the rest of his family, Vardaman is mentally unstable, but his condition is magnified due to this lack of understanding of life and death. He doesn't grasp the basic concepts of life and death. He attempts to understand his mother's death as one of the most compelling aspects of the novel. Over the course of the novel, Vardaman attempts to rationalize his mother's death through animals, particularly a fish. The following thoughts of Vardaman indicate that he is an unreliable narrator. "*But my mother is a fish. Vernon seen it. He was there. Jewel's mother is a horse, Darl said. Then mine can be a fish, can it, Darl? I said. Jewel is my brother. Then mine will have to be a horse, too, I said. Why? Darl said. 'if pa is your pa, why does your ma have to be a horse just because Jewel's is?'*" (*As I Lay Dying* 94-95).

Towards the conclusion, we can notice how Faulkner as an innovator of narrative techniques has succeeded in his novels and short stories to make them easy and convincing to the readers. At the same time, he has tried to bring out the problems and inner sufferings of the people of the American South. In the modern American literature, he is arguably the only writer who has made the best use of

these techniques successfully and skillfully. Without proper setting and background, a writer cannot write any novel or stories. Here, in Faulkner's novels, American South and Yoknapatawpha County, the fictional land created by Faulkner is the major setting for his novels.

References:

- Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton, Princeton UP, 1953.p. 536.
- Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961. p. 397.
- Cowley, Malcolm. *The Portable Faulkner*. Penguin Classics, 1977. Web.n.pag.
- Conrad, Aiken. *William Faulkner: The Novel as Form*. Atlantic Monthly, 164 New York: Meridian Books, 1958. p. 200-207.
- Frederick J. Hoffman & Olga W. Vickery, East Lansing: *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*. Ed. Michigan State University Press. 1960. p. 225-232.
- Faulkner, William. *Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech*. 1950.
- **---Sartoris, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929. p.255.**
- --- *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1987.p.2, 4, 5, 6,13,89,95,152,160,312.
- **---As I Lay Dying. New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1967. p.13, 14, 43, 47,50,94,95,155,159,347.**
- Faulkner, William. Qtd in American Heritage ® *Dictionary of the English Language*. Fourth Edition. 2000. Web.n.pag.
- Geismar, Maxwell. *Writers in Crisis: The American Novel. 1925-1940*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942. p. 154-15.
- Groden, Michael. *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*. 2nd Edition, with Michael Groden and Imre Szeman 2004. Electronic Edition, Web.n.pag.
- Gussow, Alan. *Moving Toward the Center of Life: Art and Ceremony in Sustainable Culture*, New York Times IC #5. Spring. 1984. p. 6.
- Humphrey, Robert. *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*. University of California Press, Berkeley Los Angeles, London. 1954. p.34, 36.
- James, Williams. *The Principles of Psychology* 1890. Web.www.fluigent.com
- Lawrence, Thompson. *Selected Letters of Robert Frost*. New York: Holt, 1964. p.17.
- Longley, John L. *Faulkner Villains. In The Tragic Mask: A Study of Faulkner's Heroes*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963. p. 144-150.
- Marling, William H. *Words and Images in Faulkner's As I Lay Dying*. Modernism American Salons, 1988. Web. n.pag
- Meriwether, James B. Ed. *Essays, Speeches, and Public Lectures*. Random House, New York: 1965.
- Penn Warren, Robert. *Faulkner: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Prentice Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs New Jersey. 1966. p.5.
- Ross, Stephen M. *Fiction's Inexhaustible Voice: Speech and Writing in Faulkner*. Athens: U. of Georgia .1989. p. 125, 126.
- Vickery, Olga W. *The Sound and the Fury: A Study in Perspective, A Critical Interpretation*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964. p. 28-49.