CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: FAULKNER AS A WRITER WITH RADICAL IDEAS

The very notion of 'things as they "really" are' is itself an effect of textual operations, such that 'reality' is never anything more than a textual projection: it is something that texts allude to, point at, grope for and search after but which they can never be identical with. 'Reality' is not just something that is there already, waiting to be represented textually. Instead of thinking of reality as coming before textuality, then, it is possible (again the precaution is advised) to think of this very notion as an effect of textuality. (Lucy, Niall. Postmodern Literary Theory: An Introduction. Kundli: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002. 14-15)

Faulkner's achievement has placed him as one of the major twentieth century writers who have broken a new ground in the narrative technique in their fiction. Faulkner's radical and bold venture into literary expression has enchanted many scholars and readers around the world. In fact he must be put among the cerebral writers of the modern days who maintain their unique position. He has never tried to maintain a balance between his reader and his compulsive desire to express his artistic creation in the spirit of his own vocation. He did not bother
about the salability of his fiction while he composed it under his great artistic impulse; being able to complete the writing of a novel itself was his achievement. Whether or not his fiction would be sold in the market was not his great concern. Perhaps the only exceptional case was during the time of writing *As I Lay Dying* which he wrote within one week to lighten his financial burden.

A larger vision of Southern history was slowly beginning to open to Faulkner in the South when the First World War erupted. But this devastating event forcibly directed his attention toward the meaning of world history, and in doing so toward the meaning of the South in this context. The Civil War and the South's defeat took on the character of events symbolizing the southern participation in the whole civilizational drama of the past in the present. The Southern situation became symbolic of the crossing of the ways in Western civilization, and the Southern literary artist could view himself both as observer of and participant in the crisis. Mark Twain foresaw a possibility to the novelist to grasp Southern history both sympathetically and ironically, bringing into focus the fate of a slave society that had been both historical novelty and anachronism. Faulkner saw the Southern situation in full and captured the entire drama of the South's representation of the past in the present.

To accomplish this great task Faulkner made an imaginary Southern world of which he was, as he said, sole proprietor—a county in northern Mississippi modeled on his home county of Lafayette, with its county seat of Oxford. He called his creation Yoknapatawpha County and named its county seat Jefferson. Faulkner's invention and peopling of Yoknapatawpha is a major achievement in twentieth-century literature, although Faulkner did not uniformly maintain the
proprietorship of his mythical county during the forty years he wrote about it. Faulkner's weakening grip on the subject at about the midpoint of his authorial career may be attributed to the general condition of every writer who at one point in their career shows this artistic decline. His lapsing hold on Yoknapatawpha may be partially attributed to burdensome personal circumstances. It may be traced more surely, I think, to literary circumstances.

His accomplishment was recognized most notably in 1950 when he received the Nobel Prize for literature, and afterward some other honours like the rank of Officer in the French Legion of Honour, among others. In this regard he shares the fate of other noted writers of the world whose recognition came gradually.

Faulkner's novels if looked in totality give us clear picture of his vision and persistent concern about his art of the fictional range. Malcolm Cowley's remarks in The Portable Faulkner, which Faulkner himself liked much, gives the quintessential characteristics of his novel. Cowley's emphasis is laid on the totality of Faulkner's work as his novels and short stories have been created within the milieu of the Yoknapatawpha world. The artistic innovation of saga form of his fiction nicely fits into his grand design. The full-scale of this ingenuity of fictional strategy of Faulkner lends an easy elasticity to assess his work in terms of universality despite his intense localism. Since the beginning of the saga with the arrival of the first white man in Jefferson which was a Chickasaw trading post in the wilderness down to the arrival of one of the early settlers Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin, whose family runs into miscegenation later on, finally to the Snopeses, who may be called predators in simple terms and the amoral character of mod-
ern commercial world in more symbolic terms, we have a long vista of a society
that we can look back to the very origin of it, which gives an epic sense to Faulkner's
work.

Since Faulkner did not recreate the history of the South while he was writ-
ing his fiction and short stories, it is not relevant to point out the inconsistency in
maintaining or representing the historical South. Faulkner repeatedly made it clear
in his speech and interviews that he had no special regard to his native South
while he wrote his novels and stories. But he knew that as an artist he had to use
a known material in his fictional world. In other words, he had to be faithful to his
experience as an individual as well as a writer. Faulkner knew the world he de-
scribed intimately and it was important that he should draw on this knowledge in
his creation, but it does not necessarily demands his fidelity of a historian in de-
scribing the South. This is particularly so in the case of a writer like Faulkner who,
throughout his life, was preoccupied with his desire to create something different
or unique in every novel.

