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Reading Faulkner's Minds

Čtení Faulknerových myslí

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Acknowledgments

Summary

The present dissertation focuses on the work of William Faulkner in relation to the concept of mind as conceived by the second wave cognitive sciences. This concept radically challenges previous notions such as cartesian dualism and physicalism which equates mind with the brain and puts forth the human mind as embodied, embedded in the environment, extended beyond the skin, enacted in a particular situation, and encultured, being both a product and a producer of culture. Such a vision changes the landscape of phenomena that fall under the label "mind" and has implications for the study of minds within literature as well. Literature and narrative art constitute a rich source of insights on the human mind and are treated here as an autonomous discourse on human cognition without necessarily seeking confirmation by the sciences. Since it represents a new discipline among approaches to Faulkner's oeuvre, I discuss cognitive literary studies and their relation to cognitive sciences as well as more traditional literary studies arguing for a cognitive approach to literature guided by the discipline's distinctive methods, goals and object of study.

In his works, Faulkner narratively presents human cognition as transcending the boundaries of the skull, being formed by both natural and social spheres, by humanity at large as well as by the particulars of his Southern milieu. Faulkner is aligned with other modernist writers in showing the entanglement of the mind with the world that the recent discourse of cognitive sciences provides the most suitable vocabulary to describe. I analyze two of his novels focusing on particular aspects of the mind that are figured in these works. In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner depicts in detail the workings of mindreading (theory of mind), i.e., processes by which we understand other humans as beings with minds of their own and thus understand them. Particularly, he puts acts of looking and observation center stage showing the essential role of eyes and looks in this process. Observation of bodies in order to interpret minds combined with the form of the narrative via interior monologues that show the characters not only "from the inside" as consciousnesses but also "from the outside" as bodies underline the embodied nature of the mind. This cognitive universal is wedded with the visual prominence of the ruling medium of the time, the silent film, staging both a pantomime of the Bundren family and visual scrutiny as the dominant form of communication.

Reading *Absalom, Absalom!*, I focus on cognitive extension which manifests in the novel especially in setting up pairs of narrators and their listeners who participate in scenes of storytelling that transcend them. Minds in the novel extend beyond the body through a variety of means: environmental features such as temperature, smell or visual stimuli; adverse

circumstances; the interactional, conversational aspect of the storytelling engagement and language; blood relation. All these aspects combine with love in case of Quentin Compson and Shreve MacCannon, the two narrators who come to share their minds. Their coming together, given their origins in Mississippi and Canada, at Harvard University translates into a symbolic rapprochement between the North and South regions of the USA.

Faulkner's conception of human mind is presented both on the story and discourse levels of his works. Such aspects as representations of consciousness, embedded narrative levels, multiperspectivity and multitemporality provide the narratives with a complexity that matches that of the human mind while reflecting its aspects. The resulting "intelligent" narratives show Faulkner fulfilling the novel's potential in depicting human mental life with idiosyncratic intensity. It is no coincidence that the main protagonists of the two novels focused on here, Darl Bundren and Quentin Compson, descend into madness trying to make sense of the world they live in through radical cognitive extensions. Even in their mental disintegration, brought on by the strain of modern society as well as the particulars of their Southern heritage, Faulkner portrays the mind as more than a matter of biology.

Abstrakt

Tato disertační práce se soustředí na dílo Williama Faulknera ve vztahu ke konceptu mysli, jak jej pojímá druhá vlna kognitivních věd. Toto pojetí radikálně zpochybňuje předchozí koncepce, jako jsou karteziánský dualismus a fyzikalismus, který ztotožňuje mysl s mozkem a oproti nim předkládá lidskou mysl jako ztělesněnou, zakotvenou v prostředí, rozšířenou za hranice těla, uskutečňovanou v dané situaci a kulturní, a to jako produkt i producent kultury.[1] Takováto vize mění krajinu fenoménů, které spadají pod označení „mysl", a má implikace i pro studium mysli v literatuře. Literatura a narativní umění představují bohatý zdroj poznatků o lidské mysli a jsou zde pojímány jako autonomní diskurs o lidské kognici, aniž by nutně vyhledávaly potvrzení ze strany přírodních věd. Jelikož jde o novou disciplínu v kontextu přístupů k dílu Williama Faulknera, zabývám se kognitivní literární vědou a jejím vztahem ke kognitivním vědám i k tradičnější literární vědě, přičemž argumentuji pro kognitivní přístup k literatuře, který se řídí charakteristickými metodami, cíli a předmětem studia této disciplíny.

Faulkner ve svých dílech narativně představuje lidské poznání jako nejen ztělesněné, ale i přesahující hranice lebky, formované přírodní i společenskou sférou, lidstvem jako celkem i specifiky jižanského prostředí. Faulkner se řadí po bok ostatních modernistických spisovatelů tím, jak ukazuje sepětí mysli se světem, k jehož popisu současný diskurz kognitivních věd poskytuje nejvhodnější slovník. Rozebírám dva z jeho románů se zaměřením na konkrétní aspekty mysli, které figurují v těchto dílech. V románu *Když jsem umírala* Faulkner podrobně líčí fungování čtení mysli (teorie mysli), tj. procesy, díky nimž chápeme ostatní lidi jako bytosti s vlastní myslí a tím jim rozumíme. Do centra pozornosti staví zejména akty dívání a pozorování, přičemž ukazuje zásadní roli očí a pohledů v tomto procesu. Pozorování těl za účelem interpretace mysli v kombinaci s formou vyprávění prostřednictvím vnitřních monologů rozmanitých postav, které jsou ukazovány nejen „zevnitř" jako vědomí, ale i „zvenčí" jako těla, zdůrazňuje ztělesněnou povahu mysli. Tato kognitivní univerzálie se snoubí s vizuální význačností vládnoucího média té doby, němého filmu, a inscenuje jak němohru rodiny Bundrenových, tak vizuální zkoumání jako dominantní formu komunikace.

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[1] Pro termíny „embodied mind" a „extended mind" přejímám termíny „ztělesněná mysl" a „rozšířená mysl" dle Jiří Šubrt, „O koncepci, která předznamenala teorii rozšířené mysli, a o jejím významu pro sociálněvědní teorii," *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 (2015): 697-708. Termín „enactivism" Šubrt přejímá jako „enaktivismus". Tento termín je v angličtině odvozen od slovesa „enact" ve významu „uskutečnit", proto zde používám pro frázi „enacted mind" překlad „uskutečňovaná mysl", který podtrhuje aktuální průběh kognitivních procesů v konkrétní situaci. Pro termín „embedded mind" jsem jako vhodný překlad zvolil „zakotvená mysl", který poukazuje na situovanost mysli v prostředí. Samotný výraz „situovaný" jsem nepoužil, protože odpovídá anglickému termínu „situated cognition".

Při četbě románu *Absolóne, Absolóne!* se zaměřuji na kognitivní rozšíření, které se v románu projevuje zejména spárováním vypravěčů a jejich posluchačů, kteří se účastní scén vyprávění, jež je přesahují. Rozšíření mysli za hranice těla je v románu konstituováno různými prostředky: vlastnostmi prostředí, jako je teplota, vůně nebo vizuální podněty; nepříznivými okolnostmi; interakčním, konverzačním aspektem zapojení do vyprávění a jazykem; pokrevním příbuzenstvím. Všechny tyto aspekty se spojují s láskou v případě Quentina Compsona a Shrevea MacCannona, dvou vypravěčů, kteří docílí sdílení svých myslí. Jejich setkání, vzhledem k jejich původu v Mississippi a Kanadě, na Harvardově univerzitě se promítá do symbolického sblížení Severu a Jihu USA.

Faulknerovo pojetí lidské mysli se v jeho dílech promítá jak do roviny příběhu (*story*), tak do roviny diskurzu (*discourse*) vyprávění. Aspekty, jako jsou reprezentace vědomí, vložené roviny vyprávění, multiperspektivita a multitemporalita, dodávají vyprávění komplexnost, která odpovídá komplexnosti lidské mysli a zároveň odráží její aspekty. Výsledná „inteligentní" vyprávění ukazují, že Faulkner naplňuje potenciál románu zobrazováním lidského duševního života s intenzitou sobě vlastní. Není náhodou, že hlavní hrdinové obou románů, na něž se zde zaměřuji, Darl Bundren a Quentin Compson, propadají šílenství ve snaze pochopit smysl světa, ve kterém žijí, prostřednictvím radikální kognitivní extenze. I v jejich duševní dezintegraci, vyvolané náporem moderní společnosti i specifiky jejich jižanského dědictví, Faulkner zobrazuje mysl jako něco víc než jen záležitost biologie.

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1. Faulkner on Your Mind

1.1. Heart and Mind of Literature

Accepting his Nobel Prize for literature in 1950, William Faulkner used the opportunity to address "the young men and women already dedicated to the same anguish and travail"[2] as he was – the toil of writing. Registering the effects of the Cold War, Faulkner laments that "writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat."[3] The grip that fear has on the times makes authors write "not of the heart but of the glands."[4] What this talk about the heart and the glands amounts to is a discussion of the mind and the body. For Faulkner, the only topics worthy of literature are those of a minded body: without the mental dimension, the author "writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value".[5] Ultimately, fear dehumanizes since heart, i.e., "soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance" is what makes man "immortal […] among creatures" and without it what is in stock for humanity is "the end of man".[6] To write the inexhaustible struggles of the mind is the writer´s duty for Faulkner.

Faulkner sets the life of mind embodied as the subject, goal and ideal of writing. Given the identification of the mind as the most important topic of his own writing, an analysis of the concept of mind in Faulkner's works, of the mind of his characters is long overdue. As Faulkner proclaims at the beginning of the speech, the award "was not made to me as a man, but to my work – a life´s work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit"[7]: it is in the work that one must look for Faulkner's minds. In Faulkner's view, mind is paramount: it is the necessary condition of literature (the only worth writing and reading) and makes humans what they are.

Antonio Damasio, a philosopher of mind and a neuroscientist, quotes Faulkner's acceptance speech at the beginning of the conclusion to his book *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* using the last sentence on the utopian potential of the poet's voice to help man "endure and prevail"[8] to extend such a potential to the scientist´s voice. Damasio misses or ignores Faulkner´s talk of the embodied mind and its importance, yet it seems

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[2] William Faulkner, "Address Upon Receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature," in *Essays, Speeches & Public Letters*, ed. James B. Meriwether (New York: The Modern Library, 2004), 119.
[3] Faulkner, "Address," 119.
[4] Faulkner, "Address," 120.
[5] Faulkner, "Address," 120.
[6] Faulkner, "Address," 120.
[7] Faulkner, "Address," 119.
[8] Faulkner, "Address," 120.

significant that the Southern writer makes an entrance, albeit brief, in a book which advances an embodied conception of the human mind: "When I say that body and brain form an indissociable organism, I am not exaggerating. In fact, I am oversimplifying."[9] Damasio affords a key role in the concept of mind to emotions claiming that "*feelings are just as cognitive as any other perceptual image* […] Feelings let us *mind the body* […] Because the brain is the body´s captive audience, feelings are winners among equals. And since what comes first constitutes a frame of reference for what comes after, feelings have a say on how the rest of the brain and cognition go about their business. Their influence is immense."[10]

Although Faulkner's use of "heart" in the meaning of mind might be his resorting to a standard cultural conceptualization of heart as the seat of emotions if not the soul itself, in light of what I argue in this dissertation, I am tempted to see Faulkner's talk of the heart, fear, love, lust, pity or compassion in connection with writing, an endeavor "to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before"[11], as an insight on his side into the inextricability of emotion from cognition. What Faulkner's and Damasio's treatments on the connection between mind, body, emotion and environment share is also the sense of dignity of humanity. Faulkner reminds writers as well as his audience of "the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of [man´s] past."[12] For his own part, Damasio points out that his conception of the mind does not detract anything from the dignity of the human soul and spirit:

> The truly embodied mind I envision, however, does not relinquish its most refined levels of operation, those constituting its soul and spirit. From my perspective, it is just that soul and spirit, with all their dignity and human scale, are now complex and unique states of an organism. Perhaps the most indispensable thing we can do as human beings, every day of our lives, is remind ourselves and others of our complexity, fragility, finiteness, and uniqueness. And this is of course the difficult job, is it not: to move the spirit from its nowhere pedestal to a somewhere place, while preserving its dignity and

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[9] Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon Books, 1994), 88.
[10] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 159-160.
[11] Faulkner, "Address," 119.
[12] Faulkner, "Address," 120.

importance; to recognize its humble origin and vulnerability, yet still call upon its guidance.[13]

Mind, body, environment, and humanity are all aspects that are crucial for the present dissertation which seeks to scrutinize Faulkner's work and put on display the various forms and interactions of these aspects. Faulkner moved the spirit to the little postage stamp of soil, Yoknapatawpha as well as to his oeuvre, the texts that decades after their composition and publication do not cease to fascinate. Literature, after all, is the mind´s laboratory: a laboratory where the mind is not only the experimenter, but also the experiment. The writer and literary critic David Lodge proclaims that "literature is a record of human consciousness, the richest and most comprehensive we have. Lyric poetry is arguably man´s most successful effort to describe qualia. The novel is arguably man's most successful effort to describe the experience of individual human beings moving through space and time."[14] Lodge himself is interested in and influenced by cognitive sciences, but the centrality of mind in literature has been recognized outside the purview of critics under the sway of cognitive sciences. Writing in the context of the intersection of literature and mental health, Josie Billington claims that "[l]iterature is the one area of our inherited culture which *does* seriously explore the inner life. Our customarily impoverished language for first-person data is exactly why we need poetry´s and fiction´s dedication to articulate recognition of subjective experience."[15]

While Lodge sees lyric poetry as more successful at attempting to describe qualia, a term which is "most commonly used to characterize the qualitative, experiential, or felt properties of mental states"[16] than the novel, qualia are also the novel´s province: the novel "creates fictional models of what it is like to be a human being, moving through time and space. It captures the density of experienced events by its rhetoric, and it shows the connectedness of events through the devices of plot."[17] Michel Zeraffa, writing about the sociological dimension of the novel, states that "the novel is the narrative mode that responds, or corresponds, most closely to our conventional psychological processes and modes of behaviour. […] We can follow the evolution of the concept of personality, of our perception of time, through eight centuries of the novel's development"[18], providing another example of the recognition of the

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[13] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 252.

[14] David Lodge, "Consciousness and the Novel," in *Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 10.

[15] Josie Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 91.

[16] Janet Levin, "Qualia," in *The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences*, ed. Robert A. Wilson and Frank C. Keil (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), 693.

[17] Lodge, "Consciousness," 14.

[18] Michel Zeraffa, *Fictions: The Novel and Social Reality* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 136.

importance of the mental for literature – this one originating in a very different theoretical, ideological background than cognitive sciences with its interest in the novel's representation of social reality and class consciousness.

Narrative itself has become to be seen as centrally preoccupied with and defined by the mind. David Herman, a prominent narratologist argues that "narrative is centrally concerned with qualia […] the sense of 'what it is like' for someone or something to have a particular experience."[19] Indeed, Herman includes qualia, or mind, among one of four defining features of narrative: situatedness, event sequencing, worldmaking/world disruption, and what it is like. According to him, a "prototypical narrative can be characterized as:

(i)   A representation that is situated in – must be interpreted in light of – a specific discourse context or occasion for telling.

