

NARRATOLOGY, MYTH AND DISSOLUTION IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S  
*THE SOUND AND THE FURY*

I

In contemporary critical theory, narratology has become of late one of those tools which, despite its apparent simplicity, may prove to be quite useful for a better reading – and understanding – of literary texts.

This critical method had its beginning and most substantial developments in the writings of Gérard Genette who, starting from a structuralist stance, attempted the listing and analysis of the essential formal aspects which make out a narrative text<sup>1</sup>.

Genette's studies were later commented and extended by some other critics, such as Mieke Bal, Slomith Rimmon-Kenan, and F.K. Stanzel<sup>2</sup>, who came to pinpoint and improve – at times – some of the arguments defended by the French critic. Genette's importance and insight, however, still confirm his outstanding position in the studies of narratology.

In a general sense, narratology can be defined as a structured and logical method to approach narrative texts: the events and the ways in which they happen come to be the core of these studies. In a combined interpretation Genette-Bal the *text* is understood as the written –or oral– manifestation of a second level, the *story*, where events and time have already been selected and ordered. This second level of the story is also based on a third level of simply the «raw material» called the *fabula* in Bal's terminology. The participants or characters; time; space; focalization, and the act of narrating itself are some of the most relevant factors to be analysed by the narratological critic.

Also very relevant in this textual analysis is the difference which exists between the time in which the story –a series of events– «happened», and the time in which the narrator is telling it: the analysis of the relationships between the time of the story and the time of the narrating is essential to understand, for instance, the narrator's attempts to involve the reader into the narrative, or the way in which the free indirect discourse works<sup>3</sup>.

A narratological analysis also highlights the logical –although rather complex– line of communication which takes place in any given narrative. The *real author* is conceived –so as to avoid the «authorial fallacy» –as an entity totally external to the text once he or she has finished the writing of it. In effect we can say, for instance, that William Faulk-

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1. See his remarkable *Narrative Discourse*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980 (French edition, 1972); and also his subsequent *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988 (1983).

2. See Mieke Bal's *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); S. Rimmon-Kenan's *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983); and F. K. Stanzel's *A Theory of Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

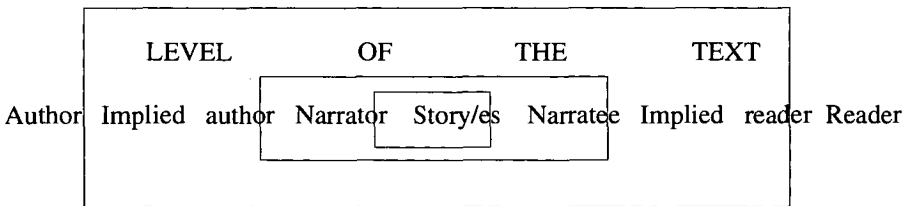
3. On this concept see Bal, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-42.

ner «tells» us nothing in *The Sound and the Fury* because he is not «here and now» when the contemporary reader reads such a splendid novel. On the contrary, the first entity which we can speak of *within* a narrative text is the figure of the *implied author*<sup>4</sup> or number of ultimate implications –or hidden purpose– which the careful reader may discover in the novel, short-story, or narrative poem. Nevertheless, the first actual «voice» the reader usually encounters is the *narrator*'s<sup>5</sup>.

Many essays have been dedicated to the figure of the narrator but, once again, Gérard Genette seems to be the one who has developed one of the most interesting classifications. The French critic divides narrators mainly according to two different aspects: their belonging or not to the «diegesis» –or world of the story–; and their having been participants or not in the story. According to the first division, a narrator is qualified as *extra-diegetic* when it does not belong in the diegesis, or *intradiegetic* when it does<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, the narrator will be *heterodiegetic* when it is not a participant in the story it narrates, or *homodiegetic* when it is<sup>7</sup>. An *auto-diegetic* narrator is the homodiegetic voice who, on top of being a participant, is also the hero or protagonist in the story<sup>8</sup>.

In a narratological analysis, definitions and vocabulary are –as the reader has, no doubt, noticed– quite imposing but once the concepts are clarified, the results which an analysis of this type can bring about are certainly worth-while.