Irving Howe says that the creation of Yoknapatawpha geographical details
itself is an accomplishment and it deserves attention by the readers, although
Faulkner's centre of attraction is elsewhere as mentioned earlier. Faulkner
introduces some major families, such as the Sartoris, the Compsons, the Sutpens,
the McCaslins and the Snopeses in his work. From these families the reader has
an advantage to make his assessment of their failures, and anxiety, and the
burdens they carry from the past. They act like the measuring rod or standard in
the assessment of the general atmosphere of the Yoknapatawphan world. The
minor families and characters have their own role in the evocation of the mood and information of the fictional world.

In the process of the saga, not only the characters develops and degenerate, but the writer himself also undergoes changes which is not to be surprised with Faulkner, as he never proposed to hold a single view on anything. His profound commitment to Bergson's philosophy of creative evolution made him to hold the view with Bergson that the temporal reality is "continuous creation of unforeseeable form" (35). With the Civil War, the racial polarization got intensified. Faulkner, being a man against racial segregation, voiced the evil of creating the chasm between the whites and the blacks. For this he was not only criticized but was also threatened. His Negro characters, however, are not presented with simplistic traits—in fact none of Faulkner's characters, either black or white, are simple representing only a particular idea. So his attitude towards Negro characters is bound to become complex, because Negro's relationship with the whites in the Southern society involves miscegenation. Anyway, Faulkner holds the view that we must live in the now accepting that in the present are both the weight of the past and the responsibility for the future. So one cannot expect Faulkner to address such social issues as miscegenation in a simplistic way. For this reason Irving Howe, in his book of critical studies, sees Faulkner showing "a whole range of responses to miscegenation, from the strongly-articulated sympathy for its victims to the conventional prophecy that it will lead to a corruption of the races." (128). Similarly Faulkner's attitude towards the South seems to be ambivalent. Although he has never been inconsistent in certain fundamental issues
of human race, he likes to look at things with a mind kept open for all sorts of impressions and responses.

This ambivalence or rather the sense of inability to communicate things adequately finds expression in his major novel The Sound and the Fury. Faulkner's difficulty, however, is not exactly as ambivalence as it is his sense of inability to communicate human experience within the framework of language and the deductive process of human cognition. While Faulkner tries to make the point that despite various angles or possibilities of human communication, the reality remains largely beyond the grasp of the Compsons, or, by extension, the society. They may have the fourteenth way of looking at the black bird, yet it is not the final one, although it may be the better one.

However, Faulkner's major concern that is explicitly dramatized in the novel is the futility of trying to comprehend the reality or truth through a framework that is static and mechanically fed with logic, longing tradition as represented by Quentin Compson. Quentin's reception of Caddy's promiscuity and his unsuccessful attempt to impose the static on the evolutionary nature of experience that is always in a state of being is the major issue in the novel. Quentin's obsession with the code of honour and chastity is so much that he himself becomes just like a talking machine having no human warmth in him; there is a conspicuous absence of the wholesome rashness that is so characteristic in human being. It is undoubtedly difficult to absorb Quentin's sense of approach to life, although he talks about the family honour and the chastity of his sister Caddy. In his article entitled "Yoknapatawpha from a Historical Perspective" Irving Howe nicely sums of the novel, "Whether taken as study of the potential for human self-destruction, or as a
rendering of the social disorder particular to our time, the novel projects a radical image of man against the wall" (119).

It is Faulkner's realization that man can find only a false and brief sanctuary from the flux of human existence; on the other hand, man makes a quest for immunity from the flux; and Faulkner's fiction affirms that the quest is as frantic and indefatigable as it is futile. Man's nature of seeking the permanence is closely associated with the desire for stasis; he looks for this stasis at both physical and psychological levels. Quentin's decision to end his life as a result of his ineffectual attempt to retain the fixed codes of honour and chastity, the first being psychological and the latter physical, indicates man's inherent obsession with the stasis. There may not be anything wrong in the original idea of Quentin when he tries to hold down the fixity. But the context in which Quentin struggles to retain them makes him appear an obsessed man. Quentin is born at a time when the Compson family has witnessed decadence, largely because of the strange philosophy of Mr. Compson, on one hand, and the changed view of the society on woman's chastity, on the other. Mr. Compson himself holds the view that there is no such thing as female chastity. Mr. Compson's view reflects the general notion of the larger society. So in such situation, Quentin is nothing but a lost cause. Quentin's puritanical assertion appears to be an unnatural mental condition which would not admit the flux of the time.