(ii)   The representation, furthermore, cues interpreters to draw inferences about a structured time-course of particularized events.

(iii)   In turn, these events are such that they introduce some sort of disruption or disequilibrium into a storyworld involving human or human-like agents, whether that world is presented as actual or fictional, realistic or fantastic, remembered or dreamed, etc.

(iv)   The representation also conveys the *experience* of living through this storyworld-in-flux, highlighting the pressure of events on real or imagined consciousnesses affected by the occurrences at issue.[20]

Compared with a former typical definition of narrative, it is obvious that mind (here, interchangeable with terms like "qualia", "consciousness" or "experience") in terms of the centrality for and the definition of narrative is the new addition. Consulting Gerald Prince´s *A Dictionary of Narratology*, one can find the following basic definition of narrative: "The recounting (as product and process, object and act, structure and structuration) of one or more real or fictitious events communicated by one, two, or several (more or less overt) narrators to one, two, or several (more or less overt) narratees."[21] Prince elaborates on various constitutive features of narrative that are of interest in narratological research mentioning, among others: the distinction of story and discourse; the structure of narrative having a beginning, a middle, and an end; the temporal relation among events (speed, frequency); focalization; or narrative

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[19] David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), xvi.
[20] Herman, *Basic Elements*, xvi.
[21] Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1991), 58.

constructs like narrator and narratee bound by a "contract on which the very existence of narrative depends: I will tell you a story if you promise to be good; I will listen to you if you make it valuable".[22] While Prince´s description of what narrative is addresses the first, second and third points made by Herman, it obviously lacks the last point according to which narrative is "a mode of representation tailor-made for gauging the felt quality of lived experiences."[23] Ipso facto, according to Herman, "the less a given representation registers the pressure of an experienced world on one or more human or humanlike consciousnesses, the less central or prototypical an instance of the category 'narrative' that representation will be – all other things being equal."[24]

At the beginning of his book *Fictional Minds*, a seminal work in cognitive literary studies, Alan Palmer proposes an experiment: think of your favorite book; when you have thought of it, try to remember and recount the plot of the book. If you do that, presumably, you find yourself talking about what happens in the book in terms of what the characters in the book "want," "think," "believe" etc. You cannot do it without recourse to the mental element of the narrative – the plot lifted up from the network of mental lives of characters who perform actions and are affected by them loses its meaning: "It would in a sense, therefore, be more accurate and more revealing about the function of physical event descriptions in narratives to refer to them not as events but as *experiences*."[25] Palmer thus concurs with the psychologist Jerome Bruner who has observed that "[p]hysical events play a role in stories chiefly by affecting the intentional states of their protagonists."[26] This is then a universal of narrative which arguably works at a scale: particular narratives will rely on or foreground experience in different ways and to a different degree. Put in the words of David Herman, "a strictly behaviorist narrative would arguably be a contradiction in terms; for if a representation completely eliminated or occluded the consciousness factor it would fall outside the (elastic) text-type category of 'narrative.'"[27]

Alan Palmer bases his whole research on the premise that "narrative fiction is, in essence, the presentation of fictional mental functioning."[28] For him, matters of mind take dominance in the experience of reading narrative literature; so much so, that he claims,

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[22] Prince, *Dictionary*, 59.
[23] Herman, *Basic Elements*, 137-138.
[24] Herman, *Basic Elements*, 138.
[25] Alan Palmer, *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 30-31.
[26] Jerome Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (Autumn 1991): 7.
[27] Herman, *Basic Elements*, 142.
[28] Alan Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 5.

succinctly, that "[n]ovel reading is mind-reading."[29] Mind-reading here does not refer to a paranormal ability, but an everyday activity: it refers to the so called theory of mind, the human ability to attribute minds to others, to interpret the behavior of others in mentalistic terms (for more see below). Lisa Zunshine claims that not only is mind an important and inextricable component of the experience of narrative, but that theory of mind (ToM) "makes literature as we know it possible. […] The novel, in particular, is implicated with our mind-reading ability to such a degree that I do not think myself in danger of overstating anything when I say that in its currently familiar shape it exists because we are creatures with ToM."[30] Recognizing the nature of literature and narrative as inextricably bound with mind has an important implication for the study of literature. Alan Palmer confides,

> from my perspective, all serious students of literature are cognitivists, whether they like it or not. We all study the workings of fictional minds and think of novels in terms of the mental functioning of characters. So the divide is not between cognitivists and non-cognitivists; it is between those who *explicitly* see themselves as cognitivists and make use of real-mind discourses to study literary texts, and those who do not.[31]

In terms of this divide, I approach Faulkner's work explicitly admitting the cognitive concerns of studying literary fiction. Faulkner's work is particularly well suited to and in need of an analysis using concepts of the cognitive sciences. While narrative and literature in general are used as vehicles of exploring and staging the life of the mind, the work of William Faulkner presents a particularly salient example of the literary exploration of experience. His texts are mired in writing the mind and, conversely, minding writing. The possible examples of the "mentalese" that Faulkner employs in his oeuvre is myriad, a case in point being the marvelous first two sentences of the sixth chapter of *Light in August*: "Memory believes before knowing remembers. Believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing even wonders."[32] Thus begins the memory of what is Joe Christmas´s most formative experience that will haunt him and the book until the very end, and the reader beyond.

Faulkner's sentences burst with meaning; they threaten to explode with revelation. John T. Matthews calls the first sentence of *Light in August*´s sixth chapter "[t]he novel's most memorable, if also most enigmatic, assertion."[33] How lucid and revelatory it in fact is! The

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[29] Palmer, "Social Minds in Fiction and Criticism," *Style* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 208. For more on mind-reading and its relation to literary fiction see the next chapter.
[30] Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, 2006), 10.
[31] Alan Palmer, "Social Minds," 200.
[32] William Faulkner, *Light in August* (London: Vintage, 2005), 91.
[33] John T. Matthews, *William Faulkner: Seeing Through the South* (Malden: Blackwell, 2009), 168.

incipit of the chapter is a compression of truth that otherwise, for example in cognitive sciences, is explained at greater lengths. The old age staple of memory as a storehouse of artifacts perfectly stored and kept immutable with only the corruptive force of forgetting (time), seen as a deviation on the normal state of things, damaging the intact memories is exploded here in this polished gem of a sentence. Already contemporaneously with Faulkner, memory became much more alive than a dead archive. In his now classic 1932 book *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*, Frederic Charles Bartlett reached a new understanding of memory based on a series of experiments he conducted:

> Remembering is not the re-excitation of innumerable fixed, lifeless and fragmentary traces. It is an imaginative reconstruction, or construction, built out of the relation of our attitude towards a whole active mass of organized past reactions or experience, and to a little outstanding detail which commonly appears in image or in language form. It is thus hardly ever really exact, even in the most rudimentary cases of rote recapitulation, and it is not at all important that it should be so.[34]

Psychology discovered that memory is corruptive from the very beginning: since from the moment of perception when memories are created, the mind works selectively and under the influence of various factors affecting the process of memorization, there can be no talk of corruption. Memories have never been perfect; things have never been "as they were": "It is with remembering as it is with the stroke in a skilled game. We may fancy that we are repeating a series of movements learned a long time before from a text-book or from a teacher. But motion study shows that in fact we build up the stroke afresh on a basis of the immediately preceding balance of postures and the momentary needs of the game. Every time we make it, it has its own characteristics."[35] Memory does not reinstate the past, it is rather inspired by it, animated by it: it comes from the past filtered through all the moments after and conforms to the present. To paraphrase a famous first line of a novel, the past is a country of myths and legends even to memory itself; it cannot do anything else but believe. It believes the incomplete, imprecise, imperfect re-presentation that it has been from the start. It is knowing, with its factual basis of verifiable information that can actually re-member the past back together again and wonders at what it has found. Exploding stale preconceptions about cognition, Faulkner's enigma of a sentence leaves only the debris of truth about the human mind.

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[34] F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 213.
[35] Bartlett, *Remembering*, 204.

In his works, Faulkner reveals the working of the human mind both as a topic of his narratives and in the very style of writing about it. My interest in the cognitive approach to his work is an outgrowth of my diploma thesis on "A Rose for Emily" which analyzes the short story in terms of the peculiar first-person plural narrative technique, we-narrative, and in terms of collective memory studies. The idea of collective memory rests on the principle that memory "transcends individuals and is shared by a group."[36] Therefore, memory exits the privacy of the individual's brain and enters the world, its very existence and functionality premised on processes made possible by the sphere of the social: others and one's relation to them, memory tools and devices (diaries, handkerchief knots, google calendar etc.), practices, institutions, or ritual commemorations. Coming across papers on distributed cognition and extended mind thesis in my research, I discovered the social foundations of not only memory, but of cognition, the mind in general. They read like theoretical and experimental correlates of Faulkner's works and the way they depict the human mind not only on the level of story, but also on that of discourse.

Before formulating my thesis about the significance of the human mind in Faulkner's work, I first need to present the concept of mind I am working with. This introduction of ideas about the mind that challenge older notions will take up most of this chapter. The rather lengthy presentation is required because these ideas form the necessary background to my discussion of Faulkner's work whose achievement in this aspect can be appropriately appreciated only against their backdrop. More generally, the treatment of these notions is necessitated by their relative novelty not only to Faulkner or literary studies, but also in general as older conceptions of the mind are more entrenched in popular imagination and circles outside the current debates on human cognition. The relationship between the cognitive sciences and literary study as well as focus on cognitive literary studies in the context of literary studies in general will be treated in the next chapter. Both these chapters provide an essential context for my thesis as well as my overarching argument.

1.2. Mind Matters

My use of Antonio Damasio's ideas has already suggested that the concept of mind is more complicated, more complex than a reduction to a talk of brain or consciousness. Overlooking the landscape of contemporary cognitive sciences, Alan Palmer uses "the term mind in

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[36] James V. Wertsch and Henry L. Roediger III, "Collective Memory: Conceptual Foundations and Theoretical Approaches," *Memory* 16, no. 3 (April 2008): 318.

preference to alternatives such as *consciousness* and *thought*. The use of the latter two terms is often accompanied by a tendency to see mental life mainly in terms of inner speech" with the important point being that "the mind refers to much more than what is normally thought of as consciousness or thought."[37] This is significant because the use of the term "mind" has implications for the study of the mind in psychology and other cognitive sciences as well as in literature. Palmer observes that "the term *mind* embraces all aspects of our inner life: not just cognition and perception, but also dispositions, feelings, beliefs, and emotions"[38]. While there is a potential for the term "mind" to become "so wide that its use can shade off into such notions as character and personality" I, together with Palmer, "regard its doing so as desirable"[39] since it opens up new and productive avenues of literary analysis.

The mind seeps into areas that might not be immediately thought of as being connected to it. The collection of essays *Social Brain, Distributed Mind* showcases several of these areas advancing the social brain hypothesis which "argues that the complexities of hominin social life were responsible for driving the evolution of the early hominin brain from its essentially apelike beginnings to its modern form."[40] As a consequence, mind is not isolated in the ivory tower of the skull but includes objects and other people, i.e. other minds since "relations between hominins/humans and the material environment can thus be seen as facilitating the cognitive process. From an evolutionary perspective, then, material culture can be seen as *integral to* the ongoing negotiation of social practices, rather than simply a passive reflection or product of such practices."[41]

In other words, inventing the wheel reinvents the mind. Thus, tool use and technology are also subjects in the realm of the mind. They are interconnected to such a degree that Carl Knappet instructs that "we should stop simply describing the material world while interpreting the social, and instead seek to describe *and* explain both. These two phenomena are not hierarchically related; rather, each enacts the other, and thus we should really talk of the emergence of *socio-material* differentiation."[42] Recognizing the social and distributed nature of the mind leads us to see the cognitive sciences comprising not only the usual suspects like psychology, linguistics, neuroscience or philosophy of mind, but also, for example, archeology

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[37] Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 19.
[38] Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 19.
[39] Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 19.
[40] Robin Dunbar et al., "The Social Brain and the Distributed Mind," in *Social Brain, Distributed Mind*, ed. Robin Dunbar, Clive Gamble and John Gowlett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5.
[41] Dunbar et al., "The Social Brain," 12.
[42] Carl Knappett, "Networks and the Evolution of Socio-material Differentiation," in *Social Brain, Distributed Mind*, ed. Robin Dunbar, Clive Gamble and John Gowlett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 232.

where this recognition "is generally taken to imply that the material world, especially material culture, shapes the thinking of individuals just as much as an individual shapes the artifacts of that culture"[43] and where under the influence of increased research into the evolution of human cognition and language a "transformation of Palaeolithic archaeology from the study of stones and bones to that of human lives, minds and societies" has occurred.[44]

How do we get from the brain bound by the skull to talking about archeology as a cognitive science? How do we get from the dualistic notion of the mind safely enclosed by the boundaries of the skull and the body, or, in fact, the rest of the world existing independently of each other to talking about social brain and distributed cognition? In other words, how do we get from Descartes to now? As the title of Damasio's book suggests, René Descartes was wrong when he opposed the mind and the body, saying that "on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing; and on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended, non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it."[45]

The brain Descartes so wished to isolate from the rest of the world is the same brain that has always been immersed in the world in a constant feedback loop. Put bluntly by anthropologist Bradd Shore, "fully three-quarters of the human brain develops outside the womb, in direct relationship with an external environment. Evolution has equipped our species with an 'ecological brain,' dependent throughout its life on environmental input."[46] An ecological brain is part of the network brain-body-world while "even basic aspects of perception are influenced by the way that experience is 'modeled' by a particular sociocultural environment."[47] The influence of culture on the brain is twofold: humans are equipped with "a nervous system that has evolved under the sway of culture (in general) and which develops in each individual under the sway of *a* culture (in particular)."[48]

As Shore phrases it, "[t]his is an ethnographic conception of the mind."[49] In this conception "we understand the mind as naturally located outside the head, in the midst of social

[43] Alan Barnard, "When Individuals Do Not Stop at the Skin," in *Social Brain, Distributed Mind*, ed. Robin Dunbar, Clive Gamble and John Gowlett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 256.

[44] Steven Mithen, "Excavating the Prehistoric Mind: The Brain as a Cultural Artefact and Material Culture as Biological Extension," in *Social Brain, Distributed Mind*, ed. Robin Dunbar, Clive Gamble and John Gowlett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 481.

[45] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy with Selections from the Objections and Replies: a Latin-English Edition*, ed. and trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 109.

[46] Bradd Shore, *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

[47] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 4.

[48] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 4. Italics in the original.