Obviously, all the «senders» of messages –real author, implied author, and narrator– have their respective counter-parts or «receivers». Namely, the *narratee* (explicit or implicit) to whom the narrator addresses the story; the *implied reader* or ideal entity capable of understanding the implications thrown by the implied author; and the flesh-and-blood *real reader* who, the same as the real author, is an element external to the text and not a paper-figure, as the case is with all the other entities already mentioned. The following diagram helps to clarify the way in which the communicative process works in a typical narrative text:



4. A concept which, however, M. Bal refuses to acknowledge as specific of narratology (*op. cit.*, pp. 119-20). On the concept see the well-known volume by Wayne C. Booth *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961); also the classic essay by Walter Gibson «Authors, speakers, readers,-and mock-readers», reprinted in *Reader-Response Criticism*, Jane P. Tompkins, ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

5. Unless the text starts with the direct speech or thoughts of one of the characters.

6. *Narrative Discourse*, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-29.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 244-45.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

The concept of *focalization* has become another of the most relevant tools in the narratological analysis. Focalization in itself is nothing but a new term to refer to the old activity of perception or point of view<sup>9</sup>. If, in a figurative sense, we can say that the narrator functions in the text as the «voice» which tells the story, focalization will be the element which provides the «eyes» to see the places and people which appear described in the narrative. But the way in which something or somebody is described or apprehended also conveys an act of *interpretation*, and the analysis of focalization also helps the careful reader or critic to perceive the cosmovision implied in the activities of the focalizer: the «eyes» are deeply related to the «mind», as Shakespeare himself stressed in his *Sonnets*.

In general terms, focalizers may also be divided in two main groups: they can be either *external* –a correlative of the «omniscient» discourse of the narrator–; or *internal* and bound to a specific character. The first type has practically no restrictions in its activities: it can be anywhere and have access to anything, including the characters' thoughts. The second type, character-bound, is precisely restricted to the range of vision which encloses a given character's perception.

But, what kind of analysis can be developed with such sort of logical or pseudo-logical jargon? An approach to one of the most difficult narrative texts of American Modernism will attempt to answer this question.

## II

*The Sound and the Fury*<sup>10</sup> is a novel clearly divided in four parts which constitute four different narratives mainly because of the fact that there exists a different narrator in each of them: the same series of events or their sequels are presented by these narrators but the reader has the impression that the whole text is a sort of puzzle where his or her aim is precisely to re-order the events here shown in such a distorted way. Cooperation on the part of the reader seems to be an essential characteristic in the reading of this novel. And no wonder it is so: *The Sound and the Fury* is a typical modernist novel and its author lived in a period characterised by very important changes both in society and literature.

In a first approach to the text, the cultivated reader will notice that its very title is a reference to another literary work –Shakespeare's *Macbeth*–, a very typical device in modernist texts –we only have to think of *The Waste Land*. «Why the reference?», the reader may ask: the answer, as in any major literary work, can be a multiple one but, in any case, it throws the conscious reader out of the scope of Faulkner's novel and carries him or her towards one of the few essential subjects always operating in the mind of the human being: the meaning of life, also a modernist plight. But, going backwards to *Macbeth*, a first relationship seems to be quickly established between the two texts: in Shakespeare's play life comes to be nothing but «a tale/ Told by an *idiot*, full of sound and fury, /Signifying nothing» (Act V, scene IV), and the first narrator of Faulkner's book is precisely characterised for his being an «idiot». However, and from the very beginning,

9. See M. Bal, *op. cit.*, p. 100 et seq.

10. William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978 (1929). All subsequent quotations are from this edition.

things are not so clear. Both in Shakespeare's and in Faulkner's text, who or what is full of «sound and fury», «life» or the «idiot»? or are both elements one and the same?

Keeping this doubt in mind we can progress into the text and realize the importance time is going to have from the very beginning. In effect, the four sections of the book are named after the four different dates in which supposedly the narrators tell about some events which took place in those dates but also in their respective pasts: the reader will come to realize that these four dates coincide with the narrating time of the four different narrators; however, in those days only *some* of the events told in the story actually took place. The importance of the narrating time is, therefore, highlighted from this first temporal division: as readers will perceive later on, *the activity of narrating* –far from being the artificial convention it becomes in «realistic» fiction– is an all-important element in the novel.