Faulkner's primary concern, however, is not about the puritanical assertion of Quentin. What Faulkner wants to reveal through The Sound and the Fury is the inherent conflict between stasis and motion. By Faulkner's logic achieving such a static apathy is similar to being dead. He makes that clear in his brief preface to
The Mansion: "Since 'living' is motion, and 'motion' is change and alteration……
Therefore the only alternative to motion is un-motion, stasis, death" (vii). To seek
the static is essentially to seek death; but Faulkner's characters still retreat from
flux, hoping to find a sanctuary that is fixed, forever safe from change and alteration.
Benjy, Quentin and Jason, all of them, try to understand the world around them
through their own ways of perception: Benjy, who is incapable of abstraction, tries
to get hold of his world through direct perception; Quentin tries to hold on to the
traditional codes of morality and tries to stop motion while Jason applies his amoral
and convenient logic to justifies his actions and self-pity. But each has his limitation
and cannot overcome the inherent weakness of human perception that is
conditioned by psychological as well as physical influence. Benjy is an idiot, and
it handicaps him severely in synthesizing experiences to grasp a reality. Quentin
has got the capacity of a normal person with Harvard education, but that does not
help him to grasp the reality better than Benjy does. Carried away by juvenile
enthusiasm and being obsessed with puritanical past he tries to assess his family
and himself that only leads him to a cull-de-sac. Jason has totally discarded the
old values or rather he has lost interest in upholding them, and he applies his
convenient logic to see things; in such kind of logic anything can be advanced or
adjusted: cruelty, meanness, avarice, etc. In the name of chastisement for
reformation, he gives harrowing mental tortures to Caddy's daughter Quentin,
and ultimately drives her away. Jason is more of a villain than anything else. This
way Faulkner puts his characters to confront situations in order to see how they
cop up with them, and in doing this he unfolds before us human experience being
explored, its weaknesses and strengths examined, its claim of infallibility tested.
Faulkner has a profound doubt on the reliability of human assertion. He goes on to explore this problem through another novel. Darl Bundren, the second son of Addie and Anse Bundren in *As I Lay Dying* is the centre of focus. Written in 59 fragments of monologues, the novel has Darl narrating a major portion of the fragments.

All the members of the family are convinced that Darl has gone into madness and they hastily decide to take an action which they consider reasonable or justifiable. He is sent to Jackson, a lunatic asylum. Even Cash who cannot support wholeheartedly the way the family members treat Darl finally thinks that Jackson is a better place for Darl. Gradually Faulkner reveals that the views of all the members of the Bundren are coloured by some individual interest. They cannot come out of their self-interest to give objective view on Darl's behaviour. Despite the sign of gradual breakdown of the mental state of Darl following the tragedy and the indigestible developments in the process of the funeral journey, Darl's consignment to the lunatic house speaks of the action tainted by motives of subjective drive. Faulkner makes it clear that Darl's malaise is not an isolated phenomenon; rather it is a part of the totality of the lives of the Bundren.

Related to the problem of grasping the authenticity is the absence of an adequate verbal formula to express one's experience that ultimately makes one destined to live a lonely life, and the isolation is rarely broken by contact with another person. The experience of Addie tells that the contact even between husband and wife failed to touch her and that Anse, her husband, merely interposed empty words between the gap without ever knowing the reality of the things for which the words stand. Darl, the most sensitive of her children, feels his isolation
perhaps the most deeply and for this reason he becomes different from the other members. Unfortunately, his extraordinary perception becomes intrusive upon other consciousness and he has to take some intellectual solace from it in the absence of emotional bonding with the family members. Darl's powerful insight into the secrets of every individual of the family rather keeps him isolated as his mother Addie cannot share her intimate feelings with her husband whose emptiness, she thinks, is filled with mere words.

