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Narrative in William Faulkner's Light in August

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Abstract

The paper offers insights into the narrative of William Faulkner's Light in August (1932), foregrounding its inventiveness and originality. Although this work of literature is perceived as more conventional in comparison with its predecessors and successors in the Faulknerian oeuvre, the analysis argues that Light in August is very complex in terms of its employment of stream of consciousness, typology of narrators, multiple points of view, juxtapositions, flashbacks, tense shifts, and typographic experiments. The analysis employs a narratological theoretical framework. These theories view narrative as the product of interactions among its various interdependent components. In light of this, this analysis shows that Faulkner employs several experimental techniques that align closely with narrative theory. The conclusion is that the novel's narrative is highly experimental and technically intricate and that it lacks structural unity, as it is marked by fragmentation, digression, and discontinuity, all of which are conveyed through sophisticated narrative techniques.

Keywords: William Faulkner, Light in August, narrative techniques, modernist literature

1. Introduction

William Faulkner experimented in *Light in August* (1932), as he did not write it according to the established conventions of the genre. Instead, his narrative makes the novel complex and challenging for the reader. It constantly requires the reader's close engagement as the scope of the text is extended from the family to the town of Jefferson of Yoknapatawpha, Faulkner's "apocryphal county". Faulkner (2019) applied many experimental techniques that correspond with Genette's narrative theory presented in his *Narrative Discourse* (1972), which provides an exploratory and detailed account of a structured, systematic approach to understanding narratives. Genette provides a clear conceptual apparatus, made of concepts and terms, that allow us to probe into formal components and methods of storytelling. Genette makes a crucial distinction between the story itself — essentially the sequence of events as they unfold in time — the narrative, which is the actual text or discourse that readers engage with, and the act of narrating, which refers to the process or context in which the narrative is set forth.

According to Genette's theories, order, duration, and frequency are the three most important elements to be taken into consideration when studying the relationship between the time of the

story and that of the narrative. Genette uses the general term *anachrony* to describe any discordance between them, while identifying analepsis (flashback) and prolepsis (flash-forward) as the main types. (Genette, 1980: 40). In this analysis, analepsis and prolepsis are considered the two main narrative techniques that dominate in the narrative of *Light in August*, along with what Genette calls the "temporal order of succession of events in the story and the pseudo-temporal order of their arrangement in the narrative." (Genette, 1980: 35).

This paper's original contribution lies in two closely connected interventions. Firstly, it develops a typology of narrator unreliability that is directly grounded in these analeptic configurations, showing how different patterns of retrospective narration generate distinct modes of epistemic and ethical instability. Secondly, it proposes a mapping of analeptic cycles, offering a systematic account of their structures, recurrences, and narrative functions that goes beyond existing linear or episodic models of analepsis. Together, these frameworks provide a refined analytical tool for examining how temporal disruption and narrative voice interact to shape meaning in complex narrative texts. The overall aim of this paper is to advance the analysis beyond prior Faulkner (2019) narratology by mapping of a typology of narrator unreliability and a mapping an analeptic cycles by providing an original and relevant contribution to the Faulkner criticism.

2. Literature Review

Narratology remains the most important contribution to the study of the way narratives work, are formed, and are received. William Faulkner's *Light in August* can be placed within the narratology study as it has a complex narrative. On the analysis of narrative unreliability, this study both draws on classical narratology as well as recent theories of focalization, cognition, and ethical narrative. The theoretical pillar is Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1980), whose taxonomy of narrative time – order, frequency, and reach, and differentiation of voice and mood – permit the precise identification of temporal and structural procedures that create unreliability. By shifting its focus on to narrative time, this study also rejects the moralizing assessment of narrators so central to Booth (1961) classical approach in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, instead it highlights the epistemic and temporal consequences of narration. Booth (1961) addressed ethical and rhetorical dimensions of narratorial authority, but that model entails a stable normative voice.

The reader's construction of story worlds under fragmented or temporal-stage non-linear narration is also in the focus in Fludernik's (1996) experientiality theory and in Herman (2002) cognitive narratology. In a work of synthesis, Fludernik draws on theories of literary and linguistic to offer a complex new model of narrative. This study is both an historical overview and theoretical study, with the author citing a vast array of examples from the earliest oral tradition to contemporary experimental texts. She employs theopics to argue that contemporary fiction, rather than marking the end of narrative, is the peak of a developmental process lasting centuries. With an emphasis on a comprehensive synthesis and critical analysis of interdisciplinary narrative studies, Herman (2002), in *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*, maintains that narrative is a cognitive style, a discourse genre, and a writing resource. Since stories are instruments that have evolved to aid humans in understanding their world, norratives not only have a logic but are a logic that delivers a unique tool for organizing and making sense of experience. The author explicitly integrates and builds on significant notions of narrative in the theories of literary criticism, linguistics, and cognitive science, with each theory introducing additional concepts that make it possible to interpret various forms of narratives. In its comprehensive historical tracing and integration of competing strands of narrative theory, and in its critical perspective on what narratives are and how they operate, it

opens up narrative theory to encompass a wider range of story forms and contexts of expression, however and wherever they might emerge.

Later theorists e.g., Nünning (2005) conceptualize unreliability as a so-called interpretive effect triggered by various textual signals intertwined with cultural conventions and reader implications. Nünning (2005) consideration, based on cognitive narratology, shifts the focus of unreliable narration from a traditional, authorial standpoint to the position of the reader. He maintains that unreliability is not an inherent attribute of the narrator, but rather something constructed by the reader's perspective, mediated by conflicts between the narrator's world view and the norms of the implied author. Nünning disputes that unreliability can be completely calculated by the narrator's mental state or "lying intention," or the like. Instead it's like a communicative tactic between the writer and reader. He stresses that readers apply their own frame of mind to the identification of cues (or discrepancies) in the text to assess the "fictional mind" of the narrator. Nünning advises to search for contradictions or incongruous elements in the text that indicate the narrator's vision is distorted or prejudiced and this forces the reader to come up with an alternative reading of the events.

Phelan (2005), *in Living to Tell about It*, makes substantial theoretical contributions, notably by positing a useful distinction between disclosure functions (communications from the implied author to the authorial audience) and narrator functions (communications from the character narrator to the narratee). Phelan, among others, also recognizes different varieties of character narration (first-person narration) such as restricted, suppressed and mask narrations. Moreover, Phelan advances new readings of such entrenched narrative theory concepts as unreliable narration, the implied author, focalization, and lyric narrative. Phelan extends the notion of "ethical position" and considers the relations between the ethical positions of characters, narrators, authors, and audiences. This way of thinking foregrounds both the intimate relations between narrational and ethical technique on the one hand, and the complex ethical implications of the positions of the authorial audience and the reader on the other. Phelan's rhetorical narratology makes clear distinctions between the communications at the authorial, narratorial, and character levels and embeds ethical evaluation at each narrative level.

