CHAPTER IV

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

SECTION I: WALKER PERCY

The narrative technique that Percy uses in his six novels is highly ingenious in the field of novel writing. His main asset as a novelist lies in what Ashley Brown calls "his extraordinary observation of the social scene in the South". He sees young men in the South suffering from a malaise in the midst of a postwar consumer society where appearance is everything. It reflects in his choice of his fictional protagonists, as a narrative strategy, who suffer from a malaise, a disease of which they have become acutely aware. In THE MOVIEGOER Binx Bolling suffers from constant insomnia and shaking terror. Will Barrett of THE LAST GENTLEMAN is given to fits of déjà vu and amnesia. The psychiatrist-hero of LOVE IN THE RUINS, Dr. Thomas More, has morning terror, disorientation and suicidal tendencies. Lance Lamar of LANCELOT suffers from madness and kills his wife and her lovers. Will Barrett of THE SECOND COMING sustains blackout and entertains suicidal tendencies too. Dr. Thomas More of THE THANATOS SYNDROME occasionally suffers from deja vu. The malaise of these protagonists has to do with the presence they feel of the past in their lives. Percy uses the malaise as a metaphor implying the protagonist's preoccupation with
his past.

Percy has special intention in using metaphor in his novels. Allen quotes from Percy’s comments on the use of metaphors: “In his essay “Metaphor as Mistake” Percy writes that all metaphors are literally nonsensical, but that out of their nonsense comes poetry, for in language, “beauty derives from ambiguity.” The metaphors enhance beauty of the novel while extending the central issues. The metaphor of ‘malaise,’ of ‘search’ and of ‘journey’ do the same things in Percy’s novels. Percy’s fictional characters are often involved in a search. Their search consists of their attempts to discover into the past new clues of their lives, clues that will help to discover the future. It makes all Percy’s fiction, what Hardy calls, “quest fiction”. The metaphor of search or quest is closely linked with the metaphor of journey. Commenting on the issue Mary Sweeney says that “In Percy’s novels there is the feeling of a journey, of a progress, of his characters being in search of something.” The journey of the central characters is rendered in existential terms borrowed from the existentialist philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. The use of existential terms such as “repetition” or “return” reveals character’s preoccupation with the past. By using philosophical framework, according to Alan T. Belsches, Percy can help his reader “understand the importance of memory or a return to the past.”
The use of memory as a narrative device becomes obligatory on Percy's part since memory is a carrier of the past. The central characters are often visited by their past memories in Percy's novels. The memories are aroused in the central character's minds by the strategic device. "In a manner like Proust", Alan Belsches adds, "Percy uses sensory stimuli to arouse memories in his character's mind." All the time the memories are closely related to certain places and time. The characters recall the memories of a certain time when they come to a certain place. The memories of the central characters are presented through the device of gradual recollection or flashback technique. In his four novels, Percy has made the central characters the narrators of the stories. The first-person-narrator-protagonists are given to brooding upon their personal and family history. It is so because they belong to the Southern community in which remembering is central act that Percy knows better. In this regard Alan Belsches writes that "the act of remembering remains central for his characters in the southern community." As a result, the narrative that develops out of the first-person-narrator-hero's remembering becomes more reflective and distorted in sequence. Though Percy uses the third person narration in two novels dealing with Will Barrett, he uses degrees of indirect discourse enough to identify the narration with their protagonists. There is no doubt that the first - person point of view is the most
favoured technique to Percy so that he begins a series of his novels with THE MOVIEGOER having the first person point of view.

The text of THE MOVIEGOER reveals its writer’s skill in presenting the central issues through a technique that complies with it. He appropriately employs the first - person - narrator - hero, Binx Bolling, who is given to brooding upon his personal and family past making the novel first-person retrospect. In the opening first two pages of the novel, we learn a great deal about Binx’s character and mentality. He is a freely self-revealing narrator. He begins the narrative in the present and in the following paragraphs, he treats us to reminiscences of his childhood as well as of the recent past. Binx tells, “This morning I got a note from my aunt asking me to come for lunch” and the next paragraph he begins with “I remember when my older brother Scott died of pneumonia” (p.3). Using this technique Percy intends to show Binx’s, what Hardy calls, “orientation to the past.” The past wells up in Binx’s consciousness by force which result into his suffering from constant insomnia and shaking terror. Here insomnia is used as a metaphor in order to emphasize Binx’s obsession with his family past. He is an insomniac for the family past visits him again and again.

Binx’s past is tucked into the present narrative by using the cinematic technique of flashback which he knows better. The use of

reminiscences or flashback is absolutely necessary in the given narrative, which covers only one week of hero’s life, because we can learn more about his past through this technique. The past reminiscences entering the narrative make the book more episodic. In words of Jack Tharpe, “THE MOVIEGOER is an episodic first-person recit by John Binkerson (Binx) Bolling.”9 Percy makes the novel episodic on a purpose. These fragmentary episodes reveal Binx’s complicated consciousness. Commenting on this issue Lewis Lawson says that “these seemingly fragmentary episodes when pieced together, yield a clear picture of Binx’s complicated consciousness”10, Allen quotes. On the structural level these episodes are tied together with a metaphor of search. It is a sustaining metaphor used in the novel to describe Binx’s preoccupation with his own past. Binx’s search has many dimensions and one of them is father search. He searches into the past for the knowledge about his father. Percy describes Binx’s search in existential terms borrowed from Soren Kierkegaard.

The existential terms of Kierkegaard form a matrix, a frame in which Percy conceives Binx’s character. The existential terms used in the novel are not for what Kierkegaard thought of them but “what he (Binx) thinks and says they mean,”11 James Walter comments. In the light of existential philosophy, the search undertaken by Binx has two dimensions, “vertical” is the one and “horizontal” is the other. During
his vertical search Binx has been preoccupied with the problems of time so that he reads great books, and particularly, books on history. Then he progresses to the horizontal search which involves such existential terms as “return” or “repetition” and “rotation.” The term “return” implies a backward movement into the past in order to integrate one’s past with the present. “This repetition ironically, includes the search for his father,”12 Jac Tharpe adds. Binx’s act of moviegoing, an extended metaphor, far from being an escape, is one of the ways in which he conducts his horizontal search in time and space for clues. The movies become part of his search because he thinks they are onto search, they screw up his search. The metaphor of moviegoing is important because it stands for Binx and his world. “In The Moviegoer, the movies provide metaphors and similes for Binx and his world,”13 Pamela Freshney writes. It is in the movie theater that Binx first discovers place and time; the movies help him in finding genuine locality as they help him in his search.

Binx’s search is sustained in the novel by the use of the metaphor of journey. Through journey, he can achieve “return” into the past. In this sense, his journey to his mother’s fishing camp is his return into the past to know from his mother about his father. A “return” occurs as Binx learns from his mother that his father, too, pursued a search and that like his son, the father was a moviegoer. Here Binx’s search for
father fits the very terms "return" or "repetition." Similarly, Binx's train ride to Chicago with Kate and his bus ride back to New Orleans are journeys designed to illustrate his return to the past. His meeting with his old friend Harold in Chicago is not just a return to the past but it is reexperiencing the past as well. Percy's use of existential terms to describe the nature of his protagonist is appropriate because Binx feels alienated from his history and tradition of the South. He sees his alienation in terms of the alienation of the Jews. His alienation raises the question of his belonging, where does he belong? In order to find it out, Binx undertakes the search into the past contributing narrative progress.

The search of Binx, in other sense, adds the element of a detective story to the fictional narrative. He enjoys playing detective, finding more about his father. Like detective he holds proposition that there is something in the past that he needs to know. Percy devotes much of space in the novel to Binx's role as a detective. Making him act like a detective, Percy focuses on his protagonist's stance to the past. The other strategy of showing the central character's stance to the past is Binx's relation with his Aunt Emily. She is the past personified and her presence in the novel is the past moving around the protagonist. Carrier of the past values, she urges upon the capable Binx the performance of one's duty. To Emily the life of 'forms' or 'codes' is the only life that one
can have. When she speaks, her speech is saturated with the language of 'forms' such as "grace" "honor" etc. Her ideal of human behavior is the Roman warrior Marcus Aurelius. Emily is the past stretching in the present therefore Binx's terms with her can be seen as his stance toward that past. Emily exercises her influence on Binx and it is clearly seen in his attempt to comply with the ideal behavior necessary for a gentleman. He becomes a soldier and goes to fight the Korean war. The aura of the past in the person of Emily clutches at Binx throughout the novel.