Related to the idea of human isolation is the failure of the characters to live up according to the verbal formula. Faulkner examines this aspect of human weakness through characters like Cora Tull who is the most extreme example of this kind. Conventional and righteous, but severely limited by her rural upbringing, her speech is full of the phrases and rhythms of rural Southern religion, her life is largely shaped according to its verbal formulas, and her response to both individual and situations is automatically dictated by it. She sees life only in terms of words like sin and pride and repentance and duty and other similar pious phrases and she implicitly believes in what she is saying without having the least understanding of it. An illiterate Cora's life is composed of such words without any significant action for she does not know the slightest import of what she is speaking.

The community's judgment of Darl is as much the product of verbal constructs as are Anse's concept of love or Cora's convictions on sin. Faulkner seems to underscore the nature of subjectivity of every judgment by assigning Cash to comment on the motif of insanity which he says in colloquial dialect and diction indicating uncertainty with phrases such as "sometimes", "it's like", etc.
Amongst the Bundrens Cash is closest to Darl who does not justify Darl's being sent to the asylum house. But Cash's grumbling that the deliberate destruction of what he has built with his own sweat and stored the fruit of his sweat into it is a revelation of man's inability to put the objectivity above his subjective consideration. How difficult it is to gain objective mind may be seen from the disappointment of Cash who, in spite of his agreeing with Darl that the putrescent dead body needs some immediate action by way of its disposal, puts more importance on the coffin which he has built with his diligent labour; he considers his toils and sweats on the coffin is more worth attention than the dead body of his mother. With this incident Faulkner tries to indicate that judgment or opinions are formed within an individual's predilection out of his necessity of some neat label to fix on the matter concerned, although the label may not be able to signify it adequately. The bizarre ending of the novel confirms the elements of cynicism that may run parallel to the serious as a sideshow in every human affair.

Faulkner's fragmentariness and the show of distrust in well-made fiction are deeply associated with his realization of the inadequacy of language and human perspective. Faulkner has repeatedly dramatized the inability to express a truth through the agency of human language as well as human experience. This idea is nicely dramatized in his *Absalom, Absalom!* It is interesting to note that out of the five major characters narrating the story of Sutpen, two namely Miss Rosa Coldfield and Mr. Compson personally met Sutpen. But despite their first hand knowledge of the legendary man, their narratives are far from being reliable. Miss Rosa Coldfield was a sister-in-law of Sutpen, and hence she was privileged to know the man from close quarters, but the most shocking thing is that her
narration gives the most biased and distorted picture of the man that demonizes him. Quentin and Shreve who are far removed from the events of the story, tries their best and give focus on certain aspects which were not touched by both Rosa Coldfield and Mr. Compson. However, in the process of their reconstruction of the story, they are overwhelmed by their vicarious experience of the fate of Charles Bon and Judith, because it is the story that involves the lives of young people like themselves. So ultimately they end up identifying themselves completely with the characters of the past event. Once the narrators identify themselves with the characters or persons they describe, their identity is totally dissolved. In this state they fail to give objective account of the story. The problem of identifying with the characters of the story is natural where mimetic process is involved.

German playwright Bertolt Brecht, having seen the problem of the audience identifying themselves with the stage characters, deliberately introduced two-dimensional characters on the stage in which the characters have direct contact with the audience or in which the characters recognize the existence of the audience. But Brecht could not be very successful in this kind of theatre in which symbolic implication is jarred in the absence of illusion effects as the audience is encouraged to be alienated from the episode. However, Faulkner's objective is slightly different from Bertolt Brecht's. Faulkner's primary concern is to explore this aspect of human weakness and by doing so to make his reader aware on the fact, while Brecht's approach is inspired by a zeal to give a new direction to an aspect of human nature.

Then Faulkner goes on to examine the reasons behind this phenomenon. In the novel he gives us the background of the narrating characters and tries to
show that their response to the story is coloured by certain factors such as their experiential relation to the problem concerned, their cultural influence, their age and time, and their psychological predilections. When a narrative is influenced by so many background factors, the narrative will certainly be removed from the reality it proposes to describe. It is a fundamental problem that has received much attention by the modern and post-modern critics.