Narrative Unreliability in the Twentieth-Century First-Person Novel authored by D'hoker and Martesn (2008) considers the evolution of unreliable first person narration in Western literature with constant reference to Faulkner's novels for exemplification of the technique in American literature. It examines the ways in which Faulkner employs unreliable, stream-of-consciousness narrators to argue that truth is not monistic but arises from the contention among multiple, frequently contradictory, viewpoints. It is a truth universally acknowledged that Faulkner's novels, *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury* in particular contain the greatest examples of modern multi-narrator storytelling, different speakers take turns offering unreliably subjective narratives. Faulkner is analyzed with other modernists to show the way unreliable narration is used in the twentieth-century novel.

In *Unnatural Narrative: Theory, History and Practice*, Richardson (2015) presents a theoretical framework for reading and hearing antirealist and antimimetic works, whether in the theater traditions of Aristophanes or postmodernism. This new approach produces novel theoretical vantage points on the fundamental ingredients of story, including beginnings, sequencing, temporality, endings, and narrative as such. Offering an original interpretation of the concept and practice of unnatural narrative, and making use of both narrative theory and recent work on mimesis and world-making in story, Richardson brings new precision to the debate on the nature of life is like narrative fiction.

Chatman (1990), in *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, deals with the concepts of narratology and text theory in general. He presents topics as a coherent lecture of narrative terminology from two vantage points. The first point of view, is an outside one, taking into account the relations of narrative in particular, fictional narrative to other kinds of discourse or "text types." He deals also with the internal aspect of narratology by going beyond Genette's vital distinction between "Who narrates?" and "Who sees? " to suggest that we create different terms for the "point of view" of the narrator and that of the character. He further contends that the term "unreliable" should only be used for narrators.

Shlomith Rimmon - Kenan, (1972) in *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, makes the distinction between external or internal by following a categorization system put forward by Genette, who distinguishes between non-focalized, internally focalized, and externally focalized "recits" (pp. 206-7)."Non-focalized" is equivalent to his "external focalization" while "internally focalized" is equivalent to his "internal focalization." According to a point in Genette's system, as noted by Bal (1985) "nonfocalized, on one hand, and internally focalized, on the other, are differentiated according to the location of the observer, the focalizer, while the distinction on the other hand, between internally focalized and externally focalized, is according to the object of observation, the focalized" (pp. 28-29). Bal (1985) herself presents in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative,* a systematic theory of narrative aimed at enhancing understanding and communication in the analysis of literary and other narrative texts. Her study navigates the complexities of interpretation, and allows for varied applications of the theory in different critical contexts.

Holman (1972) in *The Unity of Faulkner's Light in August* argues that the novel's main unifying factor is the characters and the events being continuously paralleled to the story of Christ, thus making Joe Christmas a kind of Christ figure. The narrative strands achieve unity through Faulkner's intentional imitation of Christ, especially pointing on Joe Christmas, thus, beneath the surface of the stories of loneliness, race, and the South that critics were debating, a profound structural unity can be found. According to Holman (1972), the narrative of Gail Hightower is the theme of the Protestant religion; sex is the theme of Lina Grove, in her relationship with Lucas Burch and Byron Bunch; and the theme of a black man in a southern society is the tale of Joe Christmas; these are the most dominating themes, each of them containing, somehow, two others (p. 236).

Railey (1999) situates Faulkner's narrative decisions within the context of his preoccupation with history and social ideologies. The South's cultural baggage, that is, the author's wrestling with Southern heritage and his ambitions to construct a social vision, inform both the characterization and structural components of *Light in August*. Railey contends that Faulkner's narrative is an attempt to write himself into history, as a natural aristocrat, through which the novel's social and ideological matrix is formed. In addition, Rountree (2021) argues that *Light in August* opens up to show the continuing effects of slavery and capitalism on American social relations. The characters in the novel and their narratives are testament to the after-effects of enslaving logic that continues to inform what it means to be a citizen and what counts as work, thereby providing a socio-historical lens to narrative intricacy.

Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of language as simultaneously socially constituted and individually produced, Lockyer (1991) argues in *Ordered by Words: Language and Narration in the Novels of William Faulkner* that Faulkner becomes acutely aware of both the power and the peril inherent in language. Lockyer contends that Faulkner both participates in and critiques the desire to impose order through language, making linguistic self-reflection a persistent subtext throughout his fiction. She further situates Faulkner's narrative strategies

within his broader social and thematic concerns, particularly his engagement with America's history of racial conflict.

Minter (2001) discusses in *Faulkner's Questioning Narratives: Fiction of His Major Phase, 1929-42* the stories and tensions that define *Light in August*. The analysis is made in the context of Faulkner's mature fiction, the tensions at play within the fiction and the creativity not only exhibited by the author but also extended to his characters and required of his readers. He investigates Faulkner's interrogational narrative mode and argues that the novel's proliferating storylines questions rather than resolve questions. The characters' telling and retelling of their competing histories works to engage the reader. This approach to narration is consistent with Faulkner's general inclination to create narratives that highlight the fragmented and sometimes ephemeral nature of human cognition.

Byungjoo (2008) in *Faulkner's Aesthetics of Multiple Narratives in Light in August,* studies the narratives of Joe, Hightower and Lena to find out the aesthetics of multiple narratives. According to him, *Light in August* is a novel which depicts how a single vision of life is formed by the combined voices of the narrators as modernists usually do. Nevertheless, Faulkner does not lead us to combine the three narratives but rather to open up the different facets of the novel through the simultaneous use of the aesthetics of multiple narratives.

Sandy (2020) notes on the use of ghost and phantom motifs in the novel, relating to Wordsworthian and Byronian allusions. This figurative language expresses an elegiac connection to land and place, building upon the layers of the narrative and highlighting the spectral quality of history and memory in the landscape. Tombiling et. al. (2021) explore the social contradictions inherent in the story, focusing on how Faulkner's narrative embodies race, class and violent tensions. Such tensions are seamlessly integrated into the story to highlight the role of societal challenges in shaping not only the characters' individual traumas but also the collective memory of cultural suffering.

Contemporary Faulkner criticism emphasizes the convergence of race, ideology, and narrative ethics. Recursive communal analepses, especially those of Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden, serve as formal correlatives for the creation of racial myth and social prejudice (Bleikasten, 1990; Woods, 1995; Minter, 1969). This also demonstrates that the unreliability of narratives in Faulkner can not be separated from an ethical and societal critique: the dislocation of knowing is paralleled by the social processes that generate racilalised violence.

The essays of Fowler and Abadie (2007) examine the Faulkner-race relationship. Faulkner resolutely has investigated the deeply repressed psychological depths of race, wondering about the meaning of blackness in a largely white society.