In *THE LAST GENTLEMAN*, Percy adopts the narrative strategy different in several ways from its predecessor, *THE MOVIEGOER*, to render the central issues. He shifts from the first-person narrator of the earlier novel to an omniscient point of view of the third person because *THE LAST GENTLEMAN* has the protagonist who suffers from the illness of mind. The change in narrative strategy facilitates Percy to view his central character, Williston Bibb Barrett, from a distance as a sort of psychoanalytic case study. Barrett suffers from deja vus and amnesia and this illness is the concern of the narrative. Amnesia is used as metaphor in order to describe Barrett's stance towards his personal as well as regional past. He experiences the attacks of compulsive memory from the past from which he wants to escape, and the

---

particular form of amnesia offers him temporary relief from that memory. To Eric Jones the particular form of amnesia, which allows him to forget immediate past, "frees him from the responsibility of acting in accordance with his heritage." 14 Percy is so much concerned with Barrett’s preoccupation with his past that he makes the novel’s epigraph comment upon it.

The novel’s epigraph from Kierkegaard’s Either/Or, "If a man cannot forget, he will never amount to much" (p.1), is appropriately quoted to signal Barrett’s attempt to block from his memory the idea that he is the scion of a race now gone. The epigraph works as a preceding metaphor which directs to the novel’s thrust. The action of the narrative springs from Barrett’s attempts to escape from the haunting memory of the past, and his physically fleeing from the South to the North is a part of those attempts. Much of the narrative technique of the novel depends upon Percy’s effective use of memory as a carrier of the past into the present. Memory is used with its relation to the place where Barrett experiences that attacks of memory. He flees to the North because, as the narrator tells us, the South has places “redolent” with memory and he wants not to remember. The South is the place where Southerners experience history and this has to do with their sense of place. Even there in the North, Barrett’s haunting sense of the past remains intact consequently the memory from the past wells up in
his mind. Through the use of memory, Percy presents Barrett as a Southerner in whom history is internalized in the form of memory up to the mark where it assumes a psychopathetic quality. In words of Lewis Simpson, "In *The Last Gentleman* the internalization of southern history as memory in young Will Barrett assumes a psychopathetic quality."  

The use of memory requires a certain technique through which the event in the form of memory may be created. Percy employs the flashback technique to create the event that chases Barrett in the form of memory. It is through memory that Barrett’s “return” to the past is achieved. A number of times he wants to return to the past in order to confront it and get relived from it. But his final “return” to the past, through memory, does not occur until he physically confronts the place where the event of memory happened. As he stands before his father’s house, Barrett is revisited by the memory prompted this time by the laughter of his aunts watching television on the porch. Thus Barrett’s final “return” to the past through memory is made possible by his physical “return” to his father’s house in the South. His physical return to the South is accomplished by using the metaphor of journey which is conceived as existential journey of the protagonist. It is a journey in search of roots to find meaning. Barrett’s ailments are directly connected to his dislocations, his fleeing from the South, his lack of
sense of place. Percy uses places in his novels, what Mark Johnson calls, “to represent the condition of the protagonist or of his society.”16 Ultimately, Barrett’s search is a search for place where his father committed suicide.

Barrett’s search for place involves his physical return to his father’s house. Percy creates the Vaught family that makes Barrett’s return to the South possible by contracting him for its services. He fails to join that family at the appointed hour so he begins his journey to the South as he chases the Vaughts. He starts his journey from Manhattan through New Jersey into Levittown, then down South through Virginia tidewater, over to Alabama and Luisiana and thence through Texas to New Mexico. The novel becomes picaresque – episodic as Barrett visits strange people at strange place during his journey. Paul Gatson calls the book “a picaresque novel that can almost be plotted on a map.”17 The episodes are designed only to show the past’s influence on Barrett. The episodes like Levittown and Forney Aiken, for example, are designed to reveal Barrett’s obsession with his gentlemanly past. In those episodes, he acts like his father and grandfather did in a tight situation. Though the novel becomes more episodic, all those episodes are linked by the motif of return to his father’s house. The motif is fulfilled when Barrett returns to his father’s house and allows the memory to come. There is another motif used to map Barrett’s preoccupation with the past, and
that is motif of dance. It serves as an index of Barret's relation to his Southern past. Commenting on the issue Brian Flaherty says that "the dancing motif which runs throughout THE LAST GENTLEMAN provides a fitting index of protagonist Will Barrett's nostalgic attachment to... his Southern heritages." Living in an age of sexual license, Barrett looks back to an era of less social and moral ambivalence. He recalls how, even during the worst of the Civil War, Confederate officers attended balls and cotillions. Even he cites a letter from his forefather, an infantry colonel reading how he met Miss Sally Trumball last night. In fine, the dance motif reveals how Barrett thinks of the simple decorum of the Old South as a pure bliss.

In LOVE IN THE RUINS, Percy returns to the first-person-present narrative technique used earlier in THE MOVIEGOER. Even the protagonist of the novel Dr. Thomas More claims to have similarities with his predecessors in the matter of mental problems. More too suffers from an illness of depression and morning terror. He tells of himself, "I am subject to attacks of elation and depression, as well as occasional seizures of morning terror" (p.11). His mental sickness has to do with his personal past and works as an extended metaphor in the narrative. More has a traumatic past revealed through the

---

conventional flashback technique which is fairly necessary in this narrative covering only four days in his life. Percy begins the action of the novel in the present, has his hero become unconscious, then flashes back to the past before returning to the present at the novel’s end. Since in the flashback technique everything is recollected, Percy uses a device of gradual recollection for that. This technique helps Percy in extending the narrative beyond its temporal limit. The narrative becomes more distorted in sequence as More recollects the pieces from his past life. This distortion is deliberate since Percy presents through it, what Hardy calls, "a naively inverted historicist mentality." More opens his narrative in the present and then goes back to the past related to his beloved daughter Samantha’s death and his wife Doris’s running away with a heathen Englishman.

The reality of Samantha’s death from the disease neuroblastoma is unbearable to More consequently he develops depression and morning terror. More tells, “My daughter died, my wife ran off with a heathen Englishman, and I fell prey to bouts of depression and morning terror” (p. 20). His times with his daughter that he describes as “The best of times” (p. 12) ends with her death leaving him alone in a role of mythmaking. As a result More sees American history and his past in mythic terms. He heightens his own past into a particular myth of death and loss. He sees Lola, one of his girls, in terms of the Southern agrarian
myth; to him she represents “Gone with the Wind.” He thinks the present times in terms of myth of apocalypse used as a pervasive metaphor in the narrative of the novel. This metaphor is introduced very early at the opening page of the novel. “Here I sit, in any case, against a young pine, broken out in hives and waiting for the end of the world” (p.13). The subtitle of the novel, *The Adventures of a Bad Catholic at a Time Near the End of the World* involves the metaphor of apocalypse.

The apocalypse is a metaphor of More’s vision of the world which encompasses the narrative structure of the novel. His description of signs of apocalypse begins with “The center did not hold” (p.18) an allusion to Yeats’s poem “The Second Coming”20, describing the end of the present civilization. More has already experienced the end of the world in the death of his beloved daughter, and this traumatic past gives way to his apocalyptic vision. He projects his interior apocalypse on to the external world. Percy uses similes and symbols in order to describe the approaching end of the world. As he observes the surrounding, he sees obvious signs of disorder. The interstate slab is cracked, vines are sprouting from it; poison ivy has captured the speakers posts at the local drive-in-movie; cars are left rusting in parking lot. There are clashes between black and white; the parties are politically polarized, and the Church is divided, too. These signs for
More furnish a tangible evidence of cultural disintegration. The
violence of imagery, plot and narrative voice make the novel
powerfully apocalyptic. The end of the world foreseen by the
protagonist is the end of the world in his consciousness. So, the
metaphor of apocalypse is one that explores the mind of More.