The postmodern notion is that history as a sign has lost all meaning and that it no longer refers to anything outside itself, having been divided or become indistinguishable from its referents. The traditional notion that history is a faithful record of past events has been challenged and the new finding shows that it is nothing but a discursive practice of its author. That is why in *Absalom, Absalom!*, through the acts of narration, the narrators rather reveal themselves more than they reveal the Sutpen story objectively. The distortions and imaginations they put in the narration may be amusing to the reader, and on the part of Faulkner it is a great artistic achievement that reminds us of the characters of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. The English school children, being cut off from human civilization, gradually make a move along regressive direction until they finally assume the nature of the brutal primitive tribes ready to kill and wallow in blood-bath. Although Faulkner's theme is different from Golding's, both the authors seem to examine certain fundamental issues that set the reader to re-examine those issues and dissipate the myths surrounding them.

Thomas Sutpen, the centre of the narrator's interest, is a man whom Faulkner magnifies into an epic figure through whose story he seeks to reinforce the fact that human life itself is a value creator. When Sutpen tries to find out
where he has committed mistake in his design of establishing Sutpen dynasty, Faulkner reminds the reader of the nature of modern world which is ever set to execute its plan ruthlessly, although the plan itself may be as hollow as its consequence is futile. Sutpen's story is the dramatization of a ruthless modern man who underestimates human values in the pursuit of success. He is a planner who works by blueprint and on a schedule. He is rationalistic and scientific, not traditional, not religious and not even superstitious. He does not recognize the vital morality of humanism which can be found in the ethical traditional world. Sutpen represents the anti-traditional, immoral world acting only for self-interest, and not acknowledging ethical duty. Ilse Dusoir Lind says: "He is the modern tragic hero, insofar as art can represent him, a man felt to be circumscribed by psychological and social conditions, however large his abilities and aspirations" (292). Ultimately if the legend of Sutpen is a subject of great interest to the narrators, it is also an ordinary tale of an ordinary man which grows into stature in the imaginations of the narrators.

Another recurrent theme that Faulkner deals with is the burden of the past on the present. He examines how the past may have its role to shape the present. The major characters such as Joe Christmas, Gail Hightower, Joanna Burden, and even Percy Grimm in Light in August are the products of a typical social upbringing. The long and detailed background of Joe Christmas is the pattern of fictional strategy adopted by Faulkner to examine this important aspect of human experience. While the childhood of Joe Christmas is beyond the control of the self, the cases of Gail Hightower and Joanna Burden are slightly different. The
illusions of Gail Hightower and Percy Grimm emanate from the realization of their inability to be a part of the romance associated with the Civil War.

It would be very difficult to know Joe Christmas without having the knowledge of his upbringing and the gradual transformation into the present state. The Jeffersonians donot know how to treat him when he arrives there. In the absence of his solid identity they put the label of “nigger” on him on the basis of the dubious information regarding his father. From Mrs. Hines's account of his birth it is known that Joe is born into a myth created for him by others. Since the pregnancy of his mother was the result of a love affair with a man of unconfirmed parentage, Doc Hines, the girl's father, in his sheer rage, looks for a scapegoat who will have to bear the guilt and punishment of his daughter as well as her lover. By calling her lover a “nigger”, he transforms a commonplace sexual love into the act of miscegenation. The awareness of something strange or different about Joe Christmas created by his grandfather simultaneously impresses on Joe and on others. The beginning of this psychological orientation continues one way or another until Christmas assumes a startlingly complex personality. The passage of time does not necessarily assure the reader any understandable pattern in his psychological and sexual behaviour.

While exploring the evolution of the personality of Christmas and other important characters, Faulkner also keeps on examining the response of the people who confront them. The communal response of the Jeffersonians to these characters, most of whom are outsiders, is itself an interesting sideshow in the novel. Faulkner observes that the community mind based on a broad generalization which may be called the basic characteristic of a myth. Again Faulkner observes
that the demand for conformity is also a common feature of community mind. This has been exemplified by the episode of Lena Grove whose pregnancy is not very different from the pregnancy of Joe's mother. In spite of this, she is tolerated and given food and shelter, because she is acquiescent by nature. Although the role of Lena is tangential in the development of the main episode of Joe Christmas, she gains importance through her presence as a different character from others. The community's tolerance of Lena does not necessarily mean that she carries the world view of Faulkner. Rather Faulkner seems to be enjoying a wry humour through her while she also serves as a standard for testing the communal response of the Jeffersonians.

Finally the lynching of Joe Christmas as a Negro is based on a myth which is given shape jointly by his private world and the larger public universe.