Modern Faulkner studies engage Faulkner with African American writers and critical race theory, including Southern literary culture more broadly. Ethical approaches to Faulkner (Wain-wright 2021) posit him as more than a regional novelist, as a moral thinker concerned with individual and collective ethics in — particularly racially charged — environments. Instead of being tangential, race is central to narrative structures, relationships between characters, and Faulkner's literary legacy. Trefzer et al. (2024), situates Faulkner in dialogue with fellow Mississippi writers Richard Wright and Eudora Welty. Their analysis draws negotiation with racial politics, Jim Crow, and critical race theory to uncover intersections of Faulkner's text with African American literary lineage and Southern racial awareness. Through the lens of comparative study, Faulkner scholars reassess Faulkner's treatment of race and examine how in terms of racial ethics his work may also be read against African American narrative trajectories and Mississippi's larger cultural milieu.

Wainwright (2021) offers an arguably most sustained ethical discussion of Faulkner's fictions to-date as he investigates the major novels as moral texts in addition to literary art. It considers the way Faulkner defines obligations, responsibility, kindness, and ethical lapses—frequently in situations influenced by racial violence, social ranking, and communal duty. While it is not a book about race per se, the ethical perspective sheds light on how Faulkner's narrative strategies engage with issues of racial justice, moral accountability, and the sanctity of human life not only in *Light in August*, but also in others.

Wainwright (2021) is the first full-length study of ethics in the William Faulkner canon. For its analysis of Faulkner's fiction, his study borrows from the magnum opus of utilitarian philosopher Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, as basic model. Although Faulkner's ethics does not assert that Faulkner was directly influenced by Sidgwick's text, the book does examine the moral concern of Faulkner. It makes the case that Faulkner's language is a moral medium and that it expresses the ethical ways in which people come to terms with life's exigencies. Developing the shape of this changing medium through six of the author's most significant novels, it considers the fundamental principles articulated in *The Methods of Ethics* with the incorporation of more recent developments in moral philosophy, particularly those of Jacques Derrida and Derek Parfit.

Watson (2011) examines in *Faulkner and Whiteness* how whiteness in American culture is interrogated and unsettled in Faulkner's fiction. He contends that whiteness, as one among several racial configurations the Nobel Laureate repeatedly interrogates, figures prominently. This collection situates Faulkner's work — and its critical treatment — in the contexts of the literature of the time, and within academic movements in race and text. Watson (2011) considers the ways in which Faulkner's fiction enacts and undermines the production of whiteness — questioning racial identity, normative power, and the white gaze in the absence of a hegemonic Black presence. He examines depictions of racial intersectionality, queer identity, and white complicity in racial othering.

Watson and Tomas (2016) situate Faulkner in conversation with black authors in the Americas, identifying echoes and points of antagonism between Faulkner's racial portrayals and Black literary counter(narratives). This volume explores tensions and confluences between Faulkner's literary modernism and African American literary forms and genres such as sound, migration narratives, and poetry. It highlights transnational racial dialogues that problematize or recode Faulkner's representations of Southern racial structures.

Numerous analysis are devoted to race and morality in William Faulkner's *Light in August.* Rowbottom (2025) reads Faulkner's novel through Joe Christmas and the notion of blackness as a theatrical and societal mandate. It holds that Christmas is not allowed to "break out of the ring" of racial categorization Southern society imposes on him; Faulkner employs his body and racially ambiguous identity to interrogate how racial binaries trap characters ethically and socially, driving violent ends and communal judgments. Rowbottom's 2025 article contributes to a newer turn in scholarship about how Blackness, racial passing, and ethical identity converge in Faulkner's narrative.

Mogea and Joshua (2022) discuss how racial discrimination is performed in the novel, particularly as it relates to the construction of mulatto identities and the Jim Crow racialised hierarchical system. The authors demonstrate how Faulkner represents the lack of legal protection, job discrimination, and social isolation that characterizes the ethical limbo of African American – and racially ambiguous – individuals, not as a pathological state that they must overcome as private citizens but as systemic harm they encounter within social institutions.

Čuljak and Pavković's (2022) article discusses race and ethics through the analysis of Joe Christmas as a construct of the Jim Crow socio-discourse. Drawing on Foucault's theories of power/knowledge, the authors contend that the socialized racial hierarchy informs Christmas's identity, moral decisions, and acts of violence. Madness isn't natural, though violence is–it derives from the racially mediated social practices which spiritually deform all who abide beneath the lash of racial tyranny. Subeti (2020) restages *Light in August* as a rewriting of black experience in the Jim Crow period. This places racial injustice and white supremacy at the novel's moral center and contends that Faulkner shows how conventional histories silence black people and that the sociopolitical roots of Joe Christmas's violent psyche reveal social rather than individual pathology.

These more recent readings emphasize that race is socially constructed rather than biologically determined: Christmas's racial ambiguity serves to illustrate the ways in which racial communities regulate raced norms and ethical imperatives. They also foreground what are effectively the moral challenges to keep pace with Jim Crow's brand of normality: Several essays demonstrate how Faulkner's narrators complicate received racial logics by illuminating their reliance on racial-based legal, economic and personal violence. These interpretations articulate violence as ethical outcome of thought and discourse. Rather than merely representing it, *Light in August* considers how institutionalised racial oppression informs individual action and moral disintegration.

3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of Genette's narratology is primary in the analysis. His model sees narrative as the outcome of components that are interdependent—mainly order analepsis and prolepsis. This theoretical lens provides a specific set of instruments for the examination of Faulkner's choice of narrative.

The view that the novel's discourse comprises an interaction of these elements necessitates a methodology that allows a systematic appraisal of how fragmentation, digression, and discontinuity are factors in Faulkner's experimental style. Moreover, this theoretical ground also allows for inquiry into such matters as narrative points of view, stream-of-consciousness passages, and typographic or structural deviations in the text.

This study employs a narratological-based qualitative textual inquiry method. The approach is applied for the investigation of the narrative of William Faulkner's *Light in August* by examining narrative techniques and experimentation. Through close reading, the paper aims to demonstrate the innovative and complex narrative technique of the novel. Qualitative narratological methodology was chosen as the most appropriate instrument of analysis for *Light in August*. Faulkner's narrative deals with fragmentation, shifts in time, and different points of view, and hence, qualitative narratology is the only framework that maps the interplay among narrative elements and that explains the novel's structural and thematic effects.

3.1 Corpus Selection and Passage Delimitation

The paper investigates narrative fragments of *Light in August*, which show temporal displacement, flashback, and focalizational changes (Faulkner 1990; Genette, 1980). Three criteria were applied to the selection of passages: (1) inclusion of explicit or implicit analepsis; (2) limitation of narrative information by means of internal or group focalization; and (3) presence of epistemic uncertainty or conflicting information about (a) character(s) or (an) event(s) (Fludernik, 1996; Nünning, 2005).

Key passages include Joe Christmas's upbringing in the orphanage and early flight (recursive traumatic analepses), Gail Hightower's musings on his grandfather's death (long-reach analepses), the communal narratives surrounding Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden (iterative communal analepses) as well as Doc Hines's ideologically charged reminiscences (ideologically fixated analepses). These narrative segments recur in multiple narrative contexts, allowing the study to identify analeptic cycles as recurring patterns of narrative disruption.