[49] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 5.

life. But it is equally true that these culturally orchestrated landscapes are also to be found inscribed as dimensions of the mind."[50] This is not only "why cognitive science is unavoidably an ethnographic enterprise"[51], but also why mine is then an ethnographic approach to the work of William Faulkner who himself understood the mind as enmeshed "in the midst of social life". Interestingly, Clifford Geertz has observed that anthropological analysis is "like that of the literary critic" since both are interpretive in nature.[52] I will return to the importance of culture and its relation to the mind leaving it for now with Shore´s crucial observation that "taking culture seriously as a dimension of mind implies that a central processor [i.e., brain] can never be a *sufficient definition of mind*."[53]

1.2.1. Descartes, Materialism and Consciousness

In the past several decades, cognitive sciences have been catching up to anthropology and have developed an understanding of the mind that radically subverts and refuses the cartesian notion.[54] This new way of thinking about the mind has been called the second cognitive revolution, with the fundamental ideas subsumed under the label "4e cognition". This label provides a useful schematization of the concept of the mind that I work with. "The new way of thinking about the mind", Mark Rowlands starts his treatise on the new science of the mind, "is inspired by, and organized around, not the brain but some combination of the ideas that mental processes are (1) *embodied*, (2) *embedded*, (3) *enacted*, and (4) *extended*."[55] What is important for all these ideas, a crucial difference from previous conceptions of the mind, is that they are "denying, or at least questioning, the central assumption of cartesian cognitive science: mental processes are identical with, or exclusively realized by, brain processes."[56]

As Rowlands observes, the challenge to the cartesian conception of the mind is twofold. The first part concerns Descartes´ claim that the mind is a nonphysical thing. Descartes understands the body as "whatever has a determinable shape and a definable location and can occupy a space in such a way as to exclude any other body; it can be perceived by touch, sight, hearing, taste or smell, and can be moved in various ways, not by itself but by whatever else

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[50] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 8.
[51] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 8.
[52] Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 9.
[53] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 38.
[54] I am thinking here especially of Geertz's concepts of culture and mind which anticipate the positions advanced here. See especially Clifford Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 33-54.
[55] Mark Rowlands, *The New Science of the Mind. From Extended Mind to Embodied Phenomenology* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2010), 3.
[56] Rowlands, *New Science*, 3.

comes into contact with it"[57] and firmly claims that "the mind is completely different from the body."[58] The opposition between the mind and the body is at the center of cartesian dualism distinguishing body and mind, physical and non-physical things:

> Thus, simply by knowing that I exist and seeing at the same time that absolutely nothing else belongs to my nature or essence except that I am a thinking thing, I can infer correctly that my essence consists solely in the fact that I am a thinking thing. It is true that I may have (or, to anticipate, that I certainly have) a body that is very closely joined to me. But nevertheless, on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing; and on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended, non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it.[59]

The second aspect of the challenge to a cartesian cognitive science must address "the idea that the mind is something that exists inside the head."[60] While Descartes distinguishes the mind and the body as two phenomena of different orders, he still observes a relation of influence between them stating "I am not merely present in my body as a sailor is present in a ship, but that I am very closely joined and, as it were, intermingled with it, so that I and the body form a unit" otherwise "I, who am nothing but a thinking thing, would not feel pain when the body was hurt, but would perceive the damage purely by the intellect, just as a sailor perceives by sight if anything in his ship is broken."[61] Thus, hunger, thirst, pleasure and pain are available to the mind as "confused modes of thinking which arise from the union and, as it were, intermingling of the mind with the body."[62] Descartes concludes his meditation on the relationship between the mind and the body with the observation that "the mind is not immediately affected by all parts of the body, but only by the brain" formulating a correspondence between the two claiming that when "the brain is in a given state, it presents the same signals to the mind, even though the other parts of the body may be in a different condition at the time."[63]

Therefore, to fully reject the cartesian conception of cognition, one has to reject both aspects; something Gilbert Ryle has famously done calling Descartes´ conception the idea of

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[57] Descartes, *Meditations*, 35.
[58] Descartes, *Meditations*, 121.
[59] Descartes, *Meditations*, 109.
[60] Rowlands, *New Science*, 12.
[61] Descartes, *Meditations*, 113.
[62] Descartes, *Meditations*, 113.
[63] Descartes, *Meditations*, 121.

"the ghost in the machine", as Rowlands points out.[64] Rejecting only the first one will not do as this is what the mind-brain identity theory has done claiming that mental phenomena are reducible to or exclusively realized by the brain. It thus eliminated Descartes´ soul from the equation and latched on to the second aspect of his conception of mind about which he observes "that any given movement occurring in the part of the brain that immediately affects the mind produces just one corresponding sensation."[65] This is a materialist account which, for John Searle, "leaves out some essential feature of the mind such as consciousness or intentionality. In the jargon of philosophers, the materialist analysis fails to give *sufficient* conditions for mental phenomena, because it is possible to satisfy the materialist analysis and not have the appropriate mental phenomena."[66]

The main deficiency of a materialist concept of the mind is that it fails to account for consciousness. As Searle acutely observes, the problem starts with language: "The problem we face with the terminology is that the terms have traditionally been defined so as to be mutually exclusive. 'Mental' is defined as qualitative, subjective, first personal, and therefore immaterial. 'Physical' is defined as quantitative, objective, third personal, and therefore material."[67] This is a problem because the definitions as such fail "to capture the fact that the world works in such a way that some biological processes are qualitative, subjective, and first personal."[68] The mind cannot be reduced to the material of the brain because the phenomenon of consciousness is not subject to a standard reduction which analyses what appears to be the case and boils it down to what the case is. As Searle points out, "[e]liminative reductions rest on the distinction between appearance and reality. But we cannot show that the very existence of consciousness is an illusion like sunsets, because where consciousness is concerned the appearance is the reality."[69]

Consciousness complicates the relationship between body and brain immensely. Since the materialist account of mind sees the mental as physical, it has to explain the physical basis of consciousness, a problem that has not been solved so far to any satisfaction and, thus, has acquired the apt name "the hard problem of consciousness". As Thomas Nagel wrote in his famous essay on this problem "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?", consciousness "is what makes the mind-body problem really intractable. […] Without consciousness the mind-body problem would be much less interesting. With consciousness it seems hopeless."[70] In a nutshell, the

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[64] Rowlands, *New Science*, 12.
[65] Descartes, *Meditations*, 121. Cf. Rowlands, *New Science*, 12.
[66] John Searle, *Mind: A Brief Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 58.
[67] Searle, *Mind*, 81.
[68] Searle, *Mind*, 81.
[69] Searle, *Mind*, 85.
[70] Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" *The Philosophical Review* 83 (October 1974): 435-436.

mind-body problem is "the problem of explaining how our mental states, events, and processes are related to the physical states, events, and processes in our bodies."[71] As the philosopher David Chalmers observes, there are actually several problems of consciousness and while most of them are easy, being explainable by standard cognitive science, the "really hard problem of consciousness is the problem of *experience.*"[72]

As Nagel writes, consciousness, or conscious experience implies that "there is something it is like to *be* that organism."[73] For him, this "subjective character of experience" resists capture by any reductive analyses since they all "are logically compatible with its absence."[74] Any attempts in terms of functional, intentional or causal explanation fail, since it would be possible for robots to express the same behavior like people without having any kind of experience.[75] This is what makes the problem so bewildering: "Why should physical processing give rise to a rich inner life at all? It seems objectively unreasonable that it should, and yet it does."[76] This is the difference between the easy problems of consciousness – such as the focus of attention, the deliberate control of behavior or the difference between wakefulness and sleep among others – that Chalmers talks about and the hard problem: whereas the easy problems are solved by the explanation of cognitive abilities and functions (there is nothing more to the problems), the hard problem "goes *beyond* problems about the performance of functions [...] a further unanswered question may remain: *why is the performance of these functions accompanied by experience*? A simple explanation of the functions leaves this question open."[77]

Nagel deems any physicalist account of consciousness as counterproductive since "[i]f the subjective character of experience is fully comprehensible only from one point of view, then any shift to greater objectivity – that is, less attachment to a specific viewpoint – does not take us nearer to the real nature of the phenomenon: it takes us farther away from it."[78] Qualia, as

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[71] Tim Crane, "Mind-Body Problem," in *The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences*, ed. Robert A. Wilson and Frank C. Keil (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), 546.
[72] David J. Chalmers, "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness," in *The Character of Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5.
[73] Nagel, "What Is It Like," 436.
[74] Nagel, "What Is It Like," 436.
[75] Nagel, "What Is It Like," 436-437.
[76] Chalmers, "Facing up," 5.
[77] Chalmers, "Facing up," 8. Italics in the original.
[78] Nagel, "What Is It Like," 444-445. Similarly, Searle points out that such a reduction would render the concept of consciousness futile for the fact that "consciousness has a first-person ontology, and you lose the point of having the concept if you redefine it in third-person terms." Searle, *Mind*, 86. Expanding Nagel's criticism, Frank Jackson has argued that even the knowledge of all physical facts about a phenomenon (pain, for example) does not equal to knowing what it is like to experience this phenomenon concluding that "[t]herefore there is some knowledge – knowledge of what-it's-like – that is not knowledge of any physical fact." Crane, "Mind-Body Problem," 548.

phenomena evincing the experientiality of consciousness, thus provide "a particularly vexing example of the mind-body problem."[79] It is now more understandable why Lodge uses qualia to stress the importance of literature for the understanding of mind. An important aspect of experience that makes literature a possible vehicle for the transmission of qualia is that the point of view to which experience is tethered "is not one accessible only to a single individual. Rather it is a *type*. It is often possible to take up a point of view other than one´s own, so the comprehension of such facts is not limited to one´s own case."[80] Literature, lauded for the possibility of taking up others´ points of view, of empathy, is a central medium for the representation of mind.

Chalmers sees the hard problem of consciousness as metaphysical, summarizing that "[e]xperience may *arise* from the physical, but it is not *explained* by the physical."[81] For him, the solution to the problem lies in the future in a psychophysical theory of consciousness that will marry physical processes to experience.[82] For his part, Searle tries to bridge this divide by suggesting that the explanatory gap is a problem of descriptive levels. Calling his approach "biological naturalism", he claims that consciousness is a system-level phenomenon caused by – and, therefore, causally reducible to – a lower level of neurobiological processes of the brain.[83] Searle thus integrates the subjective, first-person ontology of consciousness with the third-person, real world ontology demonstrating the paradigm within which the problem of consciousness is usually solved (including all the examples above).

Some have criticized this approach saying that the whole set-up of the hard problem of consciousness is false: "One problem with this whole way of setting up the issue, however, is that it presupposes we can make sense of the very notion of a single, canonical, physicalist description of the world, which is highly doubtful, and that in arriving (or at any rate approaching) such a description, we are attaining a viewpoint that does not in any way

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[79] Levin, "Qualia," 693.
[80] Nagel, "What Is It Like," 441-442.
[81] Chalmers, "Facing up," 15.
[82] Chalmers, "Facing up," 20, 28. For others, there is no metaphysical problem. Colin McGinn sees our inability to solve the problem only as a cognitive constraint of the human mind claiming that "there is no intrinsic conceptual or metaphysical difficulty about how consciousness depends on the brain. […] We confuse our own cognitive limitations with objective eeriness. […] There is no *metaphysical* problem." Colin McGinn, "Can We Solve the Mind-Body Problem?," *Mind* 98, no. 391 (July 1989): 362-363. If this is the case, "[t]his removes the philosophical problem because it assures us that the entities themselves pose no inherent philosophical difficulty." McGinn, "Can We Solve," 363. What remains nevertheless is the epistemological counterpart of the hard problem of consciousness, "there is still a deep problem about how we can explain the distinctive features of mental states in terms of their physical properties. In other words, there seems to be an 'explanatory gap' between the physical and the mental." Joseph Levine, "Explanatory Gap," in *The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences,* ed. Robert A. Wilson and Frank C. Keil (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), 304.
[83] Searle, *Mind*, 79.

presuppose our own cognition and lived experience."[84] The dyadic conception of consciousness as subjective and objective creates a world of selves and things with nothing in between. Both Evan Thompson and Christian De Quincey argue for the addition of another ontology, making the dyad a triad: not I-it, but I-you-it. Both philosophers highlight the intersubjective nature of consciousness stressing that "our relating to the world, including when we do science, always takes place within a matrix whose fundamental structure is I-You-It."[85] This applies to consciousness as well whose intersubjectivity is embedded in its very name, as De Quincey reminds when he expands on the fact that "conscientia" means "knowing with":

> This reveals that, originally, the word "consciousness" implied a *dialogic* process – an interaction or communication between two or more knowing beings. To be conscious meant that two or more people were privy to some item of knowledge not available to others outside the privileged circle. In this sense, "consciousness" is similar to "conspire" (to "breathe with" others). "Consciousness" meant that the privileged circle of knowers *knew that each of their conspirators knew too.*
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> Consciousness, therefore, originally implied a "shared secret" or "knowledge of a privileged few." Consciousness, in other words, was originally *communal,* a property of the group.[86]

It is easy to see how such a concept of consciousness is relevant for a novel like *Absalom, Absalom!* or, indeed, how the novel is relevant for this notion of consciousness. In it, a group of conspirators (narrators) shares a story that only they are privy to either in the details that are unknown to the public at large or in the details that they invent. Uncannily, the novel explicitly and repeatedly makes the point that sharing breath, breathing the same air is like sharing knowledge: at the beginning of the novel it is stated that Quentin Compson, one of the narrators, already knew part of Thomas Sutpen´s story because "[i]t was a part of his twenty years´ heritage of breathing the same air and hearing his father talk about the man; a part of the town´s – Jeffersons´s – eighty years´ heritage of the same air which the man himself had breathed"[87]. Shared breaths and intimacy of knowledge take on special significance also for Quentin and Shreve as they breathe in the close quarters of their college dorm room with their

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[84] Evan Thompson, "Empathy and Consciousness," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8, no. 5-7 (January 2001): 21.

[85] Thompson, "Empathy," 21.

[86] Christian De Quincey, "Intersubjectivity: Exploring Consciousness from the Second-Person Perspective," in *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 32, no. 2 (2000): 149. Cf. Kay Mathiesen, "Collective Consciousness," in *Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Woodruff Smith, David and Amie L. Thomasson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 235.

[87] William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 7.

breaths made visible by the cold New England air and their inspiration conjured by their shared storytelling (for more see the chapter on *Absalom, Absalom!*).

Faulkner understands the intersubjective nature of consciousness well. Speaking of *Absalom, Absalom!*, Eric Casero observes that instead of "simply ascribing agency in the novel to individual consciousness, Faulkner portrays a psychological landscape in which […] [t]he interplay of conscious agents is, rather, a constant flow of production, a production of ideas, feelings, and political strategies […] This flow of consciousness is the field out of which narrative emerges in the novel."[88] In Faulkner´s Copernican revolution of understanding consciousness, the self is dethroned, decentralized: as Thompson formulates it, there is "no one single zero-point or bodily center of orientation", or, in other words, "one's center of orientation becomes one among others."[89] To avoid misunderstanding, Faulkner does not dissolve the self in a flux of impersonal forces. As Casero specifies, the flow of consciousness moves through various dimensions of consciousness – through "the consciousnesses of individuals, the social networks, and the historical relationships between consciousnesses that are removed from each other in historical time."[90] De Quincey distinguishes various forms of consciousness, among them personal understood as "individualized awareness with a sense of self-identity" and intersubjective which "is not, strictly speaking, a variety, or a state or level of consciousness like the other seven. It is the context or condition for all varieties of consciousness and permeates the entire evolutionary spectrum."[91] Similarly, consciousness in *Absalom, Absalom!* is portrayed as both personal and intersubjective with the latter being the context for the former since "although the various characters (both the narrators and those whose stories are being narrated) maintain their respective individual consciousnesses, the chains of causality that bring about changes and effects in consciousness cannot simply be ascribed to individual agents."[92]

What this intersubjective line of thinking criticizes about the standard cognitive approaches to consciousness, but also the human mind as a whole, is that it excludes humanity itself from its considerations: "What this extreme emphasis fails to take into account is that the mind as a scientific object has to be constituted as such from the personalistic perspective in

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[88] Eric Casero, "Designing Sutpen: Narrative and Its Relationship to Historical Consciousness in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*," *The Southern Literary Journal* 44, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 87-88.