The other metaphor used in the narrative is the metaphor of
search. More’s quest for harmony in the chaotic world is designed to
show his orientation to the past. One of the dimensions of his quest is
theological - he is longing for the world of innocence and bliss as is
suggested in the world lapsometer. It is a device for measuring lapses
and is designed to diagnose a kind of “second fall” which modern man
suffered. More renews his efforts to restore mankind to a primal Eden
through his invention. Ideally, this lapsometer will lead man back to
paradise; it will allow man to reconcile body and spirit, control love and
hate, anxiety and ennui, depression and exaltation. More’s quest for
harmony carries him into the diverse areas of science, religion and
history. He feels drawn also to the Middle Ages and the unclouded
moral certainty of his namesake, Sir Thomas More, who likewise
dreamed of utopian existence. During his search, More reads books on
history in order to find out the roots of the present apocalypse. He
learns from his study that apocalypse is a historical process and cannot
be stopped. His search is conceived in existential terms. Percy embeds
the existential idea in the narrative in order to tell the importance of "return" to the past for the protagonist.

More thinks him a wayfarer like Robinson Crusoe and travels through four - zoned world of Fedville, the swamp, town and Paradise Estate- "an ironic symbol of human longing for prelapsarian happiness," Kennedy comments. His "return" to the prelapsarian happiness is made possible by the creation of Art Immelman's character. Being evil himself, Art plans to use the lapsometer for evil purpose of creating anarchy in society. In his attempts to foil Art's evil plan, More prays to his historical namesake, Sir Thomas More. His prayer is a sign of his "return" to the old faith because towards the end of the novel, More is seen enjoying a Christmas Eve with his new family.

Linda Hobson uses the terms "first-person confession of a madman" to describe the narrative technique of LANCELOT. The term is appropriately used because the text is an outcome of the facts of the protagonist, John Percival. The use of confessional mode, as part of narrative strategy, suits to the narrative whose protagonist-cum-narrator is burdened with the past and tries to unburden it by confessing it to the other. The protagonist Lancelot's confession takes the form of a long and very personal monologue as the

All subsequent references in the text are to this edition.
listener John Percival keeps quiet during its course except on the last two pages of the novel does he speak in monosyllabic words “Yes” and “No” (pp. 256-57). Except for Percival’s responses, everything in this novel according to Hardy belongs to, “the form of the dramatic monologue”

Basically dramatic monologue is a technique used to reveal the character of a person speaking it. Allowing Lancelot to speak monologue, Percy leaves the reader to see the mind of the protagonist. Lancelot’s entire monologue is a meditation of his own past. It reveals him as a Southerner preoccupied with his aristocratic lineage. His is a mind closed within history as is suggested by the use of setting. Percy makes Lancelot speak from a solitary cell in a Center for Aberrent Behavior symbolizing Lancelot’s living in a world of the past not shared by the others. The locale of the novel brings one of the central metaphors into focus. It is a place where Lancelot is undergoing treatment for illness of his mind called madness.

The metaphor of madness unfolds Lancelot’s mind fully preoccupied with the heroic ideals of his family past. Trying to live by those ideals, he kills his infidel wife and her lover and then sets the Belle Isle on fire. By society’s standard, the act of Lancelot is the act of a madman and his romantic obsession with the past ideals is a form of madness. The voice we hear in the novel is the voice of a madman confessing what he has done. Linda Hobson’s comment on the nature of

228
Lancelot is worth to quote here. She says, "As the narrator or confessor, Lance is truly mad, has been made so by trying to live by Stoical, ethical values in an aesthetical, relativistic society." Being mad himself, Lancelot faces difficulties in remembering the past. However, to him those difficulties are due to the banality of the past, and he sees the past intolerable. The narrative that comes up from him is in the form of fragmentation. The development of the narrative largely depends upon Lancelot’s remembering and structuring the past into an ordered form. The narrative becomes fragmentary as he recollects the pieces from the past and puts them down into a sequence. "Like a man assembling a jigsaw puzzle," Dowie comments, "Lancelot picks up and puts down the pieces of his past, trying to construct the fragmentary into a whole." Since the act of remembering is central in the narrative, the protagonist relies heavily upon memory.

Percy uses memory as a narrative device which flashbacks in Lancelot’s mind the past that he wants to reconstruct. While reconstructing it, he sees his wife’s adultery in relation to his childhood experiences of his father’s corruption and his mother’s possible affair with Uncle Harry. The acts of remembering and organizing the past become for Lancelot the means of coming to grips with the banal and intolerable past. It is a way to restore himself to some sort of sanity. Although he declares the past as banal, he knows that it contains the
clue to the present and needs to be searched. Lancelot’s search is
designed only to show the extent to which he is obsessed with the
heroic ideals of the past. His search, though negative one is born of his
daughter’s blood type “O” which is the proof that he is not her father.
The whole novel is built around Lancelot’s discovery that Siobhan
cannot be his daughter because of her incompatible blood type. He
begins his search to find out when his daughter was conceived and
where he and his wife were at that time. His obsession with the blood
relationships is his attempts to live like his ancestors. In words of Allen,
“In his desperate attempts to identify with his antebellum ancestors, he
exhibits an intensely southern obsession with blood relationship.”27 His
search is divided into two phases: one stretching up to killing of Margot
and burning the house afterwards; second leading to find clues into the
past.

The first phase of Lancelot’s search is intended to see sin and it
directs the development of the novel. Percy patterns the search on the
Holy Grail quest described in the medieval Arthurian legend. There is a
Corresponding thread between the action of the novel and the medieval
quest. Brinkmeyer, Jr., points out the similarities between Lancelot’s
quest and the ancient one. He says, “Percy strikes corresponding chords
between the action of the novel and the medieval legend of the quest for
the Holy Grail.”28 However, Percy twists his protagonist’s search
making it for unholy grail - to see sin in his wife’s bed. Still Percy intends to tell here that these two quests - Ancient and the modern - are meant to revive the heroic act. Nourished on the heroic ideals of the South, Lancelot sees his wife’s infidelity a cause enough to perform the heroic act. The code of chivalry demands decisive action only after the truth of the event is revealed. In order to find the truth of his wife’s infidelity, Lancelot searches the documents, receipts and bills of the past that show Margot’s absence in the house during the period the daughter was conceived. Once it is made clear then Lancelot’s search is directed to find out the daughter’s real father. He plays as a detective working on his case very meticulously. Like in his earlier novels, Percy uses the elements of detective story both for thematic and structural purpose.

Lancelot’s single - minded detective - like pursuit leads him to employ Elgin, his black servant, to spy on his wife. He asks Elgin to prepare videotape of the activities that will happen in Margot’s room. Any step taken to save honor is justified, even asking the servant to peep into his wife’s bedroom. Lancelot’s search which is originated from his obsession with the heroic ideals, leads him to kill his wife Margot and her lover. The act of Lancelot’s killing his wife can be seen as an act of revenge. Seen from this perspective, the story of the novel becomes a tale of brutal revenge of a husband on his wife. This element
of revenge tale, too, presents Lancelot as a Southerner preoccupied with the code of honor. Killing his wife and burning the house mark the end of the first phase of his search. The second phase of Lancelot's search begins in a cell of a New Orleans asylum where he is admitted, after the Belle Isle incident, for his insanity.

The second phase of Lancelot's search is born out of his immediate need of organizing the fragmentary past. He has to remember the past though banal and intolerable in order to give it a form or shape. His search, through remembering and organizing the past, is the only means to come to terms with the past. As a result, the narrative becomes an absolute recollection of the past events. In Lancelot's search, Percival is an important figure because it is he who screws up his search into the past. Or, rather Percival is a listener to the confessions of a madman. Percival's time-to-time visit to the cell encourages the patient to speak uninterruptedly since Percival keeps dumb. The quest convinces Lancelot that the present age is the age of paltriness and should be rejected. Dismayed of the present age, Lancelot wants to build a new society in that old womblike seat of Southern glory and defeat, the Shenandoah Valley. The new society as Lanckot conceives will be based on the codes of courtesy and chivalry by which the noble men of the past acted. Lancelot's conception of a new society strongly reveals his obsession with the Southern past. Although

232
Lancelot's search has two phases, the search as a unique metaphor underlines the theme and helps to develop the plot of the novel too.

*THE SECOND COMING* as a sequel to *THE LAST GENTLEMAN* does share its predecessor's narrative technique to a large extent. Both novels have the same protagonist and they are told from the third-person point of view instead of more intimate first-person point of view of the other novels. Using self-conscious omniscient third-person narrator, Percy attempts to give a mere detached portrait of a Southern hero trying to come to terms with his own past. The protagonist Williston Bibb Barrett in his mid-forties has changed considerably in the past twenty years, particularly his amnesia condition has taken a complete reversal. Now in this novel, he suffers from a total recall, the intrusion in his mind of incidents from the past. It is the memory of the incidents related to his father does visit Barrett again. That he is visited by his father's memory is implied in the title of the novel. Commenting on it Allen says, "This novel is... the "second coming" of the ghost of his father." The title itself is used as a metaphor to describe the condition of the protagonist. This total recall of the memory from the past is a sickness; it is a sickness of consciousness used again as another metaphor in the narrative.