Passages were analyzed on the dimensions of order, frequency, reach and focalization derived from Genette's taxonomy by focusing on internal versus external analepsis and delayed exposition (Genette, 1980); singulative, repetitive or iterative narrations of the same event (Genette, 1980), (temporal) distance between analeptic event and narrative present (Genette, 1980) and internal (fixed or variable), collective, or minimally mediated (Fludernik, 1996; Nünning, 2005). They were coded and re-analyzed to identify recurring cycles where the same past event appears in multiple narrative contexts with variation in framing, ideological coloration, or focalization (Herman, 2002; Phelan, 2005).

3.2 Operationalization of Reliability and Analeptic Cycles

Narrative reliability is operationalized as an epistemic effect, emerging from temporal structuring and focalization rather than narrator ethics (Phelan, 2005; Nünning, 2005). Indicators of reduced reliability include contradictory or incompatible retrospections; recursive reappearance of events without increased informational clarity; ideological or emotional saturation of analeptic narration and dependence on communal or speculative sources lacking verifiable origin (Fludernik, 1996; Richardson, 2015).
Analepsis cycle is a term to describe repetition of a past event within multiple narrative moments, destabilising the narrative not through clarification but through repeated appearance. Cycles can be distinguished from single stories when the same past event takes place repeatedly; narrative framing, focalization or ideological coloration changes; and the cycle does not lead to the resolution of narrative uncertainty (Faulkner 1990; Genette, 1980; Herman, 2002).

3.3 Analytical Framework: Analeptic Cycles in *Light in August*

The following table summarizes definitions, types and context in the novel, and thus operationalizes temporal categories of Genette, based on observable effects in narrative unreliability. It shows that unreliability is generated by cycles of analepsis, not by narrator intention.

Table 1. Analeptic Structures, Narrative Mediation, and Unreliability in Light in August

Analeptic Category	Genettian Basis (Order / Frequency / Reach)	Narrative Agent / Focalization	Formal Narrative Features	Textual Context	Effect on Reliability
Traumatic Recursive	Internal / Repetitive / Long-Reach	Individual consciousness (internal focalization)	Fragmented retrospection; obsessive return; temporal overlap	Joe Christmas's childhood punishments; orphanage memories	Epistemic instability; past competes with present
Communal Mythic	External / Iterative / Medium-Reach	Collective voice (plural focalization)	Retelling, rumor, speculation; absent verification	Jefferson and town gossip regarding Joe Christmas	Distortion of facts; ideology masquerades as historical truth

Analeptic Category	Genettian Basis (Order / Frequency / Reach)	Narrative Agent / Focalization	Formal Narrative Features	Textual Context	Effect on Reliability
Ideological Fixation	Internal / Singulative / Variable Reach	Obsessed focalize (internal, fixed)	Selective recall; moralization; causal compression	Doc Hines on Joe Christmas's lineage; religious reinterpretations	Unreliability via teleological reconstruction
Disjunctive Layering	Mixed / Overlapping / Long-Reach	Heterodiegetic narrator with variable access	Non-linear sequencing; overlapping timelines	Alternating Joe Christmas's past and present	Prevents closure; sustains narrative ambiguity

By combining, temporal coding (order, frequency, reach) with focalization analysis and the presentation of textual examples, this model provides the tools for a systematic detection of structural unreliability; the converging of Faulkner's ethical and racial preoccupations with narrative form (Bleikasten, 1990; Minter, 1969); empirical substantiation for theorists stressing readerly constructions of epistemic uncertainty (Fludernik, 1996; Herman, 2002) and representation of analeptic cycles as temporalities repeating themselves. This approach reveals that in *Light in August*, narrative unreliability becomes the result of recursive memory processes, ideological mediation, and communal myth-making, all expressed through Faulkner's idiosyncratic nonlinear temporality. This approach and theoretical lens have the potential to add to the existing knowledge in the field.

4. Research Questions

This study consists of the following research questions:

- How does Light in August employ modernist narrative techniques—particularly fragmentation, stream of consciousness, and shifting perspectives—to construct a complex and non-linear narrative structure?
- In what ways do Gérard Genette's narratological concepts of analepsis, prolepsis, and focalization elucidate the temporal disruptions and narrative layering in Light in August?
- How do the interactions among narrator, focalization, and temporal structure contribute to the novel's thematic exploration of history, identity, and human destiny beyond a purely regional Southern context?

These questions collectively aim to demonstrate that *Light in August*, despite being considered more conventional than some of Faulkner's other works, exhibits a high degree of narrative experimentation that aligns closely with modernist aesthetics and Genette's narratological theory.

5. The Typology of Narrators

The main narratives are those of the story of Joe Christmas, Lena Grove, and Gail Hightower. The story of Joe Christmas takes the shape of a novel within a novel, in which Joe Christmas becomes a stranger in all the places he goes. His alienation is a consequence of the fact that he is a threat to the world, and the world threatens his survival. In the end, this threat is realized when he murders Joanna Burden and the town lynches him. (Porter, 2007, p. 102).

There are three main types of narrators, and a combination of them is present in the novel. The first type of narrator is the omniscient narrator, who moves freely from one character, place, and episode to another character, place, and episode, by entering the character's thoughts and feelings whenever he chooses and by providing information whenever he wishes. Such a point of view allows the writer to make personal comments and may be inside his narrative.

Snead (1986) notes that "Faulkner reveals omniscience as a form of unreliability, where deception is intentional rather than a result of ignorance or lack of insight. The narrator deliberately crafts misinformation, turning society's arbitrary power structures into accepted "facts". To complicate things further, the reader plays a crucial role in this entire process" (p. 85). The other type of narrator is the third person narrator, who chooses a character to describe and comment upon, and the story is subsequently narrated in terms of that character by the narrator telling the story from the character's viewpoint.

Faulkner employs numerous variations and combinations of these styles of narration. The narrator tells the novel from three different angles: an omniscient perspective, which reveals the words and deeds of characters; an interior perspective, which discloses what the characters are consciously thinking, often in terms of words that the characters themselves would not use. Generally, the things that the characters say are printed in the standard double quotation marks and are normally punctuated. The narrator's rendering of the latent feelings and thoughts of the characters is in italics and is not preceded by a colon or any other pause mark, nor is it followed by a full stop, and this reflects Faulkner's vision of the unconscious of man as being unspoken and unstructured. The first paragraph of the first chapter ends in italics and has no period as in the example below:

> Thinking *although I have not been quite a month on the road I am already in Mississippi, further from home than I have ever been before. I am now further from Doane's Mill than I have been since I was twelve years old* (Faulkner 1990, 6)

About one hundred italicized sentences or paragraphs do not have a period at the end, in these cases there is a space between the end of these paragraphs and the beginning of the next paragraph. The narrator's translation of their unconscious moods and thoughts are printed in italics, not introduced with a colon or other punctuation, and not concluded with a period, and indication of Faulkner's conception of the human consciousness as unarticulated and unordered. (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 5).