Benjy, the first narrator –and alleged «idiot» of the book– is homodiegetic, as he played a part in the story he narrates. But his narrating activity is certainly a peculiar one: he frequently presents the direct speech of some of the characters, introducing a narratorial «tempo» in which the time it takes to narrate an event is usually equal to the «actual» time the event took in the story. In a mathematical formula we could affirm that  $NT = ST$  (narrating time = story time). This narratorial tempo –which will be frequently repeated also in the second and third part of the novel– allows the reader to know punctual events –or scenes– where he or she is forced to stop. On the contrary, Benjy does not summarize, does not comment on the events he tells. Even when using the indirect discourse, the «idiot» is purely and aseptically describing: «Caddy went and leaned her face over the bed and Mother's hand came into the firelight. Her rings jumped on Caddy's back» (p. 61). Here Benjy functions as a sort of «Camera Eye»<sup>11</sup> and the pace of the narrative is not altered either, the narrating time being equal to the story time. The only indication we may find of these two times being distinct is Benjy's use of the past tense when applying the indirect discourse, but even this characteristic disappears when, at the end of his narrative, the time of the story comes to coincide with Benjy's narrating time in his apparently confused mind:

Then the dark began to go in smooth, bright shapes, like it always does, even when Caddy says that I have been sleep (p. 72; emphasis added).

Being the only narrator in this part, Benjy also acts as a character-bound focalizer to present the events he narrates in this aseptic way. His focalizing activities extend even to the «tone» of the direct speeches he presents: there are neither question nor exclamation marks because he does not perceive these tones as pertinent in his discursive activities. On the contrary, the reader must create Benjy's portrait out of the restrictions of the idiot's discourse: this narrator-focalizer operates as a selector of scenes and other characters' words, elements which are presented bare of narratorial comments or even tonalities. The reader is scarcely left with the relevance –by means of repetition– of certain objects which may be interpreted as «symbols» for Benjy: the fire, the cushion, the slipper, the mirror, Caddy.

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11. Using the phrase with which J. Dos Passos denominated one of his own –modernist– techniques in his well-known trilogy *U.S.A.* (1937, first one-volume edition).

Obviously Freudian analysis will have to come to the aid of narratology here to interpret both Benjy's fixation with these objects and his restricted «view» of the events. The influence of Freud's theories on Faulkner is quite well-known<sup>12</sup> and the fact that several characters in *The Sound and the Fury* show clear symptoms of neurosis is rather obvious: in this sense, it is easy to affirm that Benjy is still located in that second stage of the ontogenetic evolution which Freud named «attachment to love objects»<sup>13</sup>, his love is being transferred into objects, including a mirror in which he cannot clearly recognize himself as a separate individual; that recognition –which many years later Lacan will name «the mirror state»<sup>14</sup>– has not been fulfilled by Benjy yet, what will help us explain his peculiar activity as narrator and focalizer: he seems to be talking to nobody, not even to himself (as he cannot fully recognise his self). We are in a first part characterized by a zero-narratee.

Benjy's confusion of times is indicative not only of his peculiar mis-functioning as a person but also of the modernist character of *The Sound and the Fury*. Early in the twentieth century different theories on internal time –coming from the studies of William James and Henri Bergson, among other well-known philosophers– started to be understood as correspondent to Einstein's recent discoveries on the relativity of external time: the theory of relativity and quantum physics came to demonstrate that time was no longer, even for the scientist, an absolute category, and that it was perfectly integrated with space in a vast space-time continuum, a new dimension which writers such as William Faulkner tried to imitate in their literary works by means of technical devices<sup>15</sup>. For the reader of Benjy's narrative, time seems to become almost «timeless» when we experience the *anachronies*<sup>16</sup> of the text: an almost total confusion –although based in the process of association of ideas<sup>17</sup> which, in any case, stresses the importance and *immediacy* of the idiot's mental activity: Benjy, as a narrator, thinks in the narrating time and it is precisely this type of time the one which is highlighted in the first part.

The second part's narrating time is located eighteen years earlier (June second, 1910) and here the narrator is not just homodiegetic, it can also be defined as autodiegetic: in fact, Quentin shows a high respect for his own ego and introduces himself not only as a participant but as the actual «hero» and protagonist of the story he narrates. In Freudian terms, he even tells the narratee about his «day dreaming» in which he becomes the rescuer of Caddy and saviour of the South.