[89] Thompson, "Empathy," 19.

[90] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 88.

[91] De Quincey, "Intersubjectivity," 151. De Quincey´s list of the varieties of consciousness also includes sentience as "primitive capacity for feeling and self-motion"; awake/awareness due to which an "organism can be either conscious or unconscious, awake or asleep"; interpersonal "involving awareness […] of deep intersubjective foundation of all consciousness"; unitive which "integrates all prior forms of consciousness into experienced unity"; and dissociative which is a "pathological failure to integrate prior forms of consciousness". De Quincey, "Intersubjectivity," 151.

[92] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 88.

the empathic co-determination of self and other."[93] Thus, going back to the beginning of this chapter and Faulkner's Nobel address, this section can be summarized with De Quincey's words stressing the importance of emotion in the matters of the mind: "In conclusion, we could say that standard third-person inquiry leads to a science of external bodies, first-person inquiry to an interior science of the mind, and second-person engagement to a communal science of the heart. Whereas the ultimate ideal of objective knowledge is control, and the ultimate ideal of subjective knowledge is peace, the ultimate ideal of intersubjective knowledge is relationship – and, dare I say it, love."[94]

1.2.2. The 4e Mind

Looking at cartesian dualism and physicalism and showing their insufficiency in providing the whole picture of the mind, we have come through deliberations on consciousness to a point where the individual is not a sufficient unit of explanation in terms of cognition. Both dualism and physicalism posit mind as something that is bounded by the body, giving little role in mental life to anything outside the brain. The new conception can be summarized by focusing on four approaches to human mind that have been collectively called *4e cognition*: it sees the human mind as (1) embodied, (2) embedded, (3) enacted and (4) extended. To give a basic idea of what this means, I will use Mark Rowlands´ summary of these approaches:

> The idea that mental processes are *embodied* is, very roughly, the idea that they are partly constituted by, partly made up of, wider (i.e., extraneural) bodily structures and processes. The idea that mental processes are *embedded* is, again roughly, the idea that mental processes have been designed to function only in tandem with a certain environment that lies outside the brain of the subject. […] The idea that mental processes are *enacted* is the idea that they are made up not just of neural processes but also of things that the organism *does* more generally – that they are constituted in part by the ways in which an organism acts on the world and the ways in which world, as a result, acts back on that organism. The idea that mental processes are *extended* is the idea that they are not located exclusively inside an organism's head but extend out, in various ways, into the organism's environment.[95]

Looking at the shared tenets of these approaches, Rowlands´ treatment of this "new science of the mind" provides a useful source. Firstly, all these approaches are underpinned by

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[93] Thompson, "Empathy," 21.
[94] De Quincey, "Intersubjectivity," 153. On the significance of love in the matters of the mind see also the present chapter on *Absalom, Absalom!*.
[95] Rowlands, *New Science*, 3.

the common view of the mind as extending beyond the brain. In their view, mental states and processes are "also things that happen, *partly*, in our bodies and even, *partly*, in the world outside of our bodies."[96] Rowlands highlights that "[t]he qualification 'partly' is (i) obvious, (ii) crucial, and (iii) ignored with surprising frequency."[97] As Shaun Gallagher puts it, the "E-approaches" supplant the "neurocentric" picture of the mind, a "narrow perspective on cognition" which sees it as brain-based, and instead "argue that the unit of explanation ought to be brain-body-environment."[98] Thus, what is proposed is not an exclusion of the brain from the mind; instead, the brain "is decentered and given a partial, although still important, role to play along with bodily and environmental factors."[99] In this way, as already shown above, these approaches reject both of the founding principles of cartesian conception of the mind earning the denomination "non-Cartesian cognitive science" from Rowlands.

Secondly, the inclusion of body and world into the mind is a practical one, explained by Rowlands as the "barking dog principle": "There is an old adage that captures this idea quite nicely. It says: why keep a dog if you are going to bark yourself? If there is some barking to be done, and you have a dog that will do at least some of it for you, then you have correspondingly less barking to do yourself."[100] In other words, outsourcing part of cognition onto the body and world lightens the cognitive load the brain has to bear by utilizing various environmental structures. This cognitive offloading is conditioned on the availability of information that an environmental structure carries: "Acting on external structures in such a way that the information they contain is transformed from the merely *present* to the *available* lies at the heart of non-Cartesian cognitive science. This sort of action […] forms a properly cognitive part of an overall cognitive process."[101] Rowlands summarizes the "general explanatory profile […] that is replicated throughout the cluster of theories" as an *attenuation of the role of representation* coupled with *augmentation of the role of action*"[102] meaning that these approaches move stress from the construction and storage of information relevant for the accomplishment of a particular cognitive task to the detection of such information contained in various structures.[103]

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[96] Rowlands, *New Science*, 13.

[97] Rowlands, *New Science*, 13.

[98] Shaun Gallagher, "Decentering the Brain: Embodied Cognition and the Critique of Neurocentrism and Narrow-Minded Philosophy of Mind," *Constructivist Foundations* 14, no. 1 (2008): 9.

[99] Gallagher, "Decentering the Brain," 9. Rowlands carefully articulates, with attacks on this decentering of the brain on his mind, that "in the case of some mental processes but not all, *part* of that mental process – but never all – is made up of factors that occur outside the brain of the subject." Rowlands, *New Science*, 13.

[100] Rowlands, *New Science*, 16.

[101] Rowlands, *New Science*, 17.

[102] Rowlands, *New Science*, 33.

[103] Cf. Rowlands, *New Science*, 18.

The idea of embodied mind, as the name suggests, claims that some mental processes "are constituted not just by brain processes but by a combination of these and wider bodily structures and processes."[104] Previous conceptions claimed that the human mind could exist and function in the same way separately from the body. The idea of embodied mind claims that the way our bodies are constituted and evolve conditions the way the brain, thus the mind as well, works.[105] One implication here is that the dreams of science-fiction of transferring our mind (consciousness) into a machine – premised on dualistic views of the mind – are impossible, at least without any corruption since the mind is tethered to the physical, organic body. Damasio calls the separation between mind and body "mythical" and "fictional" assuring that "mind is embodied, in the full sense of the term, not just embrained."[106] The bond is such that one theorist claims that "minds profoundly reflect the bodies in which they are contained," so that "it is often possible to predict properties of the body based on knowledge of properties of the mind."[107]

As Damasio highlights, brain is actually subservient to the body: according to him, "the overall function of the brain is to be well informed about what goes on in the rest of the body, the body proper; about what goes on in itself; and about the environment surrounding the organism, so that suitable, survivable accommodations can be achieved between organism and environment."[108] To drive the point home, he concludes this observation by laconically stating that "[i]f there had been no body, there would have been no brain."[109] Damasio further clarifies the interdependence of brain and body: "I am not saying that the mind is in the body. I am saying that the body contributes more than life support and modulatory effects to the brain. It contributes a *content* that is part and parcel of the workings of the normal mind."[110] The body does not encapsulate the mind; it participates in its functioning. It is emotion that functions as the medium of communication within the embodied mind, being "the combination of a *mental evaluative process*, simple or complex, with *dispositional responses to that process*, mostly toward the body proper, resulting in an emotional body state, but also *toward the brain itself* […] resulting in additional mental changes."[111]

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[104] Rowlands, *New Science*, 53.
[105] See, for example, Gallagher, "Decentering the Brain," 10.
[106] Damasio, *Descartes´ Error*, 118.
[107] Lawrence Shapiro quoted in Rowlands, *New Science*, 53.
[108] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 90.
[109] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 90.
[110] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 226.
[111] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 139. See also Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 230.

While proposing the embodied mind as an indivisible unit, embodied cognitive science does not stop short of the world, the environment. In its view, an "organism constituted by the brain-body partnership interacts with the environment as an ensemble."[112] Since "[i]ndividuals are always embedded in social contexts, characterized by intersubjective and normative relations", while there are biological and chemical processes underlying the embodiment of mind, "it is best to conceive of agency, intention, and autonomy in these embodied and socially situated terms, rather than in terms of brain processes measured in milliseconds."[113] Thus, the focus on the minded body should not be understood as turning away from the wider context of the world and the specifically cultural environment of the human kind. Damasio stresses the social dimension of the mind: "Culture and civilization could not have arisen from single individuals and thus cannot be reduced to biological mechanisms and, even less, can they be reduced to a subset of genetic specifications. Their comprehension demands not just general biology and neurobiology but the methodologies of the social sciences as well."[114] Once again, the individual emerges only as node in a network.

The idea of embedded mind claims that cognitive processes are often embedded in the environment: "In embedded or situated cognition, the environment is more than just a source of inputs. When an agent is situated, its experience of the world depends crucially upon not only its sensory mechanisms, but also upon the nature of its body and the potential of its body to affect the world."[115] In a (re)formulation of the idea of 4e cognition shifting stress from representation to action, in the context of embedded cognition, mental processes are thought of in terms of their functions, of acting upon the world: "In the traditional sense-think-act cycle, agents are passive receivers of information. In contrast, the sense-act theory of perception proposes that perception is active, because perceivers are constantly exploring their worlds."[116] The standard way of conceiving of cognitive processes within the idea of the embedded mind is a functional one.[117] There is feedback going on between an agent and the world which "is structured by the nature of an agent's body. This is because an agent's body places constraints

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[112] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 88.
[113] Gallagher, "Decentering the Brain," 13.
[114] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 124.
[115] Michael Dawson, "Embedded and Situated Cognition," in *The Routledge Handbook of Embodied Cognition*, ed. Lawrence Shapiro (New York: Routledge, 2014), 61.
[116] Dawson, "Embedded," 60. Cf. Rowlands: "In general, the guiding idea underlying the thesis of the embedded mind is that in accomplishing cognitive tasks, an organism can *utilize* structures in its environment in such a way that the amount of internal processing it must perform is reduced. Some of the complexity of the task is, thereby, off-loaded onto the environment, given that the organism has the ability to appropriately exploit that environment." Rowlands, *New Science*, 69.
[117] Cf. Rowlands, *New Science*, 68.

on how the world is experienced (Umwelt) as well as on how the world is acted upon (affordance)."[118]

The concept of affordances is crucial – it can be thought of as a nexus at which the organism and the environment meet in an active, functional manner. James J. Gibson devised the term to express the possibilities the environment "*offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill […] something that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. [Affordances] have to be measured *relative to the animal*. They are unique for that animal. They are not just abstract physical properties."[119] Speaking of an organism and its immediate environment, a niche "as a set of affordances […] refers more to *how* an animal lives than to *where* it lives. […] The niche implies a kind of animal, and the animal implies a kind of niche"[120] – the two are complementary. Affordances are by their very nature plastic, "multipurposive," as Gibson demonstrates with the following example: "An elongated object of moderate size and weight affords wielding. If used to hit or strike, it is a *club* or *hammer*. If used by a chimpanzee behind bars to pull in a banana beyond its reach, it is a sort of *rake*. In either case, it is an extension of the arm."[121]

At the heart of the idea of affordances lies a profound implication bearing on larger matters of the mind – the continuity of nature and culture. Gibson deems the opposition of these terms as false, flawed: "It is a mistake to separate the natural from the artificial as if there were two environments; artifacts have to be manufactured from natural substances. It is also a mistake to separate the cultural environment from the natural environment, as if there were a world of mental products distinct from the world of material products."[122] He firmly asserts that "[t]here is only one world, however diverse,"[123] highlighting the view of the mind as both natural (biological) and cultural (intersubjective) that is shared by all 4e approaches and that serves as a rejection of the first principle of cartesian cognitive science referred to above. Bespeaking the individual-transcending forces forming the embodied mind, Gibson reminds that "[w]e all fit into the substructures of the environment in our various ways, for we were all, in fact, formed by them. We were created by the world we live in."[124]

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[118] Dawson, "Embedded," 62.
[119] James J. Gibson, "The Theory of Affordances," in *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (New York: Psychology Press, 1986), 127.
[120] Gibson, "Theory," 128.
[121] Gibson, "Theory," 133.
[122] Gibson, "Theory," 130.
[123] Gibson, "Theory," 130.
[124] Gibson, "Theory," 130.

The notion of enacted mind shares the notion of cognition as spreading across the brain-body-world triad, while stressing the distinction between the organism and its environment. As two proponents of the enactive approach to cognition, Ezequiel di Paolo and Evan Thompson put it, this view "depends constitutively on the living body, understood as an *autonomous system*"[125]: "A key attribute of the living body is its individuation, the process by which it makes itself distinct from its immediate surroundings […]. More precisely, a key attribute of the body is that it is *self-individuating* – it generates and maintains itself through constant structural and functional change."[126] The basic level at which this happens is material, the level of metabolism. An organism interacts with its environment by "continually both producing itself out of the materials of the world, as well as distinguishing itself from it."[127] The drive behind this self-individuating quest for an autonomous status, as well as adaptation is precariousness, i.e., the threat to organisms of deterioration (illness) or disintegration (death) "from their own systemic organization and from their environment."[128]

The body, not as an anatomical unit, but as an autonomous system – thus, not necessarily "constituted exclusively by its biochemical or physiological processes"[129] – takes the lead in the brain-body-world triad within the enactive approach. Its relation to the environment is that of an affordance with a feedback loop, implying "that the precise and particular body it [an organism] has determines what it can do […] and at the same time, that what it does in turn shapes its body."[130] The second implication is that organisms have a particular relationship with the world through which they "cast a web of significance on the world"[131] and this determines the very nature of cognition: "Exchanges with the world are inherently significant for the cogniser and this is a definitional property of a cognitive system: the creation and appreciation of meaning or *sense-making* in short."[132] Cognition as sense-making, at a basic level, occurs as "not a matter of representing states of affairs but rather of establishing relevance through the need to maintain an identity that is constantly facing the possibility of disintegration. From this

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[125] Ezequiel di Paolo and Evan Thompson, "The Enactive Approach," in *The Routledge Handbook of Embodied Cognition*, ed. Lawrence Shapiro (New York: Routledge, 2014), 68.

[126] Di Paolo and Thompson, "Enactive Approach," 68.

[127] Hanne de Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing: Reflections for an Engaged Epistemology," in *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*: 9. first online. doi: 10.1007/s11097-019-09634-5.

[128] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 9. For a more extensive treatment of autonomous status, precariousness, and other relevant terms see di Paolo and Thompson or Evan Thompson and Mog Stapleton, "Making Sense of Sense-Making: Reflections on Enactive and Extended Mind Theories," *Topoi* 28, no. 1 (2009): 23-30.

[129] Di Paolo and Thompson, "Enactive Approach," 72.

[130] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 8.

[131] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 8.

[132] Hanne De Jaegher and Ezequiel Di Paolo, "Participatory Sense-Making: An Enactive Approach to Social Cognition," *Phenomenological Cognitive Science* 6 (2007): 488.

perspective, the body is not just the means but also an end of being a cognitive system."[133] In the enactive view, cognition is underlined as a survival strategy, as "the adaptive regulation of states and interactions by an agent with respect to the consequences for the agent's own viability."[134]

Enactivists are convinced that "[l]ike few ideas in the past, the concept of sense-making strikes at the heart of what is to be cognitive."[135] This is because cognition in the enactivist view has an embodied and social dimension which is crucial to its meaning. Since enactivism claims that "[n]atural cognitive systems are simply not in the business of accessing their world in order to build accurate pictures of it" and, instead, "actively participate in the generation of meaning in what matters to them; they enact a world", sense-making "is a relational and affect-laden process grounded in biological organization. […] Hence it does not promote a fissure between affect and cognition."[136] Although the body takes center stage, it also enters into social interactions.