All subsequent reference in the text are to this edition.

233
The sickness of Barret has been emphasized at the outset of the novel. The text opens with Barrett on the golf course suffering from disorientation and falling down. He is overcome with the memory, as he goes to retrieve the golf ball, of a time when his father had tried to kill him on a hunting trip to Georgia when he was a boy. Though Barrett does not willingly set out to recall the past, rather the past by way of memory overtakes him many times in the course of the novel. Here memory is used as a strategic device to show the past’s major influence on character’s life. Closely associated with this device of memory is the device of sensory stimuli. “Percy uses sensory stimuli to arouse memories in his character’s mind,” Belsches remarks. At the beginning of the novel, for example, the sound of the fence wire stretching and the sight of hawk recall to the hunting incident in Barrett’s mind. These two narrative devices contribute to rendering the central issues in the novel. Throughout the narrative the memory of the past is stimulated in the Barrett’s mind and it is in the memory he tries to search meaning. Since Barrett’s search for meaning dominates the narrative, Percy uses the search as a metaphor to convey the protagonist’s stance toward the past.

Thus Barrett, though outwardly changed to some extent, is still a searcher for meaning. Not only the thematic development but also the narrative development of the novel depends on Barrett’s search. In this
regard Allen has to say that Barrett is an “anxiety-ridden searcher” and “the progress of the novel is his retracting of his life in order to find the point at which it all went wrong.”\(^{31}\) Once again Percy describes his protagonist’s search on existential line providing what Alan Belsches calls “a philosophical frame work that can help his readers understand the importance of memory or a “return” to the past.”\(^{32}\) Though the literal “return” does not occur in the novel, the protagonist returns to the past with the help of memory. Using the technique of flashback memory, Percy recreates events from the past which are important to Barrett and those he wants to understand. One of them which is prime important to him is the hunting event. It is “Only one event that had happened to him in his life. Everything else that had happened afterwards was non-event,” the narrator tells (p.\(^{52}\)). The piecemeal return of the memory of this event occurs all through the novel while Barrett searches meaning in it. Before the final return of the memory occurs, Barrett descends, as a part of his searching, into a cave.

The dark cave into which Barrett descends symbolizes his mind obsessed with the dark past of his father’s death. His wandering in the cave conveys his attempts to understand his dark past. At the same time the one-eyed mountain on which Barrett lives takes on a brooding presence, “symbolizing his father and his father’s suicide,”\(^{33}\) Sweeny remarks. Likewise Percy uses the symbol of place in order to
exploit his protagonist’s sense of place which underlines the sense of the history too. In words of Jac Tharpe, “any mention either of time and place is automatically a part of the symbolism of time-place”\textsuperscript{34}. Thus Barrett’s sense of the past is inherent in his sense of place. His speculations on time and place begins quite early in the novel. His problem is associated with time and place. “Will has the essential problem with time and place,”\textsuperscript{35} Tharpe adds. Throughout the novel the memory associated with certain time and place chases Barrett. The time is the past when his father killed himself and the place is near Thomasville, Georgia where the event happened. In order to block out the memory of time and place, Barrett fantasizes having sex with Ethel Rosenblum on a nondescript plot of land near the railroad station in Ithaca on the way of his father’s funeral. His fantasizing sex is a defense he creates to block the memory of time and place. However, it is significant to note that Barrett gets relieved from this memory of time and place when he confronts it in a hotel. Thus using symbols of places Percy focuses on the central issues.

In addition to these symbols and metaphors discussed so far, Percy uses another metaphor to convey Barrett’s problem with the past. That one is the metaphor of apocalypse. This metaphor comes into play early in the novel as he becomes convinced that all the Jews have returned to Israel which he takes as a sign that second coming of Christ
is near. Barrett’s brooding over the apocalypse is a strategy that he has
developed in order to escape his father’s death. Even Allen remarks that
Barrett’s musings over apocalypse are his “efforts to work out through
the trauma of his father’s death”36. The traumatic experience of his
father’s suicide is taken in by Barrett in terms of apocalypse which is
reflected even in the title of the novel. The second coming refers, first, to
the second coming of Christ and the destruction of the world. Though
he has developed the apocalyptic musings as a strategy to block the
irresistible memory, it does come rushing back into his mind as his
apocalyptic musings intensify. Thus apocalyptic musings are not the
proper alternatives to the memory; that one is present in the person of
Allison.

The narrative of Allison is incorporated in the
novel’s text for thematic purpose. Percy designs three narrative
sequences: a first centers on Barrett, a second on Allison and a
third on Barrett-Allison engagement with one another. The first
seven chapters Percy alternates between Barrett’s narrative and
Allison’s narrative. This alternating scheme of narrative
suggests the oscillation of Barrett’s mind between the past and
the future represented by his dead father and Allison Huger
respectively. Symbolically, Barrett’s oscillation is between
“Thanatos” and “Eros”37 and he has to choose one. Here Percy

237
provides a cure for Barrett’s sickness; the cure lies in Eros represented by Allison. Barrett has to accept the past and build future with Allison. Her character is complementary to Barret’s: he remembers everything; she is clean of memory; he falls, she raises. The love story of Barrett and Allison, which forms the third part of the narrative, suggests that the process of Barrett’s illness has started. Creating Allison’s character without memory, Percy means to say that history is a matter of remembrance for those who have memory.

*THE THANATOS SYNDROME* has the narrative technique more or less similar to its predecessors, yet distinctive in some respects so to be evaluated on its own terms. Percy reintroduces Dr. Thomas More as the protagonist and chief spokesman in this novel. In order to focus on his protagonist’s stance towards history, Percy recreates a quasi-mythical territory, the “Feliciana” country. In italicized preface, Percy tells about it emphasizing its distinctiveness among industrial pollution. It is a microcosm of the Old South. Its way of life – plantation life, bourbon served in Jefferson cups, early morning fishing – is similar to the way of life of the Old South. Tom More belongs to such a place. His belonging to “Feliciana” moulds his character and also gives him enormous advantage over his enemies. As a part of his narrative

strategy, Percy’s creation of mythic place serves as locale of the novel and a setting against which we can judge Tom More’s character. He acts in accordance with the way of life of Feliciana - like a gentleman throughout the novel. Unlike the other protagonists of Percy’s novels, Tom More is least mentally ill. He is shown as a keen observer of the happenings around him.

At the outset of the novel he tells, ”For some time now I have noticed that something strange is occurring in our region” (p.3). To him little things are more important. What he observes is that there are personality changes in several of his patients, including even his own wife. Tom More’s attempts of unraveling the mystery covers the largest space of the novel. Its progress in a sense depends upon Tom More’s penetrating into the possible cause of the changes in his patients’ behavior. The pattern of the mystery story is exploited here in order to reveal the protagonist’s approach to the past. In mystery story the protagonist does solve the puzzle piece by piece and he is able to penetrate into each character’s mind that the reader cannot. The upper hand is given to the protagonist as he must come to the truth of mystery. At the same time, in mystery story the event is happened in the past and the detective has to begin his search in the present leading to solve the mystery related to the past. So having chosen the first - person point of view, Percy “gains much by that choice,”38 Hobson
remarks. Tom More as scientist-detective learns at a pace and keeps the novel in progress. His search is the main concern of the narrative.

Tom More’s search is born out of his curiosity and his concern for his fellow humans. The metaphor of search, the most favored to Percy, is developed here in order to underscore Tom More’s genuine sense of the Southern past. Like Binx of *THE MOVIEGOER*, Tom More’s search has two dimensions: horizontal and vertical. However, his search is free from any philosophy, from debts to Kierkegaard or Dostoevski. His horizontal search includes journey from place to place offering his reflections on the past life of the people of the South. The metaphor of search is interlinked with the metaphor of journey which, to some extent, brings about Tom More’s return to the past. His visit to Lucy’s plantation house can be seen as his return to the past. The plantation house symbolizes the Old South and its owner Lucy is the chatelaine of that house. Tom More’s journey to the fire tower of Father Smith has both thematic and structural significance. He visits the priest who has climbed up into a fire tower in order to escape the trouble of the world and that visit marks his vertical journey. There on the tower Father Smith confesses to Tom More his past related to his inclination to join the Nazis. The confession of Father Smith runs several pages of the novel under the caption “Father Smith’s Confession” (p. 239). It is an attempt on the part of the priest to come to terms with his own past
and, at the same time to warn Tom More on the basis of his knowledge of the past. He conveys Tom More that social engineering by Comeaux and his lot is a very much similar to Hitler's genetic engineering team for improving the Aryan race. Father Smith's confession is a powerful narrative within the main narrative that screws up Tom More's search.