Table 2. Typographical experiments: italicized sentences and paragraphs

Book chapter	Number of Italicised sentences/fragments
Chapter 1	9
Chapter 2	-
Chapter 3	1
Chapter 4	1
Chapter 5	7
Chapter 6	4
Chapter 7	1
Chapter 8	8
Chapter 9	7

Book chapter	Number of Italicised sentences/fragments
Chapter 10	5
Chapter 11	7
Chapter 12	7
Chapter 13	10
Chapter 14	3
Chapter 15	6
Chapter 16	5
Chapter 17	6
Chapter 18	6
Chapter 19	-
Chapter 20	4
Chapter 21	6

In chapter 5 the internal italicised sentences *Something is going to happen to me. I am going to do something* is repeated in the very first and last paragraph, we have thus repetition of italicised sentences such as *This is not the right one* in the same chapter as a stylistic device to foreground the internal tension of the character.

The third type is the first-person narrative, according to which the story is told in the first person by one of the characters. The first-person narrative provides an inner perspective that is more subjective and personal.

Light in August depicts originality through its formal experiments and the introduction of separate internal narratives: the six chapters (Chapters Six to Eleven) in which Joe relives his life chronologically from his years in the orphanage to the present; the scene at the end of Chapter Eleven in which Joanna Burden tells Joe her family history; and the long analepsis that is Chapter Twenty in which Hightower impressionistically recreates his past from the tales of his grandfather's slave woman and thereby confronts his present and future (Watson, 2011, p. 145).

Stream of consciousness is one of the key narrative techniques that Faulkner uses, not only to represent the flow of inner experiences, probe the characters' minds, and depict infinite thoughts, thereby revealing characters' emotions, but also to uncover ideas that they themselves may not realize that they have. These unconscious thoughts are sometimes very intense and are conveyed through language that lacks punctuation marks. Faulkner explains and analyzes the thoughts of his characters, enlightening the readers about the characters' subconscious thoughts, of which they do not appear to be aware. This technique is employed at key moments. For instance, in the first chapter, which focuses on the thoughts of Lena Grove, there is a shift from an external focus on her conscious thoughts to her unconscious thoughts. In this case, the thoughts are printed in italics in order to indicate the fatalism and tension in her mind.

Sometimes, this style of narrative that focuses on the mind of a character substitutes the authorial voice. This is what happens at the beginning of Chapter Six, which begins with "Memory believes before knowing remembers", where Faulkner informs the reader of what is going to be narrated in the following five chapters. In reality, it is an exploration of the inner world of Joe Christmas, and it is what takes place in his mind. This technique is challenging

for the reader who has to distinguish between the stream of consciousness and the more traditional narration. The chapter is narrated in the third person, but the depth, richness, and intensity of Christmas's inner thoughts are closer to a stream of consciousness. Similarly, at the end of Chapter Nineteen, a stream of consciousness tribute to Joe Christmas's murder characterizes the state of mind of the whole community. This technique embodies, at its best, Faulkner's tendency to practise new methods of writing.

The external narrator who relates events filtered through the perceptions of a central character is the *dominating type of narrator*. Again, what is special in this case is that the character of this narrator changes over time and with the plot's development. In the opening chapter that focuses on Lena Grove, the narrator is primarily a detached, external observer. In several other chapters concentrating on the Jefferson community, the narrator adopts a more embedded perspective, time and again resembling an inhabitant of the town. By contrast, in the fifth chapter, which focuses on Joe Christmas as he moves through Jefferson on the night before he murders Joanna Burden, the narrator assumes an omniscient role by entering into the character's mind.

Ruppersburg (1994) highlights that the narrator of the novel functions as an uninvolved spectator, a storyteller and overseer of the action, a central authority uniting various strands of plot and character. At points, the narrator seems omniscient. More often, he seems limited to what the character knows, and the narrator often speculates about what they might have thought or done. At times, the narrator assumes an omniscient or semi-omniscient role in line with the perspective of a single character, as occurs in Chapters Two and Three, which focus on Hightower. And at other times, such as the nineteenth chapter, it also seems that the narrative voice speaking to us is that collective consciousness of the community. In addition, the main character through which the action is viewed changes from one chapter to another. This technique of narration results in a vibrant and ever-changing array of viewpoints upon both people and happenings.

Faulkner also wants to establish boundaries for the omniscient narrator. He delves into the intricacies of the novel's social terrain, and this narrator pursues the various story lines as they develop, inventing one while entertaining another. In a novel where perceptions can be unreliable, the narrator occasionally reminds us that his knowledge, no matter how extensive, is not definitive or guaranteed. This idea could be expressed more straightforwardly by stating that Faulkner is revealing his creative process, indicating that he is inventing this story while consciously making choices and envisioning alternative possibilities. (Porter, 2007, p. 102).

These unreliable narrators can be explored in the context of Faulkner's *Light in August*. In this novel, the bias and limited view of his character/narrators are actually the core of his rhetoric. "The character delivers what he takes to be a single, straightforward message, but the implied reader must infer that the ostensible message is being concealed or at least called into question by an underlying message that the narrator does not understand. The narrative is being ironized in the act of narrating. Much of the effect rests on the implied reader‘s understanding that the narration is unconscious or at least ambivalent about the duplicity, distortion, or naivete of his account" (Chaman, 1990, p. 153).

Ironically, Lena sees at the same moment both the black smoke from the planing mill where Joe Christmas and Byron Bunch work and the yellow smoke from the burning house where Joanna Burden has just been killed. This is near where Christmas lived and near where Lena herself will bear her child and find Lucas Burch. This panoramic view encompasses not only the whole of Jefferson but also the totality of what happens in the novel. (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 23). Furthermore, at the beginning of Chapter Two, the point of view changes from the objective focus on Lena Grove in the first chapter to a more penetrating, analytical focus on

another important character, Byron Bunch. Clues such as "Byron Bunch knows this" (as the very first sentence in the chapter) frequently orient the reader towards a particular narrative perspective. They allow the reader to judge the reliability of the information in each episode by making clear its source. The novel relies on Bunch's perspective more frequently than on any other character's. His growing attachment to Lena Grove compels us to regard skeptically at least some of what he says, especially about his motives. (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 24).

The passage in which the narrator states that "This is not what Byron knows now. This is just what he knew, what he heard and watched as it came to his knowledge," establishes Byron's viewpoint as central in the narrative. It demonstrates that the events narrated in the first section of the chapter occurred in the recent past, and that some of the facts about Christmas are being withheld for later revelation. A similar passage (432) narrows the time of the chapter's narration to the six months between the day Christmas and Brown quit the sawmill and the day of Joanna Burden's death. The chapter's second section (beginning 432) clearly indicates that the exact time of narration is the day of Lena Grove's arrival in town. Joanna is already dead with her house aflame, but the community has yet to learn of her murder. By introducing Christmas through withheld, gradually revealed knowledge, Faulkner allows the reader to learn about him in more or less the same way Byron and the rest of the town did. (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 27).