Enactivists criticize the current, deficient understanding of social interaction and its role in social cognition, lamenting the focus of psychology and neuroscience solely on "individual mechanisms in the absence of interaction."[137] On their part, they extend their ideas of cognition as sense-making into the social dimension through the concept of participatory sense-making, the idea being that "much like individuals, interaction processes also self-organize. That is, they can take on a life of their own."[138] In other words, social interactions can develop emergent properties that arise only in the interactions themselves and are not determined on the level of individuals participating in such interactions. To illustrate this point, de Jaegher gives a ubiquitous example from everyday life: "Think of how difficult it can be to end a conversation, even if both you and your interaction partner have already begun saying goodbyes."[139] In this way "[e]lements of interaction dynamics can supplement or even replace cognitive functions that we usually assume to be individual, and patterns of coordination between people can

[133] Di Paolo and Thompson, "The Enactive Approach," 73. The authors clarify that they don´t want to "deny that we can and do engage in high-level problem solving. Rather, it is to say that this kind of narrow cognition presupposes the broader and more basic cognition that we call sense-making." Di Paolo and Thompson, "The Enactive Approach," 73.
[134] Di Paolo and Thompson, "The Enactive Approach," 76.
[135] De Jaegher and Di Paolo, "Participatory Sense-Making," 488.
[136] De Jaegher and Di Paolo, "Participatory Sense-Making," 488.
[137] Hanne De Jaegher et al., "Can Social Interaction Constitute Social Cognition?," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 14, no. 10 (October 2010): 442.
[138] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 9.
[139] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 9.

modulate, enable, and constrain individual sensemaking."[140] In other words, the interaction itself becomes an inseparable part of the process of cognition.

For enactivists, "[c]ognition is not an event happening inside the system; it is the relational process of sense-making that takes place between the system and its environment."[141] The last of the e-approaches, the extended mind thesis (EMT) has the externalization of cognition in its title, while the two theorists who formulated it, Andy Clark and David J. Chalmers put it bluntly in their seminal article saying that "[c]ognitive processes ain't (all) in the head!"[142] According to enactivists, despite the shared assumption of cognitive extension, enactivism and EMT differ in a conceptually important aspect. Whereas the enactivist definition of an autonomous organism refuses assumptions of an internal vs external debate when it comes to cognition, the definition of cognitive extension by Clark and Chalmers maintains it by what they call "the parity principle" which states that extended cognition obtains "[i]f, as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as a process which, *were it done in the head*, we would have no hesitation in recognizing as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world *is* (so we claim) part of the cognitive process."[143] Enactivism avoids modelling cognition in general on "what goes on entirely in the head" claiming that "[w]hat goes on strictly inside the head never as such counts as a cognitive process. It counts only as a participant in a cognitive process that exists as a relation between the system and its environment."[144]

I disagree with this assessment of EMT by enactivists. Firstly, some theorists have pointed out the problem with misunderstanding the parity principle in spatial terms. Richard Menary points out that the parity principle, as well as the EMT as a whole, should be understood functionally: "As long as a process has a cognitive *function* then it does not matter where it is located. If it plays the right sort of role and is causally integrated with other cognitive processes, then it is part of the system of processes that constitute a person's completion of a cognitive task."[145] Menary concedes that the problem of misinterpreting the parity principle comes from Clark and Chalmers´ choice of words; nevertheless, he stresses that "[f]ocus on the function,

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[140] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 9.
[141] Thompson and Stapleton, "Making Sense," 26.
[142] Andy Clark and David J. Chalmers, "The Extended Mind," in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2010), 29.
[143] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 29.
[144] Thompson and Stapleton, "Making Sense," 25-26.
[145] Richard Menary, "The Extended Mind in Focus," in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2010), 5. Clark himself clarifies that the idea of cognitive extension should be understood as functionalism: "This is not behaviorism but functionalism. It is systemic role that matters, not brute similarities in public behavior (though the two are of course related)" when environmental structures are involved in cognitive processing. Andy Clark, *Memento's* Revenge: The Extended Mind, Extended," in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2010), 52.

not the location, is the purpose of the PP. It is not a simple comparative exercise; if external process *X* is sufficiently similar to internal process *Y*, then *X* is cognitive."[146] Mark Rowlands stresses the functionality of EMT when he addresses another misinterpretation of the idea that sees it claiming that environmental structures are identical with mental states, in other words, that environmental structures are themselves cognitive.[147] As he highlights, it is not the what, but the how, not the structures themselves, but "the things we do with external structures – our manipulation, exploitation, and transformation of them – that constitute properly cognitive parts of overall processes of cognition."[148]

Secondly, it is the very nature of the extension in EMT that goes against a division between an outside and an inside. According to EMT, the mind extends by coupling with tools as various as pen and paper, slide rule, diagrams, language which Clark and Chalmers take "to be a central means by which cognitive processes are extended into the world"[149], or culture as a whole.[150] What these various couplings share is the way in which "the human organism is linked with an external entity in a two-way interaction, creating a *coupled system* that can be seen as a cognitive system in its own right. All the components in the system play an active causal role, and they jointly govern behavior in the same sort of way that cognition usually does."[151] The important feature of such a system is its emergent nature – the organism without the external entity does not perform cognitively at all or, at least, not as well as with it: "The external features in a coupled system play an ineliminable role—if we retain internal structure but change the external features, behavior may change completely. The external features here are just as causally relevant as typical internal features of the brain."[152] Therefore, the coupling and the emergence of the system obliterate the border between an inside and an outside. The important condition that has to be met for a structure to count as cognitive is availability, i.e. the information carried by an environmental structure has to be "easily available when the subject needs it".[153]

In fact, in some of Clark´s more radical statements and conceptualizations of the extension of the human mind, there can hardly be any talk of inside vs. outside. In his book

[146] Menary, "Extended Mind," 6.
[147] For an example of such a misinterpretation and criticism of EMT see, for example, Fred Adams and Ken Aizawa, "Defending the Bounds of Cognition," in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2010), 67-80. For more on criticisms of the extended mind thesis as well as on enactivism and EMT see the chapter on Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* of this dissertation.
[148] Rowlands, *New Science*, 67.
[149] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 32.
[150] Cf. Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 28.
[151] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 29.
[152] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 30.
[153] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 36.

Natural-Born Cyborgs, Clark sets out not only to catalogue and tackle all the various forms of mind extension, but also to show that, in fact, we humans "are already primed by nature to dovetail our minds to our worlds" and that "revealed" we are "cyborgs without surgery, symbionts without sutures."[154] He mounts an attack on western thought accusing it of self-delusional placing of the brain on the pedestal of the mind, indeed, of the self:

> What blinds us to our own increasingly cyborg nature is an ancient western prejudice—the tendency to think of the mind as so deeply special as to be distinct from the rest of the natural order. In these more materialist times, this prejudice does not always take the form of belief in soul or spirit. It emerges instead as the belief that there is something absolutely special about the cognitive machinery that happens to be housed within the primitive bioinsulation (nature's own duct-tape!) of skin and skull. What goes on in there is so special, we tend to think, that the only way to achieve a true human-machine merger is to consummate it with some brute physical interfacing performed behind the bedroom doors of skin and skull.[155]

The attack reaches a deconstructive pitch when Clark formulates his most radical vision of the self which is in line with Derrida's attack on the Western metaphysics of presence. In Clark´s view, the self is a dynamic assemblage constantly in flux: "There is no self, if by self we mean some central cognitive essence that makes me who and what I am. In its place there is just the 'soft self': a rough-and-tumble, control sharing coalition of processes – some neural, some bodily, some technological – and an ongoing drive to tell a story, to paint a picture in which 'I' am the central player."[156] The self is an emergent coalition which, seen as a whole, gives the impression of a monolith:

> Imagine a pile of sand, deposited roughly on the ground, which is slowly settling into a stable arrangement of grains. Were the pile of sand self-aware, it too might hallucinate a kind of inner essence – a special grain or set of grains whose deliberate actions sculpt the rest into a stable arrangement. But there is no such essence. The sandpile simply self-organized into a more-or-less stable coalition of grains. Similarly, certain coalitions of biological and nonbiological problem-solving elements (grab bags of mind tools) prove more stable and enduring than others. These configurations have a tendency to preserve and even repeat themselves. When viewed by a conscious, narrative-spinning

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[154] Andy Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 34.
[155] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs,* 26.
[156] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 138.

element, this all looks like the work of some central organizer: the real self, the real mind, the real source of the observed order. […] The notion of a real, central, yet wafer-thin self is a profound mistake. It is a mistake that blinds us to our real nature and leads us to radically undervalue and misconceive the roles of context, culture, environment, and technology in the constitution of individual human persons. To face up to our true nature (soft selves, distributed decentralized coalitions) is to recognize the inextricable intimacy of self, mind, and world.[157]

Here, it must be admitted that while seemingly radical, Clark´s notion of the self as an assemblage has a correlate on the biological level. Writing of the fact that the human body is more bacteria than human, i.e., that there are more bacterial cells than human cells, that cells are impermanent and die while new are created, and that the body is constantly in flux with a host of ongoing processes, James Paul Gee conceptualizes the self as a swarm, taking a metaphor from the insect kingdom, and ultimately gives the same unanchored, loose, dynamic, contextual vision of human nature as Clark:

> There is no "essential" you or me. Humans are Transacting Swarms deeply sensitive to a myriad of things (and their interactions) that are in the swarm. They change as the swarm changes in response to changes to our physical, biological, and social environments. As a Transacting Swarm, each human can have many different reasonably stable (homeostatic) states, none of which are the "real" person and each of which can change (or disappear into disorder). […] Like all animals, humans are not reducible to their biology. We are processes of processes interacting with processes of processes, like rivers running into rivers and all into the sea. We are not things and certainly not single things.[158]

If Clark´s concept of the self harbors any difference from enactivism, it does not regard the internal vs. external debate but the approach to the body within the brain-body-world matrix of the mind. As Shaun Gallagher remarks, the functionalism of EMT obliterates how "the material specifics of bodily processes shape and contribute to the constitution of consciousness and cognition".[159] Gallagher observes that Clark "argues that specific differences in body type

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[157] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 138-139. For more on the relation between cognitive sciences and deconstruction see the introduction to Mary Thomas Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), or Ellen Spolsky, "Darwin and Derrida: Cognitive Literary Theory as a Species of Post-Structuralism," in *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 292-310, drawing lines of contact between evolutionary approaches to cognition and deconstruction.

[158] James Paul Gee, *What is a Human? Language, Mind, and Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2020), 49, 57.

[159] Shaun Gallagher, *Enactivist Interventions: Rethinking the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 7.

or shape can be transduced and neutralized via the right mix of representational processing in order to deliver similar experiences or similar cognitive results".[160] On the other hand, enactivism, with its phenomenological bent[161], firmly maintains that "biological aspects of bodily life, including organismic and emotion regulation of the entire body, have a permeating effect on cognition, as do processes of sensorimotor coupling between organism and environment."[162] While enactivism admits that "[b]oth the nervous system and the body are compositionally plastic" and "can alter their structure and dynamics"[163], with its stress on the autonomy of organisms, it is the lived experience[164] of the body that takes primacy and leads the way of the enacted mind.

One should bear in mind John Sutton´s admonition that "'enactivism' is a very broad church"[165] and apply it to all 4e cognitive approaches: there are both differences and similarities among them.[166] All of them speak of the mind as "embodied" and while enactivism keeps its distance from the EMT, it regularly speaks of the "extended" mind.[167] All these approaches distinguish themselves from the traditional cognitive science. They are part of the so called second wave cognitive revolution originating in the 1980s. As the psychologist Jerome Bruner, one of the pioneers of the cognitive revolution in the 1950s, says in his personal account of the

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[160] Gallagher, *Enactivist Interventions*, 7.

[161] See, for example, Hanne De Jaegher and Ezequiel Di Paolo, "Participatory Sense-Making" or, especially, Hanne De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing".

[162] Gallagher, *Enactivist Interventions*, 7.

[163] Thompson and Stapleton, "Making Sense," 28.

[164] Cf. De Jaegher and Di Paolo, "Participatory Sense-Making," 488.

[165] John Sutton, "Remembering as Public Practice: Wittgenstein, Memory, and Distributed Cognitive Ecologies," in *Mind, Language, and Action: Proceedings of the 36th Wittgenstein Symposium*, ed. V. A. Munz, D. Moyal-Sharrock & A. Coliva, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 414.

[166] In his treatment of the new science of the mind, Rowlands himself makes a difference between the embedded and enacted mind on the one hand and the embodied and extended mind on the other. The difference between them lies in what role they assign environmental structures in cognition: "Cognition may be dependent for its efficacy on things outside the brain, but it is still something that goes on in the brain and not outside it. As we have seen, to say that a cognitive process is environmentally *driven* does not entail that the process is environmentally *constituted*." Rowlands, *New Science*, 69-70. The difference between dependence or causation and constitution is a fundamental one: to claim that a cognitive process depends on environmental structures does not entail a refutation of cartesian cognitive science, whereas a claim about the constitution of cognitive processes, i.e., claiming that environmental structures are (a part of) a cognitive process, does. As a result, for Rowlands, "at the heart of a non-Cartesian cognitive science, we find the mind embodied and the mind extended. The four Es with which we began this chapter have, effectively, shrunk to two." Rowlands, *New Science*, 83. Based on their shared "theses of the (partial) composition of (some) cognitive processes", Rowlands subsumes the ideas of the embodied and extended mind into what he calls "amalgamated mind", the eponymous new science of the mind from the title of his book based on "mental processes as amalgamations" with the "*composition* or *constitution* of cognitive processes and not, in the first instance, their *location*" as what matters in the conceptualization of the mind as amalgamated. Rowlands, *New Science*, 83-84.