Faulkner's fiction deals with issues which have perennial interest. Although he is a writer of his own way, he has never deviated from the issues that bear universal as well as perennial interests. The method he has applied to explore human experience in his fiction will certainly survive long like those of Shakespeare and the epics. The fictional strategy he has adopted in the writing of his major works emanates from his profound knowledge of human weaknesses and strengths as well as the aesthetic possibilities that have been offered so far.

Faulkner's technique and style are more experimental but effective for the purpose of his recurring themes. Faulkner's narrative universe Yoknapatawpha County is his ingenious innovation of fictional strategy which has given him the liberty to build his fable of civilization. The saga of Southern aristocracy caught at a decadent point of time in the fictional history, which has also a resemblance to
the Southern history, gives the reader an advantage of a sense to history while decoding the meanings of his fiction where characterization is stylized and moral problems unrealistically defined. This is closely linked to his avowed strategy of arresting the motion so that in a hundred years from hence it may again move. The brokenness or fragmentariness of his individual works is an accomplishment of his artistic demand, while their links to the totality of the Yoknapatawpha world ensure the timelessness as well as universality—an achievement that seems to confirm his statement regarding the arrest of motion. It is a paradoxical conception that Faulkner, in his novels after novels, tries to show his characters as blindfolded creatures groping along their ways, who inevitably fail to comprehend reality which is in a state of motion.

A liberal protestant, Faulkner dramatizes the idea of puritan naivety through highly stylized characterization. Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!* thinks that the ideas of human values are similar to that of mathematical formula which would give the desired result by simply following the rules of calculation and nothing else. Similarly, Faulkner introduces such characters as Doc Hines, McEachern, Joanna Burden, etc. each of whom shows one aspect or another of the problem of religious naivety or of the missing link to the vitality of the religion they claim to advocate. Their failure is not that kind of failure which can be traced to the lacking of the individuals, but it is because of the elusive nature of the reality, which remains immune to the reach of ordinary mind. Faulkner becomes very successful in getting this idea across to the reader through this dramatization in his fiction. Throughout Faulkner's work puritan figures are described as having ability to deceive themselves by placing a dogmatic religion and an equally dogmatic so-
cial morality into separate compartments.

The European tradition influencing Faulkner’s work is associated with the elimination of the narrative voice as a distinct personality and with the substitution of symbolism as an author’s primary means of establishing his moral authority. The effort to explore both tendencies to their logical end characterizes the interior-monologue technique, as developed by Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf. Such a technique, especially in Joyce’s hands, directs the reader’s attention to the pre-rational formulations of the active human mind, and in this way eliminates, at least in principle, the unwanted commentary of the omniscient author.

Some critics are repulsed by Faulkner’s use of a convoluted and torturous language. A reader taking side with those critics may think that Faulkner is incapable of writing plain and simple language like the one that Hemingway writes. If we think that Faulkner is careless with his language in his fiction, it would be a wrong-headed idea, for if we go through his personal letters and prose works, we see his language no lesser than any renown writer of his time. His abstract and baroque syntax is closely associated with his themes in the fiction. Faulkner felt the necessity of an artificial language to convey the abstract ideas and illusions most of his characters give away. David L. Minter thinks “Faulkner’s ‘strangely fluid and slippery and heavily mannered prose’—those ‘queer sentences’ that at first so often seem ‘monsters of grammar or awkwardness’—prove in the end ‘extraordinarily effective’ in rendering a basically violent and endlessly problematic reality” (16).
The recurring themes about legend and reality have intimate relation to his use of language. As a part of his attempt to examine the dual nature of deception and reality of language, Faulkner has persistently applied the various possibilities of language in his fictions. He has examined the verbal patterns that dominate the South, and the ways that shape individual, his society and his tradition.

Faulkner thinks that the war has destroyed the public character of language and it has provided one group with a complex pattern of experience and the other group with only a verbal pattern. Words derive their meaning both from the object or event to which they refer and from the subjective reaction of the speaker or listener to that object or event. A single word may convey different things to different people as it reflects not reality but their own particular angle of vision. Faulkner's works show a fascination and amazement to the experiential foundation of language. He traces its various forms in an effort to reveal why and how such a foundation is necessary to communicate a particular effect through language.