In addition, throughout the novel, characters, townspeople, and even the narrative itself provide gossip and speculation about why people behave as they do. Faulkner implies repeatedly that their failure to understand one another is a major cause of estrangement and isolation: it is certainly so for Christmas and Hightower, and the narrative suggests that this may be the case with Byron too. (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 34). The narratives unfold through the perspectives of witnesses or participants in the events, allowing us to see and interpret the main scenes directly. This storytelling method not only brings the characters to life but also reflects Faulkner's view of time. As the reader progresses through the story, they slowly come to realize that the explanations provided for the unfolding events and characters' actions are often exaggerated, biased, or incomplete. Furthermore, these explanations are likely to be expanded, revised, or even completely contradicted by other interpretations presented at various points in the narrative (Meats, 1971).

Sundquist (2008) claims that "Although the entire novel strives prodigiously, in detail after detail, to connect its characters by merging their responsibilities and actions, and by embedding their lives within one another in almost ridiculous ways, the effect of such exertions is quite simply to render the endless analogous details superfluous and the embedded lives fruitless. No sooner are the stories of two or more characters brought together than they are torn away from one another, creating in the novel, as in the problem of race it maintains at an agonizing pitch, an energy of fusion and division in which opposites appear to be created neither by emotional merger nor by extreme alienation but rather by holding both in generative, ironic proximity" (p. 90).

Typical of Faulkner is that his narrative is dramatic, especially when it elaborates on Yoknapatawpha's social and political dilemmas. For example, in chapter one, the narrator needs to expand his focus to give Lena a past and provide a social context for her. It is obvious that a complex character needs a complex history and a more detailed context of that history. When Joe Christmas takes center stage, the narrator devotes eight chapters to him. Unlike Lena Grove, Christmas's story is deeply tragic, and the narrator takes the reader to his social, religious, and racialized world, and informs them of experiences that shaped his identity and personality and that dictate the way he feels, thinks, and acts.

At a later point in the novel, Gavin Stevens and Percy Grimm are abruptly introduced, purely for the sake of their bearing upon the climactic moment of Christmas's own death, although no such characters have previously been mentioned. Moreover, the moment Stevens's account is concluded, the other figure steps forward. Even more remarkable in some respects are the unheralded excursions into the family backgrounds of Joanna Burden on the one hand and Gail Hightower on the other. (Millgate, 2009, p. 34). The various elements linked to specific characters or storylines constantly venture into uncharted territories of time and space, areas that have never been explored or recorded before. The insights gathered from these explorations do not always integrate back into the novel's main narrative. Indeed, Bassett (2013) asserts that "the author blends the various methods into a whole that is admirably effective. This synchronization gives the impression that Faulkner is striving for a novel-form in which all modes will be blended into a perfect narrative" (p. 139).

6. Analepses and Narrative Perspectives

"Structurally, Faulkner's novel can be divided into three sections, the second section is entirely in the remote past, the first and third sections, though basically concerned with the fictive present, contain numerous brief analepses into both the immediate past and the remote past" (Timothy P. Martin, qtd in Neill and Williams 2020, p. 130). In *Light in August*, one finds what Genette calls completing analepses, "the retrospective sections that fill in, after the event, an earlier gap in the narrative" (Genette, 1980: 51). In line with this, Faulkner's returns to the same scenes can be interpreted as not mere repetitions, but rather these "completing analepses." (Genette, 1980, p. 51).

Genette (1998), unified competing ideas most effectively in *Figures of literary discourse* where he stated that as the novel's form is complex enough, primary and secondary narrative can be mixed because of flashbacks and abrupt flash-forwards to the present. Genette recommends the adoption of a formula for the representation of the order of relations: the Latin capital letters A, B. C, ... denote the order of elements as they are presented in the narrative, while Arabic numerals give the chronological order in which narrative elements take pace in time. It is understood that the "point of origin" of the narrative is an autonomous entity; all retrospective work is already defined in relation to it." (Nilova & Zakharova, 2017, p. 807).

The novel's structure initially appears complex due to frequent shifts between past and present, which can blur the distinction between primary and secondary narratives. The protagonist's life story consists of seventeen episodes arranged in the sequence A14 - B2 - C3 - D4 - E5 - F6 - G1 - H7 - I8 - J9- K10 - L11 - M12 - N13 - O15 - P16 - Q17. Despite this non-linear order, only episodes 1 and 14 are anachronistic. Episode 1 is presented through Joe's recollection, while episode 14 constitutes an internal prolepsis that fills a narrative gap. Although chronological narration may appear more accessible, the novel's structure foregrounds psychological continuity by integrating memory and reflection into the narrative flow. (Nilova & Zakharova, 2017, pp. 804-805).

"The narrative opens in the present tense and tilts almost immediately into the past (with an analepsis on Lena starting in the second paragraph, ending on page four), then shifts back from the past to the present up to the end. (Bleikasten, 1990, p. 3). That openness is, of course, exploited with great virtuosity throughout the remainder of the novel - especially in the extraordinary resourcefulness of its style and the subtlety of its shifts in time and narrative perspective" (Millgate, 2009, p. 36).

Certainly, the opening chapter moves back and forth with extraordinary rapidity between different times, different tenses, and different levels not simply of Lena's consciousness but of

the narrative presentation of that consciousness. Immediately following the first direct-speech expression of Lena's thoughts ("Lena thinks, 'I have come from Alabama: a fur piece. All the way from Alabama a-walking. A fur piece."), Faulkner shifts to a convention that allows him to elaborate on Lena's thoughts without restricting himself to Lena's own linguistic resources. (Millgate, 2009, p. 34). Furthermore, the burning of Joanna Burden's house, which is narrated in nine segments over a span of two hundred and fifty-seven pages, provides another pertinent example of this device. The first mention of the smoke rising comes from the man who takes Lena to Jefferson in Chapter One: "That's a house burning," the driver says" (Faulkner 1932: 30), and details are added a few at a time, as the reader learns that it is the Burden house (Faulkner 1932: 49), that Brown and Christmas lived out there (Faulkner 1932: 78), that "Miss Burden got hurt in the fire" (Faulkner 1932: 84), that Brown was in the house (Faulkner 1932, p. 90), that Joanna had been decapitated (Faulkner 1932: 92), and so on.

To continue with the example of the burning house, by the time people begin to gather at the scene of the crime before the sheriff arrives on page two hundred and eighty-seven, we are still "within five minutes after the countryman found the fire," an event that had been first reported on page 90. (Nelles & Williams, 2020, p. 11). Key sentences, such as the opening sentence of the second chapter, "Byron Bunch knows best," consistently orient the reader toward a specific narrative perspective. They allow the reader to judge the reliability of the information in each episode, making its source clear. The chapter relies on Bunch's perspective more than on that of any other character. His growing feelings for Lena Grove force us to view with suspicion at least some of the picture he describes, especially regarding the motives for his involvement in this story.