[167] On the various uses of the term "embodiment" see Di Paolo and Thompson, "Enactive Approach," 68. When it comes to the extended mind, an example of a similarity with a difference is Shaun Gallagher´s treatment of socially extended mind by what he calls "mental institutions" which challenge the parity principle postulated by Clark and Chalmers. See the present chapter on *Absalom, Absalom!* and Shaun Gallagher, "The Socially Extended Mind," *Cognitive Systems Research* 25-26 (2013): 6.

history of the cognitive science, the second wave effects the original idea of the cognitive revolution, i.e., "to establish meaning as the central concept of psychology – not stimuli and responses, not overtly observable behavior, not biological drives and their transformation, but meaning."[168] Not only did Bruner and his colleagues in mid-century see the mind as enmeshed in the world, trying "to discover and to describe formally the meanings that human beings created out of their encounters with the world, and […] the symbolic activities that human beings employed in constructing and in making sense not only of the world, but of themselves"[169], they also understood that the cultural dimension of the mind required an interdisciplinary approach, it required bringing in the humanities to weigh on the newly forming concept.[170]

Despite their intentions, the concurrently occurring information revolution with the computer and computation as the ruling metaphor at its centre led the new field astray from its original goal.[171] Consequently, "emphasis began shifting from 'meaning' to 'information,' from the *construction* of meaning to the *processing* of information."[172] This represented a profound change – Bruner highlights the significant difference between meaning and information: "Information is indifferent with respect to meaning. In computational terms, information comprises an already precoded message in the system. Meaning is preassigned to messages. It is not an outcome of computation nor is it relevant to computation save in the arbitrary sense of assignment."[173] Within the computation model of the mind, seen as disembodied and concerned with inputs and outputs, mind in the sense of consciousness became either "an epiphenomenon that the computational system outputted under certain conditions" or a misnomer for "behavior and simply needed further linguistic analysis."[174]

1.2.3. Social Brain, Cultural Mind

Writing just after the beginning of the second wave cognitive revolution started forming, Bruner envisions the proper study of man as a rectification of the cognitive sciences´ errors as beginning "with the concept of culture itself – particularly its constitutive role" recognizing that it is "man's participation *in* culture and the realization of his mental powers *through* culture that

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[168] Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 2. For another account by one of the theorists involved in the original formation of the cognitive revolution, see George A. Miller, "The Cognitive Revolution: A Historical Perspective," *Trends in Cognitive Science* 7, no. 3 (March 2003): 141-144.
[169] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 2
[170] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 3.
[171] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 4-7.
[172] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 4.
[173] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 4.
[174] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 9.

make it impossible to construct a human psychology on the basis of the individual alone."[175] All the above mentioned approaches conceptualize mind as inseparable from culture and society at large. A crucial precursor and source of the cognitive sciences´ vision of encultured mind was Vygotsky who conceived of what he called higher psychological processes as "culturally based psychological processes" which he designated as specifically human since with them, mind "breaks away from biological development" by using tools and signs.[176]

I have already treated the idea briefly above in presenting Bradd Shore´s observations of the "ecological" and "ethnographic" notions of mind. Shore points out that "[c]onceptualizing *culture in mind* suggests both an ethnographic theory of mind and a cognitive theory of culture"[177] while culture in this view "is best conceived as a very large and heterogeneous collection of *models* or what psychologists sometimes call *schemas*."[178] This conceptualization of culture has the distinctive advantage that it "provides a bridge between the empiricist concept of culture as 'objects' and the cognitive concept of culture as forms of knowledge."[179] In the scheme of things, brain is seen here not only performing information processing, but also as a model generator.[180] Shore has culture as a universal, but also culture as a particular in mind – his conception reflects his profession as an anthropologist as, "[t]o the extent that they are public artifacts, cultural models are out in the world, to be observed by outsiders as well as experienced by locals."[181]

While Shore´s dynamic of the observer and the observed implies at least some level of distinction between mind and culture which in turn necessitates models and schemas as a bridge between the two phenomena, the profound shift in the notion of mind advanced here is the virtual identification of mind and culture. Specifically, the 4e cognitive approaches recognize the mutual constitution of brain and its environment which includes other brains: they are locked in "the complex reciprocal dance in which the brain tailors its activity to a technological and sociocultural environment, which—in concert with other brains—it simultaneously alters and amends".[182] This recognition heralds an important shift "from viewing the brain not merely as an artefact of the cultural environment, but as a cultural artefact itself."[183] Thus, while seeing

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[175] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 11-12.
[176] L. S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, ed. Michael Cole et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 40.
[177] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 13.
[178] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 44.
[179] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 44.
[180] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 46. For a list of various kinds of models and how they work see Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 46-67.
[181] Shore, *Culture in Mind*, 44.
[182] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 87.
[183] Mithen, "Excaviting," 496.

culture as affecting, even constituting the mind, might lack the element of surprise, being a staple in anthropological models, current cognitive research brings with it the experimentally based discovery that culture affects the mind on a material level, i.e. the brain. Gallagher, who reports several studies of transformations of the brain as a result of "extended cognitive practices" (for example, a study on the enlarged hippocampi of London taxi drivers who don´t use GPS), observes that "as we engage with externalities in specific ways our cognitive processes – including our neural processes, but not just our neural processes – are transformed."[184]

While a new recognition on the part of the cognitive sciences, this is not a new phenomenon, but the very mechanism through which the brain, and with it the mind, evolved. During the past three million years of human evolution, brain has increased threefold in size due to various causes while "one key factor upon which many theorists agree is the need for greater 'social intelligence' – shorthand for the ability to process information about the behavior of others and to react adaptively to their behavior."[185] This is the core of the social brain hypothesis which claims that the brain grew and developed with the increasing size of the group in which our ancestors lived and the attendant growing complexity of social relations the individual needed to keep track of.[186] Importantly, Robin Dunbar, the author of the hypothesis, asserts that "it is group size that drives brain size evolution rather than brain size driving group size".[187] Along with the brain, language, the main tool through which the mind extends beyond the body, emerged as a result of the social context "as an efficient social-bonding mechanism".[188]

This interdependence of biology and culture in the creation of the mind bears two fundamental implications. Firstly, accepting the "looping process of mutual accommodation"[189] that exists between brain and environment, seeing that the brain´s "link to the environment is essential rather than elective"[190] means recognizing that the traditional nature vs. culture/nurture debate is built on false premises since "our biology is social in such a fundamental and thorough

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[184] Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 10. Mithen reports a study in which learning and performance of juggling was found to correlate with expansion of grey matter. Mithen, "Excavating," 497.
[185] Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995), 13.
[186] Leslie C. Aiello and R. I. M. Dunbar, "Neocortex Size, Group Size, and the Evolution of Language," *Current Anthropology* 34, no. 2 (April 1993): 184-193.
[187] R.I.M. Dunbar, "The Social Brain: Mind, Language, and Society in Evolutionary Perspective," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32 (2003): 169.
[188] Aiello and Dunbar, "Neocortex Size," 191.
[189] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 87.
[190] Bruce E. Wexler, *Brain and Culture: Neurobiology, Ideology, and Social Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2006), 50.

manner that to speak of a relation between the two suggests an unwarranted distinction. It is our nature to nurture and be nurtured."[191] The already mentioned concept of affordance, as Gibson points out, obliterates this distinction which in effect reinstates cartesian dualism in a new bottle:

> It is a mistake to separate the natural from the artificial as if there were two environments; artifacts have to be manufactured from natural substances. It is also a mistake to separate the cultural environment from the natural environment, as if there were a world of mental products distinct from the world of material products. There is only one world, however diverse, and all animals live in it, although we human animals have altered it to suit ourselves.[192]

Secondly, given the social and cultural foundations of the human mind, it becomes clear that the individual is far from the be-all and end-all of cognitive scrutiny. All the approaches to human mind presented here posit a fuzzy, if any, border between a biological organism and its environment including society and culture in the case of humans. Stanislav Komárek provides a historical perspective pointing out that it was with Descartes among others that in the seventeenth century "one of the key aspects of human existence, namely the primacy of human sociality over individuality" got obscured.[193] It was this time that produced Rousseau's "paradoxical" idea of the solitary savage who enters the social realm only through a consciously made social contract.[194] Besides a specifically cultural source of the preference, dominance of the individual over the group in Western thinking, Bruce E. Wexler provides an elucidation of the perceptual source of the individualist illusion:

> Individuals often have an exaggerated sense of the independence of their thought processes from environmental input. This is due in part to the nature of memory, which allows individuals to carry in themselves the effects of environmental input to places distant in time and space where the origins of the effects drop from awareness. It is also because we are not capable of detecting, tracking, and summing the subtle and numerous

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[191] Wexler, *Brain and Culture*, 13. Cf. Cecilia Heyes on this topic: "The rich interactive complexity of developmental processes makes it absolutely clear that, in cognition as in other biological systems, there are no pure cases of nature or of nurture; no biological characteristic is caused only by 'the genes' or only by 'the environment.'" Cecilia Heyes, *Cognitive Gadgets: The Cultural Evolution of Thinking* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 24.

[192] Gibson, "Theory," 130.

[193] "Evropský novověk počínaje sedmnáctým stoletím zakryl jeden z klíčových aspektů lidského bytí, a sice primárnost lidské sociality před individualitou." Stanislav Komárek, *Tělo, duše a jejich spasení: aneb kapitoly o moci, nemoci a psychosomatice* [*Body, Soul and Their Salvation: Or, Chapters on Power, Illness and Psychosomatics*] (Praha: Academia, 2015), 83. Translation is mine. Komárek´s book provides some historical and comparative context for some of the matters under discussion.

[194] Komárek, *Tělo*, 83.

environmental influences on our development and thought, any more than we can count and track the different molecules in the air we breathe or the food we eat. […] Thus, as we develop into unique individuals as a result of both our unique cumulative interactions with the environment and our unique hereditary characteristics, our uniqueness seems a property of us.[195]

If our notions of the self as an individual unit are only illusory and determined by a specific culture, then the sciences that investigate the nature of the self must undergo a paradigm shift. As Clark observes, "[i]t is because we are so prone to think that the mental action is all, or nearly all, on the inside, that we have developed sciences and images of the mind that are, in a fundamental sense, inadequate to their self-proclaimed target."[196] To tailor sciences of the mind to their subject of study requires "[m]aking explicit the domain of social interaction" and, thus, "to take a crucial step away from methodological individualism."[197] Regrounding cognitive sciences along this axis, proceeding from the intersubjective to the subjective, means "[w]e should not be asking how individuals can form a collective subject, but how individuals are formed by the collectivities in which they inhere."[198] If such a concept of cognitive science seems intangible, too abstract, it is no more so than the neurocentric approach to the mind as enactive theorists assure:

Resistance to interactive explanations may be partly due to a false impression that interaction patterns are abstract. They seem hard to pin down because they are not easily associated with material structures such as brain regions; but this is doubly misleading. Interaction dynamics do have a measurable material basis and recruit not only interacting bodies (including brains) but also elements of social technologies and cultural norms (e.g. tools and toys). It is also misleading to conceptualize neural function as less abstract given that it is increasingly understood as a matter of complex relational dynamics. There is no reason to privilege skull-bound theories over what are essentially explanations at the same level of concreteness.[199]

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[195] Wexler, *Brain and Culture*, 39-40.
[196] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 5. Cf. De Quincey, "Intersubjectivity," 136.
[197] Di Paolo and Thompson, "Enactive Approach," 75. Cf. Gallagher, *Enactivist Interventions*, 6.
[198] Mathiesen, "Collective Consciousness," 240.
[199] De Jaegher et al., "Can Social Interaction," 445. On the tendency of some scientists to fetishize neural structures in the pursuit of concreteness at the cost of reducing the complexity of phenomena see the next chapter.

1.3. Faulkner´s Minds

Faulkner's work refuses a neurocentric concept of the mind. The definition of mind most fitting to keep in mind when reading Faulkner is given by Teed Rockwell:

> My answer is that the mind is a field that forms and reforms itself into a variety of short-lived ad hoc systems from the items which constitute its world. The behavioral field is not identical to those systems any more than an ocean wave is identical to the water molecules it travels through. The brain (or at least the organism) is probably always at the center of this fluctuating behavioral field. But just because the organism is necessary for the existence of the mind does not mean that it is sufficient. Perhaps there are times when the mind really is identical only to the body or brain. But that just shows that the behavioral field can sometimes shrink down to that level.[200]

Such a definition not only contains the basic idea of non-cartesian cognitive science, but it also highlights the contextual, i.e., functional and pragmatic nature of cognition. The behavioural field put forth by Rockwell operates (inevitably) in a social world with other minds and culture where "we extend our cognitive reach by engaging with tools, technologies, but also with institutions. We create these institutions via our own (shared) mental processes, or we inherit them as products constituted in mental processes already accomplished by others."[201] It thus covers a spectrum of mental functioning representations in Faulkner's work stretching from interior monologue to the institutional and technological underpinnings of the characters´ interactions.

The introduction of the embodied, extended and encultured mind was necessary firstly for a full understanding of the shift it presents not only from the older version of cognitive sciences, but also from more traditional, culturally embedded notions of cartesian dualism or various forms of brain identity theory. Secondly, only with this background can Faulkner's conceptualizations of the mind be fully appreciated, i.e., Faulkner conceptualizes the mind in accordance with the so called second wave cognitive sciences' view of the mind already in the 1920s and 1930s. This conceptualization is realized through the medium of narrative, not by constructing theoretical concepts, both on the level of story and the level of discourse, and bears, thus, markings of the specific nature of the medium: the ecological and social nature of the

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[200] Teed Rockwell, "Extended Cognition and Intrinsic Properties," *Philosophical Psychology* 23, no. 6 (December 2010): 747-748. Note the similarity between Rockwell's example of a wave and its relation to water molecules and Clark's example of a pile of sand and its relation to the individual grains.
[201] Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 7.

human mind manifests as a topic of various narratives as well as a way of organizing, stylizing the process of narration.

I discuss two of Faulkner's novels as sample texts chosen for the prominent and illuminating way they narrate the human mind. As such, they lead a dialogue with contemporary notions of the mind in the cognitive sciences. *As I Lay Dying* highlights the embodied view of the mind and the concept of mindreading, or, theory of mind (for more see section 2.2.1. of the next chapter and chapter 3): it puts on display the mechanisms of understanding others as well as communicating with others as beings with a mind within a matrix of social relationships. The chapter after that turns to *Absalom, Absalom!* mainly as an instantiation of embedded and extended mind as understood by EMT as well as enactivism, highlighting storytelling as cognitive tool of cultural transmission and negotiation.

These emphases are, nevertheless, matters of optics: mind is always necessarily all of these things. As Uri Margolin reminds when speaking about cognitive sciences, "as in all areas of inquiry, here too it is methodologically warranted, sometime even necessary, to concentrate initially on one major component in isolation for the closer study of its specifics, as long as we bear in mind that the only natural unit is indeed the social mind in action."[202] Consequently, one could speak of the embodied mind in *Absalom, Absalom!* and, conversely, of the extended mind in *As I Lay Dying*. Cutting across both readings is the paramount idea of mind as a product and producer of culture which bears on specific aspects of the US South of the times, meaning both the time of Faulkner´s writing the novels and the time as a setting of the novels, as co-constructing elements of the characters´ minds.

While I view Faulkner as a prime example of conceptualizing the mind in terms of the recent developments within the cognitive sciences, his feat of imagination in this aspect finds its counterpart in the presentation of cognition undertaken by modernism at large. It is a staple of literary history that modernism shifted literature´s focus from imagining the social and material world to imagining the psychological realm of consciousness. As the cognitive narratologist David Herman puts it, "the modernist accent falls less on fictional worlds than on fictional-worlds-as-experienced."[203] Traditional readings, such as Robert Humphrey´s, categorized modernism´s exploration of the mind as putting emphasis "on exploration of the

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[202] Uri Margolin, "Cognitive Science, the Thinking Mind, and Literary Narrative," in *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, ed. David Herman (Stanford, Cal.: Center for the Study of Language and Information, 2003), 272.
[203] David Herman, "1880-1945 Re-minding Modernism," in *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English*, ed. David Herman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 243.

prespeech levels of consciousness"[204], relying on interior monologue as "the technique used in fiction for representing the psychic content and processes of character, partly or entirely unuttered"[205], while conceiving of consciousness itself as "a private thing"[206]. Instead of this envisioned turning inward, Herman argues that the modernist departure from the protocols of realist fiction consisted in

> not an inward turning but rather a foregrounding of the inextricable interconnection between "inner" and "outer" domains — with the scare quotes indicating the extent to which the narratives in question undermine the classical, Cartesian dichotomy between mind and body, the mental and the material. Arguably, instead of moving inward, or shifting their focus from public environments for action to a private, interior domain of cognition and contemplation, modernist writers pointed to the inseparability of perceiving and thinking from acting and interacting. What modernist narratives suggest, on this reading, is that mental states have the character they do because of the world in which they arise, as a way of responding to possibilities (and exigencies) for acting afforded by that world.[207]

Instead of merely shifting the direction from inward to outward, modernist writers "call into question the internal-external axis as a principle for mapping the relation between mind and world."[208] In refusing the very premise of cartesian dualism such texts "allow the mind to be imagined as a kind of distributional flow, interwoven with rather than separated from situations, events, and processes in the world."[209] In agreement with my claim about Faulkner, Herman suggests that "modernist narratives can be viewed as concretizing the lived, phenomenal worlds that postcognitive theorists have subsequently tried to describe in more abstract terms. And here modernist narratives point a way back to the future."[210] Thus, an important caveat must be made: my approach differs from the traditional readings of modernist texts focusing on consciousness in the mode of "stream of consciousness" or "interior monologue." In fact, I consciously avoid this topic and focus on other discourses on the mind in relation to Faulkner's work. That is not to say that stream of consciousness lies outside the term "mind". An exhaustive account of mind in Faulkner's work would include it: in novels

[204] Robert Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 4.
[205] Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness*, 24.
[206] Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness*, 42.
[207] Herman, "1880-1945," 253.
[208] Herman, "1880-1945," 253-254.
[209] Herman, "1880-1945," 255.
[210] Herman, "1880-1945," 265.

like *The Sound and the Fury* or *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner plunges the reader in the stream of consciousness of the protagonists. In other words, my treatment of the topic is necessarily selective and partial.