His self-consciousness and egotism may lead the reader into thinking that Quentin is mainly talking to himself, that is to say, narrator and narratee would be the same entity. Although at times the distorted figure of the Father also appears as a possible narratee, however –going back again to Freud's theories– «Father» does not represent in Quentin's

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12. See, for instance, *The Literature of the United States*, W. Blair et. al., eds. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and C., 1970 (1961); pp. 900-35.

13. For a more detailed analysis of this Freudian theory and its implication in literary studies see Rosemary Jackson's *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, London: Methuen, 1981; pp. 61-72.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-91.

15. On the influence of the new physics in twentieth century literature see Robert Nadeau's clarifying work *Readings from the new book on nature: physics and metaphysics in the modern novel*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981.

16. «Differences between the arrangement in the story and the chronology of the fabula we call *chronological deviations or anachronies*.» M. Bal, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

17. A notion so popular at the time that it even constituted one of the pillars in which James G. Frazer based some of his theses in *The Golden Bough* (London: Macmillan, 1922, one-volume ed. [1915]).

narrative his actual father but a mental image to be associated with the repressing super-ego: a received cosmovision which frequently imposes on Quentin's character and which eventually would lead him to commit suicide. The narratee, in both versions –ego and super-ego– would never go beyond Quentin's persona.

Argumentation, comments, and analyses of the family problems are clear indications, in Quentin's discourse, of a change in the narrative tempo: there are many moments of reflection which did not appear in Benjy's discourse and consequently the aseptic telling of the latter's narrating activity disappears in Quentin's: his is an attempt to convince himself (and indirectly the reader) of his own *interpretation* of the events. In his interpretation –focalization, as he is also a character-bound focalizer– his obsessive character becomes all too clear; he even consciously interprets objects as symbols, such as the famous watch: Quentin is already a symbol-making animal, he lives in a more «advanced» stage of the ontogenetic evolution than his brother Benjy's. But the result is mental obsession: the morality of the old South becomes symbolized in the chastity of his sister Caddy and once the symbol is degraded –Caddy loses her virginity– the symbolizing South also collapses, and suicide is the only way out for the man of honor.

This symbol-making narrator is also the prototype of a sort of intellectual who stands between the «fin de siècle» decadence and American Modernism. He even permits himself the elaboration of a pun which may throw the reader into more doubts about the title of the novel and Benjy's apparent idiocy:

because Harvard is such a fine *sound* forty acres is no high price for a fine sound. A fine dead sound we will swap Benjy's pasture for a fine dead sound. It will last him a long time because he cannot hear it unless he can smell it (p. 158; emphasis added).

What is the meaning of «sound» after all? The reader should not forget that Quentin is both narrator and focalizer and in this double role he can reactivate, from the inside, some of the most important issues which the reader perceives from the outside when reading the text. Another ironic –self-referential– touch comes when, in his stream-of-consciousness, Quentin also demonstrates having a certain knowledge of Einsteinean and Bergsonian theories: «Eating the business of eating inside of you space too *space and time confused* Stomach saying noon brain saying eat o'clock» (p. 97; emphasis added).

These notes of irony, as will be later discussed, are not to be attributed to Quentin himself but to the higher-levelled implied author of the novel. Quentin is only left with his obsessive mind which continually retrieves him from June 10, 1928, into the past. In effect, if the reader may conclude that Benjy's mind lives in the immediacy of a present thinking where events from the past are brought forward, he or she may also perceive how, thanks to his obsessive symbolic activity Quentin's mind always makes his present thinking escape backwards, towards his past. This regressive pull is materialized on the text by means of a technique of interior monologue or psycho-narration which becomes at times totally free of punctuation and which, in this way, tries to represent the subsequent lack of consciousness operating on Quentin's mind, a lack of consciousness which even leads him to confuse Dalton and Gerald, and start fighting the wrong man (pp. 135-51).

Benjy the idiot always respects punctuation; Quentin the intellectual is engulfed by his own past. The frontiers between idiocy and intelligence become quite blurred in this second part and new gaps open on the possibility of ever reaching objective knowledge

when the reader realizes that some scenes –such as the one in which Benjy pushes Caddy into the bathroom– reappear, perceived now from a different angle.