Another common narrative frame in Faulkner's fiction is two characters facing one another across a desk or table, one talking and the other listening, as in the case of Chapter Four of *Light in August*: "They sit facing one another across the desk. The study is lit now, by a greenshaded reading lamp sitting upon the desk." (51). Byron Bunch is a consummate storyteller. Many of the facts in the story he tells in Chapter Four, he says, he obtained from townspeople who attended the fire and the sheriff's deputies. There is much here, however, that is his own elaboration. (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 464).

These four chapters, the first three of which are expository, with the fourth already foreshadowing the ending, form the first narrative movement. Past and present alternate in all of them, but the present is the axis of reference. In Chapter Five, the narrative circles back to the Friday of Lena's arrival in Jefferson but focuses for the first time on Christmas. It takes the reader from midnight to midnight, another circle, recounting the last twenty-four hours before the murder. All of the chapter is in the past, which prepares the reader for the much longer analepsis into Christmas's earlier life, which constitutes the middle portion of the novel, comprising Chapter Six through Twelve. The narrative then returns to the other characters, and the narrative threads are re-tied where they were cut. Then, in the second section of Chapter Thirteen the present again becomes the major tense in which the novel is written. As the tense of motion and action as well as of the eternal now, the fullness of time, it is par excellence the tense of the circle, and is therefore also the predominant tense in all the scenes irradiated by Lena's presence. Moreover, after Christmas' narrative and Hightower's story have been completed (Chapters Nineteen and Twenty), the novel comes full circle when Lena, like a bright star having followed its prescribed orbit, reappears, as serene and steadfast as ever." (Bleikasten, 1990, p. 5).

Chapter Five centers entirely on Joe Christmas, exploring his thoughts and actions on the day before Joanna Burden's murder. Unlike Chapter Nine, which presents McEachern's viewpoint, Chapter Eight returns to Christmas' perspective. The chapter opens in the evening, highlighting

a dispute between McEachern and John regarding a missing heifer. It details the events that lead to this confrontation, particularly examining Joe's relationship with Bobby Allen. Chapter Twelve shifts the narrative to two days later, recounting the events that unfold on Sunday night directly after the murder. (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 62). Chapter Six commences with "Memory believes before knowing remembers. Believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing even wonders" (Faulkner 1932). The events of one's life influence thought and action long before "knowing" (the conscious mind), "remembers" and comprehends them (even if one does not remember them at all). They influence human behavior longer than it takes to wonder why they happened and what they meant. These famous lines emphasize the importance of memory and the past on the present-day behavior and personality of an individual, which is a central theme of the novel. They introduce the six-chapter retrospective account of Joe Christmas' life at the orphanage, with the McEacherns, and his time at Joanna Burden's.

About these lines, Pitavy (1982) observes: "Memory is the intuition of a being who sees himself as the sum of his experiences – the significance of which is not apparent until an instant in the present recalls them into being; it is an assertion of the continuity even though it disappears into the subconscious or oblivion." (Faulkner 1932, p. 41). Bleikasten (1900) agrees: "For Faulkner, memory is not just a mental function, but a man's whole relationship to his past, a relationship including his whole being, body, and mind" (p. 86).

For this passage, "Knows remember believes a corridor.." Zender (1984) writes: "This phrase enacts in inverse order the process of mind described [in the first two sentences]. Joe's conscious mind "knows" that he grew up in an orphanage because it "remembers" his being there. But Joe's memory "believes" far more than this fact. It "believes" the weight of emotionality conveyed in the remainder of the passage, a weight that will never allow him to know or remember the orphanage neutrally" (p. 97).

Chapter Eight, in contrast to Chapter Nine, related from McEachern's perspective, is narrated from Christmas's perspective. This opening scene occurs on the evening of the day that McEachern confronts Joe about the missing heifer. The chapter recounts the events leading to that confrontation, focusing mainly on Joe's affair with Bobbie Allen. In Chapter Nine, the first five passages are narrated from McEachern's perspective. They form a narrative block that covers the same period of time as the first three pages of the previous chapter, which is narrated from Joe's perspective. Both chapters, for instance, describe Joe sliding down the rope from his window, but from different perspectives (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 116).

Though for the most part, the narrator relates the thoughts of the character he is describing, in this chapter, first with McEachern and later with Joe, he assumes a considerably less omniscient stance. Repeatedly, he qualifies his narrative with "possibly" or "perhaps", suggesting that he is less than certain of his account. The narrative thus assumes a more detached tone towards these characters, who themselves do not always seem in control of their actions. McEacher pursues Joe "as he believed...he would be guided by some greater and purer outrage" while Joe finds his foster-father's horse "with something of his adopted father's complete faith and in an infallibility of events" (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 117).

Frequently in the novel, characters seem to act in accordance with the will of some force or agent outside themselves. In the first chapter, Lena Grove comes from Alabama to the very town where Luchas Burch is living; in Chapter Sixteen, Doc Hines rides without guidance through the dark and rain straight to the carriage that holds his daughter and the circus "Mexican"; Percy Grimm in Chapter Nineteen pursues Christmas with "blind obedience to whatever Player moved him on Board" (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 117). In Chapter Nine, the lines "Knowing not grieving remembers a thousand savage and lonely streets" echo the opening of Chapter Six as well as of Chapter Seven. The opening of Chapter Six suggests that although

Joe does not clearly remember the events it relates, they deeply influence his life nonetheless. "Knowing not grieving remembers" makes clear that Christmas consciously and clearly recalls the events this chapter relates, such as the "thousand savage lonely streets," but that he does not "grieve" over them.

The retrospective account of Christmas's life that began in Chapter Six ends in Chapter Twelve, and the narrative has moved up to the present time of August 1932 and the night when he kills Joanna. This narrative point in time corresponds to the end of Chapter Six. We first learn of the fire's discovery in Chapter Four, when Byron Bunch tells Hightower about it. Chapter Thirteen begins with that discovery, which loosely parallels Lena Grove's approach to Jefferson in the first chapter: she sees the smoke from the fire as her wagon mounts the hills overlooking the town. The end of Chapter Twelve thus marks the conclusion of the seven-chapter "analepses" of Christmas' life leading up to Joanna Burden's murder. Chapter Fifteen opens with the phrase "that Friday," but the timeline of the story indicates that Christmas occurs on Saturday afternoon, one week after Joanna Beard's murder. Chapter Sixteen shifts to Hightower's studio on Sunday evening, eight days after the murder, and unfolds in the present tense.