As Zeraffa summarizes the same view like Herman, although from a different perspective, in a seemingly oxymoronic fashion, "[t]he interior monologue abolishes 'society', and discovers social existence."[211] Conceiving of the novel as a dynamic tension between a representation of social and historical forces, and as an aesthetic object, a work of art, Zeraffa sees it as a relevant "document" of its time and for its time – and, in the case of great novels for all times – expressed with an aesthetic function figuring forth specific social and historical facts in terms of artistic techniques: "It is through its formal character, and through the techniques used to create that formal character, that a work of art exposes reality. Consequently, in order to elicit the sociological significance of the novel, it is legitimate […] to see it as a language bespeaking society as much as spoken by society."[212] With this dialectical notion in mind, he sees the novels of Joyce, Woolf or Faulkner as displaying "in an exemplary manner the interplay between literature and sociology."[213] They show "that there are necessary relationships between forms in society and forms in art […] that the rapid tempo and the complexity of the stream of consciousness and of social relationships are directly and logically related to each other."[214] In their novels, these writers developed "a conception of the individual in terms of consciousness and of culture […] seeking to express what Proust calls the 'universal mind' – the deep level of understanding common to all men."[215]

While I do not subscribe to the particulars of Zeraffa's notions on the author's determined interest in and expression of class consciousness, I agree with the dynamic notion of the novel as an independent and variable form of art and a "document" of its social reality at the same time: "The novel thus assumes the guise of oracle, since more directly than other arts it confronts us openly with the issue of the meaning and value of our ineluctable historical and social condition."[216] I also want to build a case for literature and, consequently, literary studies as relevant discourses on the human mind on a par with psychology, philosophy of mind, linguistics etc. when it comes to their legitimacy. The first step involves stressing that

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[211] Zeraffa, *Fictions*, 123.
[212] Zeraffa, *Fictions*, 10.
[213] Zeraffa, *Fictions*, 118.
[214] Zeraffa, *Fictions*, 118.
[215] Zeraffa, *Fictions*, 114.
[216] Zeraffa, *Fictions*, 11.

Faulkner's achievement in portraying the human mind is not a claim about his seconding to theoretical developments in cognitive sciences half a century after he created his masterpieces.

In other words, Faulkner's narrative and literary envisioning of mind does not need, let alone seek, validation by the so called "hard sciences". Faulkner is attuned to the social reality of his time. I say this as an expansion on Zeraffa's notions of the novel's relation to social reality as well as on Marshall McLuhan's observation that "[t]he serious artist is the only person able to encounter technology with impunity, just because he is an expert aware of the changes in sense perception. […] The artist is the man in any field, scientific or humanistic, who grasps the implications of his actions and of new knowledge in his own time. He is the man of integral awareness."[217] Faulkner's narrative concretizations of the way human mind works are not to be dismissed as poetic license. Like other modernist writers, Faulkner can serve as an explorer of and a guide around "the lived, phenomenal worlds that emerge from, or are enacted through, the interplay between intelligent agents and their cultural as well as material circumstances."[218]

Jonah Lehrer prefaces his book "about artists who anticipated the discoveries of neuroscience" with the assertion that "[i]t is about writers and painters and composers who discovered truths about the human mind real, tangible truths – that science is only now rediscovering. Their imagination foretold the facts of the future."[219] This might seem to suggest that these discoveries became facts only after science rediscovered them; only then were they given official sanction. But that is not what I want to suggest and neither what Lehrer implies: he associates facts with science to highlight different natures of truth explored by science and by art. Their relation is complementary: as Lehrer puts it, "[t]he moral of this book is that we are made of art and science. […] The experiment and the poem complete each other. The mind is made whole."[220]

Thus, before turning to Faulkner's novels, I devote the next chapter to assessing and exploring the ways in which literary works are resources on the mind while being distinctive pieces of art, the interactions and exchanges between cognitive sciences and literary studies, the relation between cognitive literary studies and more traditional literary scholarship, and the nature and accessibility of not only fictional minds. This is done as a necessary precondition of any serious engagement with literature equipped with concepts from cognitive sciences, as an introduction of a new critical tradition into Faulkner studies and in an effort to establish that

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[217] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet Books, 1964), 33, 71.
[218] David Herman, "1880-1945," 266.
[219] Jonah Lehrer, *Proust Was a Neuroscientist* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), vii.
[220] Lehrer, *Proust*, x.

"the study of modernist texts can contribute to and not just be informed by postcognitivist approaches to mind, underscoring the relevance of traditions of narrative analysis for research on human intelligence."[221] After all, it is only a logical extension of, a logical conclusion to the conception of the mind as both a biological as well as cultural phenomenon that it need both natural and human sciences to explain human cognition.

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[221] David Herman, "1880-1945," 250.

2. Cognitive Sciences, Literary Studies, Cognitive Literary Studies

Building on the ideas of cognitive sciences presented here as well as on observations such as Lodge´s about literature as a prime source of understanding of the mind, cognitive literary theorists have come to the realization that "the human mind in its numerous complex environments has been the object of study of literary critics for longer than it has been the object of study of cognitive scientists."[222] This is so for two interrelated reasons. Firstly, literature constitutes a treasure trove of information on mind in depicting it since it represents a most suitable environment for the human mind. In view of the notion of mind presented here, it is crucial that, as Terence Cave observes, "literature is by its nature cognitively mixed. It refuses to separate thought from emotion, bodily responses from ethical reflection, perception from imagination, and logic from desire. And everything suggests that, in that sense, it does what the mind does […] It demonstrates the essential fluidity and mobility of human cognition, its adaptive inventiveness."[223] Secondly, following logically from the first point, literary critics necessarily study the mind by studying literature. Cave draws out two implications from his previous observation: on the one hand, literature can "provide a prolific and wide-ranging set of test-cases for pragmatic cognitive enquiry", on the other hand, "[f]or mainstream literary specialists and readers, however, what is likely to matter most in the end is the openings offered by cognitively inflected reading."[224] Both of these implications bespeak the relation between cognitive literary studies to both other cognitive sciences and the canon of literary studies.

2.1. The Mind of Literature

One of the channels through which ideas from cognitive sciences have seeped through to literary studies was, and still is, narratology. David Herman, potentially inspired by the fact that the word narrative derives from the Sanskrit root meaning "to know"[225], has developed across his work a notion of narrative as a "tool for thinking", a cognitive artifact which "affords an optimal environment for social cognition."[226] Besides the idea of "narrative as a problem-solving strategy in many contexts […] as a powerful and basic tool for thinking"[227] which I will

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[222] Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 5.
[223] Terence Cave, *Thinking with Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 31.
[224] Cave, *Thinking*, 31.
[225] David Herman, "How Stories Make us Smarter: Narrative Theory and Cognitive Semiotics," *Recherches en communication*, no 19 (2003): 153.
[226] David Herman, "Stories as a Tool for Thinking," in *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, ed. David Herman (Stanford, Cal.: Center for the Study of Language and Information, 2003), 164.
[227] Herman, "Stories as a Tool," 163.

devote myself to in the last chapter, Herman advances a "claim, which is a more radical, controversial, and speculative one: namely, that we cannot even have a notion of the felt quality of experience without narrative."[228] He bases this on two implications of the observation that "there is no way to step outside consciousness and observe it as it really is, since consciousness simply *is* the (act or process of) observing".[229] First of these is that conscious states and the qualia bound up with them are not objects that lend themselves to observation, "instead, they are structures of experience, or rather ways of experiencing".[230] The second suggests that one´s access to one's consciousness is necessarily mediated, i.e., consciousness can be experienced but not inspected, while access to another's is completely shut off.[231]

The bridge to overcome this ontological divide, Herman claims, is narrative due to the "link between how narratives are structured and the phenomenology of conscious awareness" which "points to an indissoluble nexus between narrative and mind"[232]:

> Stories, thanks to the way they are anchored in a particular vantage-point on the storyworlds that they evoke, and thanks to their essentially durative or temporally extended profile, do not merely convey semantic content but furthermore encode in their very structure a way of experiencing events. To put the same point in other terms, narrative, unlike other modes of representation such as deductive arguments, stress equations, or the periodic table of the elements, is uniquely suited to capturing what the world is like from the situated perspective of an experiencing mind. […] But more than just representing minds, stories emulate through their temporal and perspectival configuration the what-it's-like dimension of conscious awareness itself. […] narrative affords a discourse environment optimally suited for the world-picturing process, since that environment shares crucial elements of structure with raw feels. Hence stories point beyond what might be called the closure of consciousness, that is, the impossibility of inspecting the very mechanisms by which inspection, as such, is made possible. Enacting and not just representing ways of experiencing […] stories capture and sustain our interest because of how their structure maps on to the mind's own engagement with the world.[233]

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[228] Herman, *Basic Elements*, 145.
[229] Herman, *Basic Elements*, 155.
[230] Herman, *Basic Elements*, 155.
[231] Herman, *Basic Elements*, 155.
[232] Herman, *Basic Elements*, 158.
[233] Herman, *Basic Elements*, 157-158. Cf. Lodge, "Consciousness," 14. Seeing narratives also as "overt manifestations of the mind in action: as windows to both the content of the mind and its ongoing operations", the linguist Wallace Chafe claims that he and other practitioners of his discipline "are in as good a position as anyone to understand something about how the mind works". See Wallace Chafe, "Some Things That Narratives Tell Us

The combination of representing cognitive complexity and expressing qualia makes literature in Cave´s words "the most far-reaching and enduring vehicle and instrument of human thought, the most revealing *product* and *symptom* of human cognition, an outgrowth of one of the most fundamental of human cognitive instruments, namely language itself."[234] He draws out the implication that consequently, "[s]uch a claim entitles literary specialists to join the cognitive conversation not only as learners, but as fully-fledged contributors."[235] Literature as a profound source for the study of mind has not gone unnoticed by some thinkers from the cognitive scientific circles. Specifically, some theorists of embodied mind have featured literary examples in their work heavily, attesting to "the power of literature to capture and represent the full range of embodied experience in all its intricacy and complexity, its fragility and delight."[236] Literature, in the end, is part and parcel of human cognition, a product of the human mind at work and "without a keen appreciation of the full scope of literary experiences, cognitive science theories will remain incomplete or incorrect. […] any account of human cognition that excludes consideration of literary experiences will be inherently flawed."[237]

The status of literary scholars as contributors to cognitive science is due to literature´s ability to channel the human mind, but also to channel it in markedly different way than is studied in cognitive sciences. Uri Margolin observes that literature provides "probably the most eloquent and differentiated non-scientific mode of describing specific instances of the mind in action."[238] As Margolin articulates it, the difference is between the generality of cognitive sciences which use "individual features as a mere source of data for constructing prototypes, and individual behavior as information for formulating regularities of some kind", and the specificity of literature which presents the reader with "individual, differentiated story participants and their specific cognitive features and acts".[239] It is only a secondary and optional function of literature to generalize about the human mind based on the particular cases it instantiates by its very nature. Importantly, Margolin points out, literature is marked by its

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about the Mind," in *Narrative Thought and Narrative Language*, ed. Bruce K. Britton and Anthony D. Pellegrini (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1990), 79.
[234] Cave, *Thinking*, 14.
[235] Cave, *Thinking*, 14-15. Cf. Cave, *Thinking*, 152.
[236] David Hillman and Ulrika Maude, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Body in Literature*, ed. David Hillman and Ulrika Maude (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 7.
[237] Richard J. Gerrig, "Why Literature is Necessary, and not Just Nice," in *Cognitive Literary Studies: Current Themes and New Directions*, ed. Isabel Jaén and Julien Jacques Simon (Austin: University of Texas, 2012), 35-36.
[238] Margolin, "Cognitive Science," 288.
[239] Margolin, "Cognitive Science," 287.

preference for "nonstandard form of cognitive functioning, be they rare and marginal, deviant, or involving a failure, breakdown, or lack of standard patterns."[240]

The difference of the resulting picture of the mind in literature, as opposed to science, is paramount as literature "documents and records cognitive and neural processes of self with an intimacy that is otherwise unavailable to neuroscience."[241] This difference in the mode in which mind exists in literature and in the various experiments and observations of the cognitive sciences necessarily distinguishes the science of mind in literature, literary studies, and other cognitive sciences. Lodge, who makes the same distinction between scientific and literary approaches to the mind like Margolin[242], affirms that "[t]he contest is unnecessary. Literature constitutes a kind of knowledge about consciousness which is *complementary* to scientific knowledge."[243] Lehrer adds to this complementarity of art and science an element of checking the balance in how we conceptualize and understand our world: it is not only that "[b]oth art and science can be useful, and both can be true", but also that "art is a necessary counterbalance to the glories and excesses of scientific reductionism, especially as they are applied to human experience. This is the artist´s purpose: to keep *our* reality, with all its frailties and question marks, on the agenda."[244]

As Faith Elizabeth Hart points out, cognitive literary studies necessarily "accepts axiomatically some degree of epistemological efficacy in scientific empiricism"[245]. But, as she quickly adds, this is by no means a naïve, uncritical acceptance but "has, in fact, been at times carefully qualified by critics' sensitivity."[246] There is not a striving "toward consilience with science" in cognitive literary studies but "toward a richer engagement with a variety of theoretical paradigms in literary and cultural studies"[247], notes Lisa Zunshine. Based on her own experience, she acutely observes that "all it takes is to attend a couple of talks—however wonderfully exciting—in cognitive science to realize that there is a reason that literature departments are distinct from departments of psychology and neuroscience."[248] The difference

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[240] Margolin, "Cognitive Science," 287.

[241] Aaron L. Mishara, "The Literary Neuroscience of Kafka's Hypnagogic Hallucinations: How Literature Informs the Neuroscientific Study of Self and its Disorders," in *Cognitive Literary Studies: Current Themes and New Directions*, ed. Isabel Jaén and Julien Jacques Simon (Austin: University of Texas, 2012), 107.

[242] See Lodge, "Consciousness," 10-11.