What Tom More is searching for is clearly stood out in the title of the novel. The title means "the symptoms producing death." Tom More's search for symptoms which produce death implies the Southerner's love of death. Percy's structural strategy is primarily based upon his use of search as an extended metaphor. It joins both the main plot concerning Tom More's unraveling the mystery about his patients' behavior and the sub-plot consisting of Father Smith's confession together. Having received clue from the priest, Tom More reaches to the root of the mystery. He comes to know that Bob Comeaux and his group of doctors are adding heavy sodium to the local water supply to engineer a New Eden. On closer inspection, Tom More realizes that Comeaux is fooling people under the name of restoration of a mythical past. His genuine sense of the past, revealed through the metaphor of search, helps him to see Comeaux's conspiracy wrapped under the cover of restoration of the past. As a Southern gentleman of "Feliciana," Tom More foils Comeaux's attempt and acts 'noble's oblige' towards the common people saving them from danger.
The narrative technique, to sum up, of this novel differs from the earlier one in that here plot is made more important than character. As a result, the narrative that we see is more straight and easy to read. Though the protagonist is past oriented, there is no flashback memory. Commenting on the technique of the novel Hobson says, "Since plot is more important than character here, the narrative pushes straight through time and easy to read, with few flashback." But it is the novel in which Percy creates setting sharing with the narrative technique of Shelby Foote.

SECTION II: SHELBY FOOTE

The narrative technique in the novels of Shelby Foote is compatible with the central issues that he deals with. His novels are carefully designed and meticulously constructed leaving the impression of highly crafted artifacts. His narrative technique, primarily, consists of creation of setting – time and place – which gives validity to the central issues. As a novelist – historian Foote is very particular in the historical accuracy of the setting of his novels. "The historical accuracy of the setting for his fiction has been important to Foote from the beginning of his career," Robert Phillips comments. Foote’s novels are located either in Jordan County, Mississippi, or Bristol whose past and tradition the characters can not escape. In creating an imaginary locale to his novels, Foote owes a great deal to Faulkner. In this matter Robert Phillips has to
say that in writing novels Foote cannot escape the influence of Faulkner. Like Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, Foote creates new terrain for his novels. The creation of place has to do with the past of it. That is why Foote recapitulates the past of a particular place going as far back as to its origin. The importance of place in Southern culture is due to the history of the region. History gives meaning to place. The Civil War, according to Robert Phillips, is "an immense event that gave the place a new meaning for all time."3

The characters in Foote's novels have sense of place; they "belong" to certain place. There abandoning the "place" symbolizes their drifting away from the moorings of the past and tradition. In a sense, the place in Foote's novels serves as microcosm of the South; its history is the history of the South. As for the creation of time in Foote's novels, it is inherent in creation of place. In addition to the history of the place, Foote clearly establishes "historical milieu"4 for his works. TOURNAMENT is based on the life of Foote's grandfather and develops around events that led up to and included 1910, "a sort of watershed year."5 FOLLOW ME DOWN is based on the sensational murder committed by Floyd Myers in Greenville in 1940 and the trial that followed in 1941. The depression year provide a backdrop for the events in LOVE IN A DRY SEASON. The battle at Shiloh during the Civil War is the subject of the novel SHILOH. September September
takes place in the month of September in 1957, another of those "watershed" years,⁶ Foote calls it. Thus Foote’s novels are set in the recent past which serves as the backdrop against which the action of his novels develops. In words of Thomas Landess who says that history is used as "the matrix in which the central action takes place."⁷ In such setting, Foote develops his fictional characters.

Foote uses the dramatic technique of characterization which makes his novels the novels of character study. The story is developed mainly through, what Louis D. Rubin, Jr. calls, "the dramatic and psychological exploration of the interaction of his characters within a known historical context."⁸ Foote delineates his fictional characters in a tragic perspective. The fortunes of the characters are described in terms of their rise and fall, and their fall is necessarily due to the flaw in their characters. The characters’s preoccupation with the past turns out to be the flaw causing their fall. Foote’s treatment of the characters is more symbolic; they represent the Southern community and their fall implies the fall of that community. Foote achieves the effective characterization through the use of wide range of narrative technique - from the first-person monologue through the third person narrator to the multiple points of view. Usually the first-person monologues are the memories from the past that come to the character preoccupied with the past. Here Foote employs the flashback technique which makes the return of
character's memory possible. He also uses multiple points of view only to offer different perspectives to characters or event thus helping readers to see truth. Most of the time Foote builds his characterization with the help of an extended metaphor or motif which communicates the central issues in the novels. On the basis of the comments so far, we can assume that, Foote's narrative technique consists of creation of time and place, psychological exploration of characters, and use of different monologues. Through the effective use of this narrative technique, Foote extends the central issues of history and individual consciousness in his novels.

The narrative technique used in TOURNAMENT merges and coincides with the central issues. Foote's choice of the third person omniscient point of view is appropriate because the novel intends the objective study of the protagonist Hugh Bart. The third person narrator is no other than Asa, the grandson of Hugh Bart. Asa undertakes a kind of search to learn about his grandfather from the people intimately related to Bart. At the opening of TOURNAMENT, Asa tells that "talking to others who knew Bart while he came and strove and went, that I learned the full story"(p.xxx). Asa, as the narrator, devises the life-story of Hugh Bart in terms of rise and fall of his character beginning with his coming to Lake Jordan during a late - Reconstruction at the age

of eighteen; his becoming sheriff of Issawamba County at twenty-twó; his becoming owner of Solitaire plantation; his marriage with Florence Jameson and afterwards having children from her, and Asa ends with Bart’s selling the land only for his destruction and death. In view of Thomas Landess the action of the novel “is primarily concerned with the rise and fall of the heroic Hugh Bart.” Foote employs the elements of tragedy, what Asa call “the decline and fall” (p.xxix), in order to emphasize the tragic aspect of Bart’s character in a given time and place.

The time created is the past surrounding the Civil War and its aftermath, and the place is the plantation Solitaire on the periphery of mythic Jordan County. Foote devotes an ample space to the origins of the plantation itself and to the character of Isaac Jameson, who first carved a cotton empire out of the wilderness and lived to see that empire and house destroyed by the Northern invaders. Here Foote does not intend to write a novel about history “Yet history is the matrix in which, the central action takes place, and Foote carefully constructs his enveloping action in order to emphasize the historical dimensions of his major character” Thomas Landess comments. In such a time and place, Bart undertakes stewardship of the land and his act can be viewed as the “historical equivalent” of the Southerner’s efforts to “come again” after the ravages of the War and Reconstruction. With consistent efforts, Bart rises to power of sheriff but declines and falls
from that height due to his obsession with the region’s ‘style’.

Foote creates Bart as a Southerner who carries with him certain traits which lead him to imbibe the ‘style’. Billy Boy, the long - time servant to Bart views him as “the proud tall figure cast his shadow, immense and knightly and biblical rich, unreal glare of hero - worship”(p.xxix). That Bart’s obsession with the ‘style’, which creates barriers enclosing him and causing his fall is explicitly projected in the novel’s texture by the use of the extended metaphor of enclosure. “The growth of the barriers that enclose is one of the central metaphors through which Asa explores Bart’s fall; the other metaphor is the tournament, the game”12, Robert Phillips comments. The metaphor of enclosure comes into play when Bart thinks manners as important as goal. While describing Bart’s attempt towards maintaining manners Asa says that “The minute he found himself thus, coat spread open, belly shoved forward, he would know that he had dropped what he believed was his air of gentility, and he would snap shut like a turtle jerking back into its carapace”(p.19). The manner or ‘style’ becomes for Bart a shell, carapace in which he encloses himself.