The second part of Chapter Fifteen is told by an anonymous representative of the town. He seems to be a typical citizen, interested in local happenings, an effective gatherer of gossip and news. He often cites information reported to him by other townspeople and seems especially interested in the Hines couple. His story is a combination of joke and mystery. The result is a lively narrative, like a comic tall tale, which contributes to the novel's tale, which contributes to the novel's overall concern with penetrating the ambiguous motives of human behaviour (Ruppersburg, 1994: 200). Chapter Sixteen occurs in Hightower's study on Sunday evening, eight days after the murder, and is narrated in the present tense. Chapter Twenty begins on the Monday evening after Christmas's murder in Hightower's kitchen. In Chapter Twenty One, the salesman and his wife are about the same age as the couple about whom he tells the story, Lena Grove and Byron Bunch. He and his wife have just finished making love when he begins the story, a fact he alludes to several times, establishing not only an ironic parallel between himself and Byron Bunch, but also jokingly trying to titillate his wife. His account of Byron's valiant, desperate pursuit of Lena is the account of one lover's pursuit of his beloved told by another lover to his own wife. (Ruppersburg, 1994, p. 299).

The closing chapters of the novel (19 - 21) further accentuate its refusal of formal resolution. Each chapter offers a rhetorically distinct ending that introduces new characters, perspectives, and uncertainties, rather than drawing together existing threads. These chapters resist the notion of a traditional ending, instead dispersing the narrative temporally, spatially, and thematically: Chapter Nineteen culminates in the ambiguous fate of Christmas; Chapter Twenty regresses into Hightower's imagined past; and Chapter Twenty-One propels the story outward, as Lena and Byron leave Jefferson for an undefined future.

Table 3. Character's chronology, Source: (Nilova & Zakharova, 2017, p. 806)

Character	Point of reference	Point of "violation"
Joe Christmas	Case with the diet nurse, 1905	Murder of Johanna
Lina Grove	The beginning of the journey, July 1932	--
Byron Bunch	Entry to the sawmill, 1925	Appearance of Lina
Gail Hightower	Day of the Murder of the Grandfather, 1862	Attempt to rescue Christmas
Joanna Burden	Murder of Calvin Burden I and II, 1874	Connection with the Christ

"Each character has his own chronology, in which there is a point of reference and another point that breaks the usual course of time. The chronology of the main character, Christmas, has the least intersection with the line of the primary narrative. The meeting with Byron Bunch can be designated as a "point of violation" of Lena's chronology only conditionally, because this event does not change anything in her life. The absence of such a point is also a method. Faulkner's characters are obsessed with the past, but in the end those are happy who got disburdened and got responsible for the future." (Nilova & Zakharova, 2017, p. 806).

The last paragraph of the last chapter echoes the first paragraph of the first chapter. The novel ends as it begins, with Lena on the road, and her comments express identical wonderment about the distance she has covered. The last scene is a nearly perfect replica of the first: the same character appears in the same setting, thinking nearly the same words. Nothing, however, is exactly the same. Lena has traveled from Alabama to Mississippi and is now moving into Tennessee (it is indeed her moving that is the subject of her comment), time has passed ("a month"/"two months"), and though she is still on the road, she is no longer alone (a change signaled by the pronominal shift from "I" to "we"). In the fictional world, there is thus no return to the starting point, but repetition with a difference, and in its spiral-—like movement through space and time—Lena's curve remains open, since her journey, begun before the novel begins, will continue on beyond the novel's ending.

The circle, then, is to be understood dynamically, as an active circling or circulation. To identify it as the unifying principle of the novel's narrative design is clearly not enough; it is also worth inquiring how it affects its textual economy. In *Light in August*, circulation operates on all levels: it takes place between words or sentences as well as between scenes or sites or characters, generating various intersecting patterns of repetition. (Bleikasten, 1990, p. 6).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, based on analeptic structures, this work offers a fully articulated typology of narrator unreliability and a map of iterative analeptic cycles as they are exhibited by the texts under scrutiny. With clear delineations of its analytical categories and criteria, supported by extended close readings and schematizations, the study foregrounds the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of the introduced frameworks. This methodological approach also delineates the rules for the selection of passages and for the coding and the application of the concepts of narrative reliability and analeptic cycles.

The analysis takes place against the background of recent narratological debates on unreliability, narrative temporality and ethics, and recent Faulkner criticism sensitive to matters of race and moral (mis)representation. Editorial rigor results in terminological consistency and bibliographic accuracy which ensure the abstract and concluding claims are vindicated through section analyses. Merging theoretical articulations with close readings the article offers a sophisticated model of the relation between analepsis and narrator unreliability in modernist narrative.

Using Genette's theories from *Narrative Discourse* (1972) as a theoretical framework which views narrative as the product of interactions among its various interdependent components, this analysis shows that Faulkner employs several experimental techniques that align closely with Genette's narrative theory of analepses and prolepses.

The novel's narrator operates largely as a detached observer, guiding the story while overseeing the unfolding action and linking together its various plots and characters. At times, the narrator appears omniscient, but more often the perspective is limited to a character's knowledge, with the narration speculating about what that character might have thought or done. At certain moments, the narrator adopts an omniscient or semi-omniscient stance aligned with the perspective of a single character. At other points, the narrative voice seems to express the collective consciousness of the community. The focal character through whom events are filtered also shifts from chapter to chapter, creating a fluid and constantly changing range of perspectives on both characters and events.

Faulkner interprets and analyses his characters' mental processes, presenting thoughts of which they are not consciously aware. Stream of consciousness is one of the novel's central narrative techniques, used not only to capture the flow of inner experience and delve deeply into the characters' minds, but also to reveal emotions and thoughts the characters themselves may not fully recognize. These unconscious impressions are often intense and expressed through language that minimizes or abandons conventional punctuation. As a result, the novel's narrative is highly experimental and technically complex, lacking conventional structural unity and instead characterized by fragmentation, digression, and discontinuity, all conveyed through sophisticated narrative techniques.

Light in August's narrative is formed through a sequence of interactions between its individual sites of telling, and that every section of telling operates as a node within non-linear telling of the story, in which analepsis and prolepsis as experimental methods. The complex narrative, which is composed of long sentences and very short emotional fragments, is abundant with colorful detail and imagery. The long paragraphs, with their dense and intricate rhythm, bring to mind the almost unbearable weight of history, and then (human) destiny. This style creates and maintains an aura of tragedy and human suffering above and beyond the shock value of the story.

Faulkner uses a layered and often ambiguous narrative style, moving among multiple perspectives to explore its central themes. Faulkner's structure mirrors his fascination with the difficulty of understanding human motives, the lingering influence of the past, and the deep social tensions shaped by the South's history. As a result, the novel stands as a defining example of modernist experimentation in narrative form.

Ultimately, Faulkner develops in *Light in August*, a typology of narrator unreliability that is directly grounded in these analeptic configurations, and it proposed a new mapping of analeptic cycles, offering a systematic account of their structures, recurrences, and narrative functions that goes beyond existing linear or episodic models of analepsis. It suggests a typology of

narrator unreliability and a mapping an analeptic cycles as a further contribution to the Faulkner studies.

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