Through his characters Faulkner shows that some community experience is the prerequisite for communication and this is true in both individual and national contexts. The North-South engagement in linguistic solipsism for example, can be seen in *Absalom, Absalom!* when Quentin attempts to convey to Shreve the particularly Southern qualities of his experience and language. The existence of such a problem indicates decisively that there is no direct relationship between the word and its referent. The object is itself involved in the process of change and the word is continually acquiring additional connotations, personal, social, and historical, in order to make it conform to the speaker's view of that object. Even proper nouns have there clusters of secondary meanings and associations.
For example, the word "Caddy" in the *Sound and the Fury* involves the whole complex of private associations belonging to Benjy, Quentin, Jason, Dilsey, etc.

Faulkner also tries to focus on the problems that exist between concept and reality. This is because of the elasticity of the language which can be stretched to serve the imagination of the speaker concerned. For example the question of virginity can be taken either as a symbol or a physical condition. Mr. Compson recognizes it to be both. The former is eternal and immutable, while the latter yields to time and change. Quentin Compson and Jody Varner are concerned solely with the symbolic value of virginity. But such symbols are continually threatened by the very object with which they are identified. Not only Quentin but Jody Varner and Byron Bunch are forced to see that Caddy, Eula, and Lena have their own ways and they donot conform to the imaginations of the young men. Thus the arbitrary identification of the symbol with a specific person is destroyed. Faulkner illustrates this idea through the painful exploration of the various implications and ramifications of the word "Negro" through the character of Joe Christmas. We notice the word "nigger" being used reflecting some attitudes and elemental feelings rather than as a concrete word indicating a person of a particular community. This is a clear example of distortion of word which is associated with emotion or feelings. It indicates that words can be used quite arbitrarily to suit the mental state of the user.

Faulkner shows that the formal category of a word imposed on a person has serious consequences. A word inadequate to convey an experience can be misused on anyone, which would give a reductive category to the person inviting a tidal wave of responses from the community. No one certainly knows whether
Velery Bon and Christmas are actually Negroes. Velery's mother is believed to be an octoroon by the various narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* Sharing this belief, Judith Sutpen sends him into a wretched condition of conflict with both black and white worlds. Even after he commits himself to the black world through marriage, the uncertainty continues and even his wife cannot but think that he is a white man. Similarly, Joe Christmas goes through a violent period of alternately affirming and denying his black blood, because of his uncertainty about his origin. In both cases the category of Negro is imposed on their consciousness by the convictions or actions of others. In short "Negro" or "nigger" is no longer a descriptive or generic term but a compressed myth to which the plantation system, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction have all contributed shades of meaning. In Southern context the term has evolved to become an actual and unquestionable sign of slavery, stigma and evil.

The shift in language from the concrete and descriptive to the abstract and logical is accompanied by a corresponding shift in man's attitude to experience. As long as the individual restricts himself to the level of essential meaning and knowledge, language does not present a serious problem. Man's reasoning or conscious mind always attempts to articulate and so order its own reaction to experience. The process of generalization ultimately requires such mind to draw an abstraction. On the other hand, Benjy Compson, Ike Snopes, and Jim Bond are incapable of passing from the concrete object which they handle to generalizations, and consequently, they are bounded by the physical world in which they live. They are capable of working and of physical effort but have difficulty in finding word with which to express themselves.
Finally, the study on Faulkner's strategies of exploring human experience leads one to conclude that he is a master innovator of fictional devices, who has been able to make a breakthrough through his fearless assertiveness in his technique and style. He was uneducated in so far as the vocation of art is concerned, and one can expect unpredictable things from a self-made man. His radical ideas on the notion of reality and on human perspective will always prevail on the reader and scholar alike to come to him for inspiration as well as for clues to seek further possibilities in the craft of fiction. Considering the growing reception of Faulkner's works outside his native land, John E. Bassett says "the international momentum will continue to bring from abroad more and probably better commentary each year, not only from Japan but from all over the world" (22). His view that mere conformity to society's artificially established codes and traditions has no moral significance is grounded on his commitment to writing as a responsible citizen of the society. How he writes is his personal identity, while what he writes is his commitment to the society. Lastly, the ultimate value of an artistically ordered narrative depends first on its power, as story, to hold the attention and interest of the reader; then ultimately on its power to move the emotional and intellectual sensibilities of the reader. In the collaborative act of reading the extra efforts required of the reader by a difficult storyteller like Faulkner, must always be rewarded ultimately by the power to move the reader profoundly.

Works Cited