The ‘style’ of “grand life” proves too constricted for a man like Bart. He does not understand that men admire him not because of his superficial style but because of his person. Instead of going beyond the superficial style he prefers to live within it. The style creates barriers
that thicken around him. It stops him from doing action like the one
that he has started stewardship with. Asa tells us that “he had begun to
put on weight, flesh building a barrier about the robust frame, incasing
the still - hot blood,” and, Asa continues he “took sanctuary within
inaction”(p.53). Like the region’s ‘style’, tournaments too encloses Bart
leaving him inactive.

Bart’s obsession with tournaments, games is put in a clear
perspective by Robert Phillips. He says that “Bart’s games are described
in terms that are often associated with American and European culture
in general, but specially with the South.”13 The European writer Walter
Scott romantically glorified games as crucible from which heroes
emerge. And the Southerners took Walter Scott too much seriously, and
Bart is no exception to it. Bart loves the game of hunting up to the level
where it becomes obsession to him. He likes “the acrid smell of powder
blown back across his face, the feather explosion of birds in midair”(p.35).
When there is less plentiful hunting in the Delta, Bart turns to
trapshooting and then ultimately to poker. He does extremely well in
these games and emerges as a champion. But these games create
barriers around him and because of that, Judge Wiltner says, he
“stopped changing”(p.52). The games that enclose him, draw him away
from his family and become the source of his isolation from it. Bart
filled Solitaire with trophies, but the cost he pays for being often away

248
from it is that “he hardly knew any of his children” (p.132). Consequently the children fail to live by the pattern that he imposes upon them.

The metaphor of enclosure is also reflected in the form of the novel. Asa’s narrative surrounds and encloses the story of Hugh Bart. The opening and closing comments by Asa are set apart on pages numbered in Roman numerals enclosing pages of the central narrative of Bart. Further, his enclosure in the past is suggested again by the same metaphor, this time implicit in the plantation house where he does live. The forty-room mansion which he restores to its past glory closes him both what Phillips calls “physically and spiritually.”14 The Solitaire represents the past and its restoration implies living the past in the present. Living too much past in the present becomes the means of Bart’s defeat.

Bart’s obsession with the past and his attempt to recount it towards the end of the novel, is conveyed through an appropriate method. The method Foote uses is the episodic structure since Bart sees his life history in terms of individual episodes/incidents. All of them are as Bart sees it very much important to him for they have touched his own life in one way or the other. Asa tells that how Bart think “All the lives that had touched his own, some of them only slightly, had a share in the telling. Cass Tarfeller, Abe Wisten, Major Dubose: all these were a part of his life” (p.223). The problem Bart faces here is that he can’t tell all
those episodes since it would require as much time as has been required to live. Yet he can’t omit one of them because it would leave a space blank on a canvas bigger than life. Bart tries to search an essence, a string that would bind those individual episodes touching Bart’s life and binds them artistically in a metaphor. Every episode or incident related to Bart reveals that all the time the persons involved in it tried to live by the pattern of the Old South. Cass Tarfeller episode, for instance, shows Tarfeller living by the code of chivalry forced upon him. The episodic structure suits to the novel as it extends Bart’s stance towards history.

The narrative technique of FOLLOW ME DOWN* is similar to that of TOURNAMENT and SHILOH in many respects. All of three novels have the contrasting narrative voices and a framing device for their action. In this novel, Foote retains the technique of creation of time and place for handling the central issues. The story of the novel develops in a cultural context and place that the characters exemplify. Foote deliberately recaps some of the background of Solitaire and Jordan County, where the main characters of the novel live, “in order to make certain that the reader understands the extent to which his characters are exemplary of their own time and place,”15 Landess comments. The narrative focus of the novel is on Luther Eustis’s

preoccupation with the traditional faith that leads him to murder Beullah. So making him the inhabitant of the Solitaire, Foote has emphasized what Landess calls "the orthodox nature of the world" exercising its influence on its inhabitants. Thus Eustis's obsession with the traditional faith is in keeping with his being an inhabitant of Solitaire, the symbol of traditional society. To emphasize the orthodox faith of Eustis further, Foote uses the Bible as a frame of reference. Eustis is dominated by a desire to follow the letter of the Holy Word, and throughout the novel, he refers to the Bible as he faces crisis. Eustis represents "the intrinsically protestant morality" providing a base for nineteenth - century conservatism of the region.

Creation of time and place shows Eustis's orientation to the past. Creation of other characters also delineates Eustis as a man who was led to the traditional faith. One of those characters is Brother Jimson, the old-fashioned preacher who picks up the young sinner and dashes him against a tree, the action exemplifying his nature. Jimson's religion relies upon emotional extravagance and being one from Jimson's flock Eustis follows it. The other character created for the purpose is Beulah. She represents loose morals, a trait associated with change from old to new. The creation of Beulah's character has thematic importance since she challenges the traditional faith of Brother Jimson. A part of Foote's narrative strategy involve in his pushing Eustis between the old faith
and new force represented by Brother Jimson and Beulah respectively. Foote knows that what a person like Eustis will do when he finds himself between the two extreme poles. At first he is attracted to Beulah, runs with her to an island where he has had sexual relations with her. Eustis, however, as he is obsessed with the protestant morality, feels guilty and begins to hear voices commanding to kill Beulah. Killing of the girl is the central act in the narrative leaving ground for assessment of the central issues in the novel. After the killing of Beulah the novel is molded upon the story of crime and retribution - an extended metaphor again through which Foote communicates society's views upon Eustis's obsession with the past. Foote appropriately employs a multiple points of view representing the voices of community.

The technique of multiple points of view allows many characters to comment on the central event helping reader reach to its heart. Foote says that the purpose of notion of employing nine narrators "was to penetrate to the heart of an event." In a sense it is a way of interpreting past event from different perspectives. Each of the narrators views Eustis's past action in a certain context. Among the narrators Ben Rand, the circuit clerk, who opens the novel introducing us to the principal characters and gives the general outline of the plot leading up to the verdict. Mildly cynical and humorous point of view,
Ben gives Bristol’s general views. To Ben the middle-aged Eustis does not look like a man who could “entice a girl into a soda shop” (p. 9). Roscoe Jeffcoat, the jailor closes the narrative and like Ben Rand represents the community’s view. Roscoe is not as cynical as Ben and has sympathy for Eustis.

Russel Stevenson and Parker Nowell occupy the second level of narration. Quoting Foote’s comment Philips says that both are “more involved and closer to the action.”¹⁹ They offer a more complex perspective because of their learning and experience. With these two things they measure the significance of the events and their own relationship to it. Stevenson’s narrative gives picture of a world with no fixed vision. His world is populated with references to the past, allusions to important cultural and historic events. He seems not to care about Eustis. Yet Milton’s fallen angel comes to his mind as he recalls his first visit to Eustis in the jail. Events surrounding the murder of Beulah remind him of passages from Shakespeare and Milton. He knows the story of the Bible-reading Eustis; knows something of the history of Jordan County and looks for the Old South under the concrete facade of the New. These references offer a framework, Phillips says, “against which the reader may judge Eustis.”²⁰ We can see the historical dimensions of Eustis’s character but Stevenson doesn’t care. Stevenson is, Parker Nowell observes, “hard faced already from living
off the misdeeds of the people" (p.220).

Nowell Parker, Eustis's lawyer narrates two sections balancing that of Stevenson. He is a disillusioned and frustrated man enjoying intellectual status and knowing the ills of the modern world. Keats, Browing, Chaucer, Emerson and especially Shakespeare constitute a portion of Nowell's literary background which provides him with a frame of artistic and historical reference in which he can see and judge the present. For example, the tale of Eustis's wife, Kate reminds him of Troilus and Cressida and of Emerson. "What she told me had occurred in an atmospheres much like that of Troilus and Cressida in which the faithful are betrayed and the brave are slain. I was reminded of Emerson's 'Our faith comes in moments; our vice is habitual," Parker tells (p.219). Forms and patterns constantly affect Nowell and he is consciously using his understanding of form to shape his case to its best advantage. As he knows the facts, he thinks that he can shape the case to fit almost any pattern the jury may seem to want. Making the case simple is his duty, complications will loose the case. Parker thinks Eustis's crime in terms of failure of love which is traceable to events surrounding the Civil War. He sees the South's defeat in the Civil War as the root cause of the present illness of the society including the illness of Eustis.