The third part opens with a narratorial voice talking in the present tense and whose third pronounced word is «bitch», in this manner anticipating the radically different cosmivision from which Jason is going to focalize all through this section:

Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say. I says you're lucky if her playing out of school is all that worries you. I says she ought to be down there in that kitchen right now... (p. 163)

In Jason's words the present of his narrating is fused in the present of the story events he is talking about. He will also recollect past events but his main worries, curiously enough, will be in his future. He is the «new» Northern type representing the future of the technological era but also the selfishness of the individual who, in the Freudian analysis of the ontogenetic evolution, has definitely reached the third stage and is submitted to the «reality principle». If Quentin became, in his day dreaming, his own hero, now Jason the selfish will become a prototype of autodiegetic narration: Quentin's concern about the South and his sister give way in this third part to Jason's exclusive concern about himself. In this case the narratee could be anyone who wants to listen to Jason's report: he is never engulfed by unconscious mental activity, there is only one occasion in which the reader may perceive a mild manifestation of Jason's stream of consciousness (pp. 208-9) but, on the whole, this third narrator is extremely self-conscious: he is not ashamed of his character, not even when he lies, he shows no doubts about his own behaviour. His speech is deformed by Negro and popular dialects and his repetition of the misleading «I says» further confirms his discursive immediacy with any possible narratee. From the conscious report of past events he frequently comes back to the present of his narrating time, giving the reader many clues about the cosmivision implied in the focalizing activity of such a character:

Well, I reckon those eastern jews have got to live too. But I'll be damned if it hasn't come to a pretty pass when any damn foreigner that can't make a living in the country where God put him, can come to this one and take money right out of an American pocket (p. 174).

Selfish, racist, misogynist, a frustrated child spoilt by a hypochondriac mother: Jason is another of the Freudian experiments so carefully carried out by Faulkner's mastery. Jason is Benjy's counterpart, the man absorbed by the forces of history and necessity. His «favourite» time is the future: he piles large amounts of money he never wants to spend, he chases his niece but is always late, he uses the modern telegraph but the future always outsmarts him. Meanwhile the reader faces a third focalizer who tries to impose his cosmivision on the same events: some new bits of information come in this third section of the book but the old problems are recounted here by means of a different voice and mind. Objective truth seems to escape us thanks to Faulkner's use of his narrators and focalizers and the result is the new category of a mixed space-time which, however, seems to come back in this third part to the classic separate coordinates of the old physics.

Nevertheless, the definite coming back to Newtonian physics and to the human logical frame of reference does not fully operate till the reader enters the fourth part of the novel: here the modernist experimental narration gives way to a more traditional «realistic» mood which *apparently* favours the understanding of the whole story. The old figure of

the «omniscient» narrator appears: a heterodiegetic extradiegetic voice, a non-participant which clearly stands above the diegetic world in which the Compson's story unfolds.

However, the apparent clarity which this figure introduces in the narrative<sup>18</sup> cannot be considered as such –especially for a contemporary reader– when we become aware of the artificiality which is revealed in the method itself: who is this omnipotent narrator who seems to be everywhere and has even access to the thoughts of the characters? The change from the three previous homodiegetic intradiegetic narrators into this heterodiegetic extradiegetic voice cannot fail to point out a component of artificiality. The old Coleridgean «willing suspension of disbelief» may, at the very least, suffer a serious threat with the abrupt change.

Furthermore, in this fourth part that confusion or integration which frequently or at times operated between the story and the narrating times has now disappeared. The narrator's time is definitely in the future of the story time: the narrator's use of the past tense to tell the Compson's story clearly stresses the existence of a long distance between the story and the narratee. The element of immediacy disappears. The appearance of a correlative external focalizer (imposing its superior and overwhelming position from which everything and everybody can be observed) rests credibility and proximity, and diminishes that sympathetic element which the reader of previous pages could have felt till this part of the book.

Above all, the careful reader may even feel a bit cheated because the modernist idea that any truth is relative to the observer seems now to give way to the old belief in the possibility of objective knowledge: an issue which remains to be proved at the very end of the novel... or perhaps, we may think, the fourth narrator's «truth» is also subjective?

The subjective character of truth; the impossibility to fix time and space in a clear-cut way; the decadence of the Compson family and, by extension, the common grounds for all the events told once and again: all these are elements which saturate the four parts in which the novel is divided and which demonstrate, above the four narrators, the existence of a set of implications which give the whole book its sense of unity.