We are made known of Eustis's past through the technique of
flashback memory used in Kate’s, Eustis’s wife, narrative. She traces the roots of her husband’s crime in his family heritage. She tells that Eustis inherits in his person the double heritage of lust from his mother and murder from his father. To Kate the past bears on Eustis’s present. The narratives of Eustis and Beulah form the middle of the novel. Eustis narrates six sections that surround a single central section by Beulah. In his narrative he tells how he sees Beulah, and attracted to her; takes her to the island and kills her there. His narrative delineates him as Bible reader following instruction from God. He is not satisfied with the present world; Bristol to him is like a concrete wasteland. Beulah’s narrative occupies the center of the novel and takes place as Eustis drowns her. At the center of her narrative is the long seven-page summary of the important events of her life touching her meeting Eustis. The narrative of both Eustis and Beulah recall the past into the present focusing on the narrative thrust of the book.

*LOVE IN A DRY SEASON* has the technique which corresponds to the central issues treated in it. As usual, Foote renders the central issues through the technique of creation of time and place and through effective characterization. The novel is set in Bristol, the county seat of Jordan County at the time of depression years and the period surrounding the World War Second. This immediate historical setting


255
becomes more prominent in the novel. Against such setting, Foote develops the characters who are not away from it. To be objective in character development, he employs the third person point of view. The use of flashback technique which facilitates the writer not only in telling more about a character or event but also suggesting the character’s orientation to the past. Foote begins near the end of an event and he immediately reverts to earlier events that preceded and then finally adding a sentence to the culmination of the event. Following the same technique, Foote opens novel with the announcement that "Major Malcolm Barcroft was sixty - seven when he died, the last male of his line"(p.3) and then for the next twenty-five pages, Foote surveys the history of the Barcroft's and their position in Bristol. In the same narrative fashion, we learn about other characters in the novel - Harely Drew and Amy and Jeff Carruthers.

The flashback technique thus enables the reader to learn more about the past of the character which is outside the plot of the novel. The qualified third person omniscience examines the feelings and ideas of the major characters penetrating into their, what Phillips calls, "troubled consciousness."21 Malcolm Barcroft has that troubled consciousness and the narrator explains it in relation with the events surrounding the Civil War. Malcolm Barcroft's intense preoccupation with the Civil War is the point of emphasis in the Barcroft's narrative.
He plays the battle in his mind; the Civil War internalized in him. It is shown in Malcolm Barcroft’s playing a crate of lead soldiers while demonstrating to his only son the mechanics of the Fredericksburg’s battle. His reverence for the military tradition and the frustration that followed after he is denied opportunities to comply with that tradition leaves him insensitive to his children. As a result, Malcolm Barcroft is isolated from his daughters and that isolation results into the ‘failure of relationship’. It fails due to the lackness of love which in turn doesn’t grow in a dry season. The ‘failure of relationship’ serves as a unified metaphor along with ‘the metaphor of dry season’ uniting the two contrasting plots; the Barcrofts plot and the Carruthers plot.

The Barcrofts plot is developed on the failure of father–daughter relationship. Frustrated as he is Malcolm Barcroft hasn’t any attachment towards his motherless daughters. He fills their breasts not with fatherly love but with anger and reproach. His behavior to his daughters is like a stern soldier commanding discipline to his subordinates. He doesn’t like Florence’s pretense of suffering from hot due to her long yellow hair, so that he arranges his regular barber to cut it. She cannot bear the shock she received during her hair cutting which visits her in dreams in the form of her father sexually assaulting her. Malcolm Barcroft’s manners to his younger daughter Amanda, too, lacks fatherly love. He refuses Harley Drew’s proposal of marriage with
Amanda on the ground that Drew can not remember the color of Amanda’s eyes. After that the lovers – Amanda and Drew – plan elopement but Malcolm Barcroft senses it and threatens to disinherit Amanda. Malcolm Barcroft never means that Amanda should not marry; she must marry a person he chooses. He invites Henry Stubblefield, ex-soldier to court Amanda but she rejects him. The father – daughters relationship are failed because Malcolm Barcroft lives by the military code that he tries to impose it on his daughters. The father – daughters relationship is doomed to fail since it is not based on love. On the other side, the relationship between lovers – Amanda and Drew – is failed because it is not based on true affection, true love on the part of Harley Drew. He is not so much after Amanda’s love as he is after her father’s fortune. Harley Drew breaks his relationship with Amanda as he sees great prospects in Jeff’s wife, Amy Carruther.

The metaphor of failure of relationship dominates the Carruthers plot. The father – daughters relationship is at failure in the Barcroft plot due to Malcolm Barcroft’s preoccupation with history embodied in the Southern military traditions. Ironically the relationship between Amy and Jeff Carruthers fails because their sensibilities lost their moorings in history. Their marital relationship is an utter failure since their marriage is not based on a deep affection for each other. Foote develops their characters metaphorically. Jeff is a voyeur, and even, as Amy suggests,
a homosexual and to the other end Amy is promiscuous. Jeff has no sensibility for history and Amy, though she inherits Briartree, misses the fundamental of the tradition of which Briartree is a symbol. Amy and Jeff restore the plantation house but they are not "Old Miss' and "Mars Jeff" in the old sense of the words. Their lives are not those of planters although they move into the plantation house. Without moorings in history and tradition the lives of Amy and Jeff become increasingly violent. It is explicitly shown in certain events such as Jeff's motor accident making him blind, his killing the pet dog; his shooting at a man in Amy's bedroom in a hotel near Nice; his attempt to kill Drew, and finally his smashing the face of Amy, his wife. In their failed relations, the central metaphor works; it works at three levels of relationship: father - daughters, husband - wife and lover - beloved. These relationships are failed because the season is too dry for the growth of love which can sustain them.

The 'dry season' mentioned in the novel's title is employed as an extended metaphor in order to bring the central issue into focus. The metaphor of dry season provides the novel with a context in which its action takes place. Actually depression years are the time in which the novel is set. Foote metaphorically looks at those years as the season which is dry in the sense that it lacks manners, rites and tradition all forming the conditions of love. Love cannot grow outside these
conditions consequently the human relationships which need love are failed. The relationships between Malcolm Barcroft and his daughters, between Amanda and Drew and between Amy and Jeff are devoid of love hence doomed to fail. The metaphor of the failure of relationship springs from and merges into the metaphor of dry season. It shows Foot’s skill in extending the central issue in an appropriate technique.

The narrative technique in *SHILOH* is appropriately used in order to bring the central issues into light. The major ingredients of Foote’s narrative technique are the creation of time and place and subsequent development of characters in that setting. Here Foote recreates the battle of Shiloh, one of the crucial encounters in the Civil War through a series of monologues by people engaged on the Southern side and the Northern side. The battle is appropriately recreated through a series of monologues in order to examine the Southern mind in relation with history. The battle is viewed through the eyes of five soldiers, Union and Confederate, and a squad of Indiana men. Foote alternates the Southern soldiers’ monologues with the Northern Soldiers’ ones. This technique of alternation helps the writer present the Southern mind in comparison with its Northern counterpart in the context of the Civil War history. The battle of Shiloh provides Foote with an occasion to bring the Southern and Northern people face

to face in the crucial moments of history. In this light, the battle proves to be a ‘pervasive metaphor’ serving the thematic purpose of the novel. The metaphor facilitates us to see comparatively the ‘difference’ in characters of Southern men and Northern men extending other metaphor, the metaphor of difference.

Southern narrators and Southern interest do dominate the novel *Shiloh*. Palmer Metcalfe, Lieutenant on the Southern side, narrates both the opening and closing sections of the book. The Southern narrators employ many more pages in which to explain their presence. This makes the book the Southern novel. It takes its stand, what Philips calls “in the interest of the Southern cause and Southern history” and the Northerners provide a “counterpoint” representing an industrial and mechanical force. In a sense, the Southerners differ from their fellow Northerners in terms of their way of life, and more importantly, in their sense of the past. The narrative of the novel which springs from the ‘metaphor of the battle’ focuses on the difference in character of the Southern soldiers and the Northern soldiers, and in understanding that difference lies the understanding of the central issues. The difference is achieved through creation of Southerners as more “reflective” than their Northern counterparts. The Southerners are reflective because, Phillips says, “they have... a more significant past on which to reflect.” All the Southern narrators, Metcalfe, Luther Dade and Sergeant Polly, reflect on
the past. The Southerners, as Metcalfe's father asserted, are in love with the past. Metcalfe's narrative, crucial in thematic sense, is full of references to his past life.

Metcalf, during the course of his narratives, reflects on his own past. He recalls the words of Sherman about the defeat of the South spoken at the Louisiana Military Academy where Sherman was superintendent and Metcalfe was a student. He dips even further into his past as he sees images of his mother, whom he knows from painting, floating into his consciousness during sleep. Johnston's death gives Metcalfe yet another occasion to reflect on what his father had told him about the South's malady which caused the region's fall. Metcalfe recollects his father's words, "We were sick from an old malady, he said: incurable romanticism and misplaced chivalry, too much Walter Scott and Dumas read too seriously" (p.200). This is not all; Metcalfe does reflect on a European past too. For that purpose he is deliberately placed by the author at the center of strategic planning of the battle which facilitates him to comment on South's obsession with the European past. Metcalfe admits that the fault lies in Southerners' patterning the Shiloh battle order on Napoleon's Waterloo battle order. The South's obsession with the European past not only leads it to the war but also leads it to defeat. The South's attachment to a European past is further revealed in Metcalfe's quoting lines from Keats and
Shakespeare. It gives his prose poetic quality.

On the other side, the Yankees do not quote Keats or Shakespeare, and Flickner would like to forget about Napoleon. Flickner's father told Flickner stories of his grandfather's having fought against Napoleon, but to Flickner tales of past seemed out of place. He thinks that their country is new country and they do not need stories from the past. Among the Federals only Flickner comments on the past but it is only to deny it. The Northerners have nothing to do with the past, the Southerners, on the other hand, love to remember the past.

The further difference between these contrasting people lies in the fact that the Southerners appear in the form of community that their counterparts lack. In the course of their narratives, the Southerners mention their meeting each other that gives their tale an internal coherence. The Southern army seems to be more of an organic whole as Luther Dade appears in each narrative of his fellow Southerners. More, the Southern men have much closer ties with their officers whom they serve. Metcalfe's father was close to Johnston enough to serve as a second for Johnston in a duel. The Southerners form a community which is closely tied together. Sergeant Polly's relationship with Forrest is very close and Polly is under his direct command. The closer ties of the Southerners are counter pointed against the more distant ties of the Northerners. Fountain is not as close to Grant as the Southerners are to
their officers. He knows about Grant because both have come from the same section of Ohio State. One reason that Southerners' ties stand out more clearly, Phillips tells, is that "the past has deeper meaning for the Southerners. Their past is more closely connected to who and what they are."²⁴ To sum up the artistic use of the technique consisting of the creation of setting and use of metaphor of battle and metaphor of difference helps the reader to understand the central issues in the novel.

*September September*, the last novel, claims to have the similar technique that Foote has employed in his earlier novels in order to extend the central issues. His strategy of developing the story in a historic context is naturally used here. He sets the novel in the month of September 1957, a time of the Civil rights movement giving way to the local racial conflict over integration of a school in Memphis, the novel's locale. The events happening around the month of September 1957 are special to Foote because he sees them "in terms of the nation's history, particularly in terms of the Civil War history," Phillips comments.²⁵ In such time and place Foote develops his fictional characters who alike their creator are not far removed from major historical events. Foote brings four of his fictional characters from Bristol to Memphis, and three others from Moscow, Tennessee, to Memphis. Foote uses the racial conflict as a backdrop against which events in the novel take place. This backdrop has been sustained throughout the novel by the
use of news media. Headlines from the papers create that backdrop as
the characters read them.

Foote creates two sets of characters, one white, one black
matching thematically. His choice of the characters from both races is a
part of technique adopted to examine the black-white relationship in
historical context. The relationship between the two races is conditioned
by the history and when they are juxtaposed, they play history. These
two races are confronted in their historical roles – exploiter and
exploited – as the white characters kidnap the only son of a wealthy
black family for a huge ransom. The event of kidnapping implies the
white men’s attempt to retain the past into the present. The event
provides the black people with an occasion to review the past in order
to build a new future. In the narrative structure of the novel, the
kidnapping is a crucial event used as a metaphor extending the central
issues. Another metaphor used is the metaphor of conflict: it works in
conflict between two sets of characters as well as in conflict within two
set themselves. For Phillips the conflict within two sets themselves are
more significant “in the thematic development of the novel”26. The
event of kidnapping puts unusual pressures upon the internal
relationship within the characters. Under the pressures, the white
characters break one from other and left to their loss; the black
characters come more closer and are at their gain.
The black characters' gain and the white characters' loss are presented in terms of success and failure of their sexual relationships. The crisis in the relationships between Reeny and Rufus occurs when Teddy, the kidnapped boy, interrupts their lovemaking. Reeny turns to Podjo for her sexual need after Rufus beats her and leaves her hanging. Before kidnapping the sexual relationships between Reeny and Rufus were exuberant, binding them closely together. Podjo is not as good in his sexual relationships with Reeny as she imagined him before she leaves Rufus. As their relationships fail, the white characters experience death and dissolution towards the end of the novel. Rufus is killed in his Thunderbird accident; Podjo and Reeny are off to Las Vegas where Podjo loses thousand dollars. Through the metaphor of kidnapping, Foote explicitly tells that the white characters are bound to fall because they try to live by the past sucking the blood of the blacks. The metaphor of kidnapping gives way to the metaphor of conflict which brings about the fall of the white characters. The black characters, on the other hand, gain much out of their experience. They develop a much closer sexual relationships contrasting to the earlier ones, before kidnapping, which were just meaningless gratification. After their son, Teddy returns home, Martha and Eben develop a less restrained, more exuberant shared sexual relationships. For Eben, it is emblematic of his achieved manhood and escape from the system of the unwritten codes
governing race relations. Foote’s populating the novel with both black and white characters is as much part of his narrative technique as creating metaphors.

Foote delineates his fictional characters in two ways; one, what the general narrator tells about them in the four sections of narrative allotted to him, and, other, what the characters themselves think in their monologues. The general narrator presents every character commenting on him or her and on occasion, he tells us what the community thinks about him or her. The characters’ monologues are divided into three sections labeled as “Voices.” It is a narrative device that Foote uses in order to give a room for characters to reflect on their various pasts. This device suits to the central issues of the novel because the “Voices” of the characters are the voices of individual consciousness reflecting on its past. Having caught in the current events, the characters in the novel bring a considerable portion of their own pasts to these events so that, Phillips comments, “the past adds shape and perspective to the present.”27 They reflect on their pasts while identifying it as the sole determinant of their present being. Thus Rufus tells how his present life has to do with his grandfather’s advice to steal the rich people in order to take revenge on them on the old man’s behalf. Podjo recalls his military career which has shaped his present making him a professional gambler. Reeny thinks her past life has made

267
her what she is in the present. Like these white characters, the black characters, too, think of their past to understand the present.

Among the black characters, Martha sees her present life from the perspective of the past. Under the pressures of kidnapping, she explores the old foundations of love making journey back to the primitive origin of love “jungle doing”, she calls it. Eben, too, adds his own past to the present while thinking the kidnapping as an extension of the slavery system. Eben thinks of Theo, his father-in-law as the intricate part of the system. Foote’s creation of Theo’s character is thematically important because Theo lives by the system which emasculates Eben. Eben’s conflict with Theo, after the kidnapping event, is naturally with the system itself. It is that system – the unwritten codes and traditions – which has governed race relations in the South. Eben rebels against Theo and his system since they are the root of his present problem. Eben’s rebellion against the system and his rejection of it is symbolic. His rejection of the system is his rejection of the past. But he does so only after he understands it.
ENDNOTES

WALKER PERCY

10. Allen, p.22.
17. Paul L. Gatson, "The Revelation of Walker Percy". *Colorado*
Quarterly XX-4 (Spring 1972) p.469.
32. Sweeney, p.54.
33. Tharpe, p.113.
34. Tharpe, p.114.
36. Allen, p.137.

SHELBY FOOTE

1. Robert L. Phillips, Jr., Shelby Foote: Novelist and Historian

270
4. Phillips, Jr., p.29.
5. Phillips, Jr., p.29.
6. Phillips, Jr., p.29.
10. Landess, p.325.
11. Landess, p.324.
13. Phillips, Jr., p.56.
16. Landess, p.327.
17. Landess, p.326.
18. Phillips, Jr., p.91.
19. Phillips, Jr., p.94.
22. Phillips, Jr., p.76.
23. Phillips, Jr., p.77.
24. Phillips, Jr., p.78.
25. Phillips, Jr., p.28.