This set of implications –or superior «implied author»– is also shown in a reiterative mythic pattern that underpins the whole text. This pattern is not the work of any of the narrators alone but of this superior being of uncertain characteristics which narratology has resurrected under the name of «implied author».

The first clue to perceive the mythic pattern resides precisely in the four dates in which the narrative is divided: these four days respectively coincide with Holy Saturday, Corpus Christi, Holy Friday and Easter or Resurrection Sunday. Another modernist characteristic, the use of parody – «hypertextual reference» in Genette's terminology<sup>19</sup>–, will be responsible for this interwoven pattern of myth:

From the very beginning of the first part Benjy is defined by his age; he is thirty three years old, the same age as Christ –according to tradition– when he was crucified. This new «Christ» is dumb and he appears, speechless, on Holy Saturday –when Christ is apparently dead and consequently speechless. However, Christ-Benjy is considered to be

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18. An argument which has been defended by Faulkner himself when talking about the way in which –supposedly– he wrote the whole book. See Michael Millgate's «*The Sound and the Fury*», in *Faulkner: A Collection of Critical Essays*, R. Penn Warren, ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966), pp. 96-97.

19. On the concepts of parody and hypertextuality see G. Genette's *Palimpsestes*, Paris: Seouil, 1982.



an idiot. In the fourth part the narrator describes him as being big, of «pale and fine» hair and with blue eyes (p. 244): but for his dumbness he could be a remarkable Anglo-saxon type. On top of everything else, Benjy has been castrated: he cannot produce the regeneration of the land –and life– which is asked of the Christ. In effect, this religious figure came to be understood, by the beginning of the century, as another example of the fertility dying-god which Sir James Gordon Frazer studied in his influential work *The Golden Bough* (1915). The eminent anthropologist presented as one of the main theses of his long and famous research the existence in many religions of a recurrent pattern. This pattern connects the rites of many mythologies to an ever-lasting cycle of death and resurrection. So as to propitiate the regeneration of life and vegetation it was necessary, Frazer assumed, for a god or a man –as divine representative on earth– to be put to death. In this way, by means of a process of imitation, the blood of the sacred victim would regenerate the spirit of life as a new god and a new life would sprout out of the pneuma of this dying victim.

Frazer's theories became very fashionable among modernist writers, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* being one of the clearest examples of indebtedness. Faulkner, no doubt, was also influenced by this anthropological work<sup>20</sup>, but its use in *The Sound and the Fury* is positively distorted: the dumb Christ of the Holy Saturday is followed by Quentin, the character who is carried in procession along the streets of town, the same as happens in the Corpus Christi ritual, but this time it occurs because Quentin has been accused of the attempt to kidnap a little Italian girl. His interest in the big trout, that fish which nobody can capture, is also a precedent of his Eliotean «Death by Water»: he also dies in the water, the refreshing symbol of death and resurrection. The new-born god will obviously receive the same name, Quentin, even if it happens to be a girl.

However, before the reader may discover how the new god will stand her role in life, we enter the Holy Friday. Here the suffering Christ adopts the disguise of a suffering Jason, another distorted figure who, nevertheless, also has pains in his head and follows a road of punishments towards his personal Calvary.

Finally, the latest transvestite Christ gives way to the new born Quentin-Redeemer: on Easter Sunday the sepulchre is found empty in the same way as Jason's room is found empty of «his» money. The redeemer and last hope of the Compson family proves to be nothing but a girl who can only escape in the company of the lecherous type of the red tie (another psychological symbol of sex). The mythic Frazerian cycle of death and resurrection has been completed but distorted by the tricks of the implied author: no regeneration seems to be possible. Seven years after the publication of *The Waste Land*, Faulkner does not seem to have progressed much from Eliot's poem. Life is not easy to comprehend; truth still appears to be, if anything, subjective; a mythic attempt of integration degenerates, once again, in parody and distorsion.

Narratology, as one of the possible tools to improve the reader's knowledge of a given text, may be rather efficient but, unfortunately, it cannot promise the happy end one always would like to find both in literature and in «real» life.

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20. See Carvel Collins' «*El sonido y la furia*», in W. Stegner, ed., *La novela norteamericana*. México: Diana, 1965.