[243] Lodge, "Consciousness," 16.

[244] Lehrer, *Proust*, 197.

[245] F. Elizabeth Hart, "The Epistemology of Cognitive Literary Studies," *Philosophy and Literature* 25, no. 2 (Oct. 2001): 314.

[246] Hart, "Epistemology," 314.

[247] Lisa Zunshine, "Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

[248] Zunshine, "Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies," 2.

between the departments can be formulated in terms of methodologies and the resultant findings: as Barbara Dancygier puts it prosaically, "being able to see the human brain at work through fMRIs and scans will not tell a researcher in the humanities much beyond the obvious observation that something *is* happening in the brain as we listen to Mozart or read a novel. The humanities need their own tools to represent the ultimate forms of human language and cognition, though these tools cannot ignore what science has to offer."[249] There is a patently obvious difference of cognitive levels in which disciplines like neurology and literary studies deal since "narrative, like any mode of signification, involves a cognitive level whose basic elements are symbols and not neurons."[250]

Here, the psychologist Matthew K. Belmonte's discussion of, as he puts it, a tendency to fetishize concrete symbols in the scientific explanation of the mind is most instructive. This propensity sidetracks the scientist, "so unfamiliar and uncomfortable with a view in which representational capacity emerges from the interactions within a delocalized network of neural assemblies, so desperate to pin it on a concrete and tractable anatomical structure, physiological process, or cognitive module"[251], to "fetishize bits of brain" and thus the scientist "often misses out emergent properties that reside not within any specific region or process but instead arise from complex interactions among these processes."[252] Belmonte sees literary theory as a remedy to this scientific vice since "driven less by the anatomy of a brain and more by the anatomy of a text," it "may be less susceptible to this tendency to fetishize cognitive capacities – but only if it resists the urge to defer to neuroscience as somehow closer to truth by virtue of closeness to anatomy."[253] For Belmonte, literary criticism possesses the explanatory power to "characterize the properties emerging from these interactions even when we don't yet

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[249] Barbara Dancygier, *The Language of Stories: A Cognitive Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 16.

[250] Marie-Laure Ryan, "Narratology and Cognitive Science: A Problematic Relation," *Style* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 473.

[251] Matthew K. Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist Have a 'Theory of Mind'?," *Review of General Psychology* 12, no. 2 (June 2008): 199. Belmonte makes his remarks regarding specifically theory of mind (for more see below), but they can be generalized to a certain extent. For example, they seem to apply to mirror neurons, another fetishized neural structure that has been claimed to be the biological foundation of empathy, intersubjectivity as well as underpinning autism for example. See Marco Iacoboni, "Imitation, Empathy, and Mirror Neurons," *Annual Review of Psychology* 60 (2009): 653-670; or Pier Francesco Ferrari and Vittorie Gallese, "Mirror Neurons and Intersubjectivity," in *On Being Moved: From Mirror Neurons to Empathy*, ed. Stein Bråten (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2007), 73-88. For a criticism of researchers overstressing the importance of mirror neurons based on experimentally unsolid foundations see Gregory Hickok, *The Myth of Mirror Neurons: The Real Neuroscience of Communication and Cognition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014).

[252] Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 201-202.

[253] Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 199.

understand them at the level of neurophysiology."[254] In turn, this means that literature, the writer has the insight to understand the nature of the mind before science.

2.2. Disciplining Cognitive Literary Studies

A key aspect of cognitive literary studies is its interdisciplinary nature. As Hart observes, it was the second cognitive revolution´s paradigm shift from seeing the mind as a computing machine to seeing it as an embodied living organism what opened the door to "a new kind of interdisciplinary practice, to the potential for a sincere engagement between diverse sciences and even between literature and science that stretches all the bounds of what literary scholars generally mean when they speak of being interdisciplinary (e.g., exchanges with history, art history, anthropology, film studies, sociology)"[255]. Yet, therein lies the rub for her. Hart takes the ambiguity of the term "cognitive" in science as a reflection of "the still-primitive state of scientists' knowledge about the human brain/mind and the haphazard lines of demarcation that, if they were straighter, might help distinguish what the brain/mind is and how it functions from its myriad artifacts and effects."[256] One could argue that it has been two decades since Hart´s article and science has made progress since then; nevertheless, this progress does not necessarily lead to a clearer demarcation of the mind. The reason, put briefly in Palmer´s words, is that "the mind is a fuzzy concept"[257].

Given the above definition of mind as a behavioral field, what the mind is fluctuates "[a]s an organism changes how it interacts with its world, it appropriates parts of its world into itself, and thus the border between the self and the world expands and contracts."[258] Rockwell also highlights that the delimitation of mind is pragmatic for two reasons. Firstly, there is bound to be some kind of "ambiguity in the mind–world border at some point in the linedrawing process"[259] as one descends to smaller and smaller scales of measurement. Secondly, "where we draw the line between mind and world may depend on what aspect of the mind we are studying, and how carefully we are studying it"[260], with various disciplines drawing the line at various places. Ultimately, the borders of mind´s realm pragmatically fluctuate since their

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[254] Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 202.
[255] Hart, "Epistemology," 315.
[256] Hart, "Epistemology," 317
[257] Alan Palmer, "Social Minds in Fiction and Criticism," *Style* 45, no.2 (Summer 2011): 223.
[258] Rockwell, "Extended Cognition," 747.
[259] Rockwell, "Extended Cognition," 746.
[260] Rockwell, "Extended Cognition," 746.

demarcation "is not just dependent on the goals and purposes of the minds doing the studying. It is also dependent on the goals and purposes of the mind being studied."[261]

Therefore, pace Hart, who calls on cognitive literary studies to distinguish their particular brand of "cognitive" from "its more sweeping uses by others in literary theory"[262], it must be said with Lisa Zunshine that "given what a messy proposition the human mind/brain is and how little we still know about it, striving toward a grand unified theory of cognition and literature is to engage in mythmaking."[263] The implication for cognitive literary studies, drawing on heavily interdisciplinary fields of literary studies and cognitive sciences is that it is, by its very nature, "inevitably represented by a broad variety of paradigms and approaches."[264] Thus, the definition of the term "cognitive" or "mind" within this discipline will be variable and differ based on the relevant critical project. Marie-Laure Ryan distinguishes three areas where the nexus of narrative and mind can be studied: characters´ minds, readers´ minds, and narrative as a way, or tool of thinking.[265] To this list, Mary Thomas Crane adds the author´s mind believing that "cognitive theory may provide some help in getting around the current critical impasse between those who assume an author with conscious control over the text he produces and those who assume that cultural construction leaves little or no room for authorial agency."[266] In terms of this division of the map of the cognitive literary studies, I claim my territory in reading Faulkner´s characters´ minds in my analysis of *As I Lay Dying* and *Absalom, Absalom!* while I make some observations on narrative as a tool for thinking in the last chapter.

What can be said for the area of interest in cognitive literary studies is that it concerns "exploring how both the architecture and the contents of the human brain/mind—both in terms of its on-line processing of information and its evolutionary history—may contribute structurally to the writing, reading, and interpretation of texts."[267] What is called for in the creation of cognitive literary studies is a synthesis of the best of both worlds: "On the one hand, it should build on and advance our understanding of the structure and operation of the human

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[261] Rockwell, "Extended Cognition," 747.
[262] Hart, "Epistemology," 318.
[263] Zunshine, "Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies," 1.
[264] Zunshine, "Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies," 3. On this note, Margolin calls cognitive sciences a "super-discipline" in that "its concepts and models can be interpreted in terms of diverse domains of phenomena consisting of humans, animals, and machines. As such it constitutes a high-level tool of inquiry which may serve to integrate findings from diverse domains." Margolin, "Cognitive Science," 271.
[265] Ryan, "Narratology and Cognitive Science" 476.
[266] Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 16. Crane sees the cognitive sciences as staking out a middle ground, claiming that "current theories of cognitive psychology seem to some extent to corroborate our view of the author as fragmented, unable consciously to control language, unable to evade the mandates of his culture. But they also open a space for a more informed speculation about the role of the author within culture and the role of culture within the author's brain." Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 16.
[267] Hart, "Epistemology," 319.

mind as developed in cognitive science. On the other hand, it should build on and advance our understanding of literary art as developed in narrative theory."[268] In the process of construction of this approach, an integration has to occur so that, ideally, a cognitive approach to literature gives "an account of literature which uses science without simply repeating its claims in a context which is not reducible to the concerns of scientific research."[269]

Given the pragmatic nature not only of the mind itself, but also of the research practices, the cognitive literary critic "would thus do well to think of herself as a bricoleur who reaches out for the best mix of insights that cognitive theory as a whole has to offer without worrying about blurring lines between its various domains" – after all, "[c]ognitive scientists themselves cross disciplinary boundaries daily, attracting new academic fields into their orbit."[270] To clarify, what these remarks suggest is that while cognitive sciences are a source for cognitive literary studies, with some reliance or dependence on them thus being inevitable, they should not be a model to be copied blindly, being a research enterprise of a different kind. Nancy Easterlin, who envisions "biocultural criticism" which "does not employ an a priori model that it presumes has application to the vast majority of literary texts" points out a historical lesson for cognitive literary studies, noting that the "drawback of many pseudoscientific twentieth-century programs was to work deductively from such models, and many of us have been left bored and unenlightened by such approaches."[271]

One stipulation in this relation to cognitive sciences is the placement of literary studies, sometimes plagued by a too heavy reliance on and borrowing from the cognitive sciences, on equal footing. If it is "to become a bona fide interdiscipline, theorists need to move beyond unidirectional borrowing and engage in genuine dialogue and exchange."[272] As Herman admonishes, for this dialogue to appear and last, literary critics must prove the relevance of their traditions of inquiry for the research on mind.[273] Lest these calls for recognition and the importance of literature be construed as voices in the wilderness, Belmonte serves as an example of a cognitive scientist who not only recognizes that "much of the exchange has been one-way and restricted, with literary scholars importing the findings of cognitive science", but

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[268] Patrick Colm Hogan, *How Authors' Minds Make Stories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) xiv.
[269] Dancygier, *Language of Stories*, 16.
[270] Lisa Zunshine, "Introduction: What is Cognitive Cultural Studies?," in *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 3.
[271] Nancy Easterlin, *A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 34.
[272] David Herman, "Afterword: Narrative and Mind: Directions for Inquiry," in *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*, ed. Lars Bernaerts, Dirk de Geest, Luc Herman, and Bart Vervaeck (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 202.
[273] Herman, "Afterword," 202.

also instructs that "[c]ognitive scientists would do well to pay similar attention to the insights of literary critics, since literature is a more direct product of human minds and offers more immediate and symbolic access to psychological processes than does raw neurophysiology."[274] Belmonte gives literary study primacy on matters of the mind, echoing the claim that mind has been under scrutiny in literature longer than in science, when he says that "[a]s a mode of understanding the psyche, then, the literary occupation is perhaps the more honest one" and regrets that "[d]espite this powerful relevance of their discipline, some literary scholars still look to cognitive science not just for synergy but actually for legitimacy – as though insights are not real until they can be tied to individual brain structures and neural processes."[275]

Belmonte qualifies his praise for literary criticism by stating that he does not see neuroscience as wrong and literary theory as right: what he wants to stress is the differences between the two "lest we succumb to the false belief (ironically) that we are constructing an interdisciplinary synthesis when in fact we remain trapped within our own disciplines' discursive bounds."[276] In order to achieve such an interdisciplinary synthesis with all the above-mentioned requirements on rigorous cognitive literary studies, the bricolage carried out towards cognitive sciences should not be unbridled. Marcus Hartner concurs that cognitive literary studies "should engage in dialogue with, and seek inspiration from, the cognitive sciences without kowtowing to them on a conceptual level"[277] and develops three principles for the meeting of literary study and cognitive science.

The first principle, that of coherence, puts a demand on literary scholars "to master the theories that are being adapted to such an extent that he or she is familiar not merely with their conception and application but also with their criticism."[278] While this demand is reasonable so that a diligent academic work is being done, the requirement creates significant burden as "mastering expert knowledge in an additional discipline beside one's own is indeed a daunting task"[279] given the speed of development in research and publication and the corresponding amount of reading required to keep up with it. The principle of moderation has two aspects. Firstly, it demands that transfer between the disciplines "should be firmly restricted to established, well-corroborated theories and concepts."[280] This demand seems to be limiting and

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[274] Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 201.
[275] Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 201.
[276] Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 202.
[277] Marcus Hartner, "Scientific Concepts in Literary Studies: Towards Criteria for the Meeting of Literature and Cognitive Science," in *Cognitive Literary Science: Dialogues between Literature and Cognition*, ed. Michael Burke and Emily T. Troscianko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 31.
[278] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 25.
[279] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 26.
[280] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 26.

stifling creativity, as Hartner himself admits, however, he points out that the purpose of this restriction aims at preventing literary scholars from "unintentionally misinterpreting or misapplying ideas from highly specialized scientific discourses which we in literary studies, even if we do not realize it, may lack the training to understand, contextualize, and evaluate."[281]

The potential problem with this criterion is the existence of competing explanatory models each with its own disciplinary tradition: as anywhere else, there are differences of opinion, theoretical frameworks, methodology as well as research focuses within the cognitive sciences which lead to the existence of competing paradigms the allegiance to which by anyone outside the discipline has to be ultimately guided based on other things than expertise. Here the practice of bricolage comes into play as a pragmatic factor of judgment and choice aimed at a particular context (for more see below). Similar guiding principle seems to be provided in Hartner's second aspect of moderation formulated as a limit on "the use of scientific theories to cases in which new insight into the literary objects and phenomena in question can really be gained".[282] The third and final principle, that of autonomy regards, as the name suggests, the difference between the studied subjects and, therefore, research enterprises within cognitive sciences and literary scholarship which "may be interested in what could be called non-scientific aspects of reading […] in individual works and their interpretation".[283]

2.2.1. Theory of Mind in Fiction

It can be said with Crane "that theory can be derived from scientific knowledge and considered to have truth value equivalent to that of other current bodies of theoretical speculation" provided that "we apply to cognitive theory the same tests we apply to other kinds of theory, that is, simply to consider whether it convinces or intrigues or interests us, and whether it provides us with a useful model for interpreting texts and cultures."[284] To demonstrate such a borrowing from cognitive sciences as well as my method of "transferring" concepts into literary studies, and, at the same time, to introduce the last major concept of the cognitive sciences that I will be using in this dissertation, I will now briefly present the critical debate on what is standardly called "theory of mind", "mindreading" or "folk psychology", i.e., the "ability to explain people's behavior in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires"[285]. In other words, theory of mind provides us with explanations of why people do what they do in terms of their mind, i.e., we don´t view actions, behavior as occurring randomly and mechanistically.

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[281] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 26-27.
[282] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 27.
[283] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 29.
[284] Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 10.
[285] Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 6.

Speaking of theory of mind, I want to address the problem of methodological rigor called for by both literary scholars and cognitive scientists. It is my conviction that a too strict adherence to at least some of the concepts coming from these disciplines is to the detriment of doing cognitive literary studies and, particularly in this case, inspecting fictional minds. In other words, while "cross-disciplinary transfers need to be managed with care, on pain of overextending ideas and methods"[286], bringing in all the conceptual baggage of a chosen concept can be more of a hindrance than a methodological rigor for the interpretation of texts. I say univocally with Peter Stockwell that "[t]he crucial difference between psychological accounts of ToM [theory of mind] and literary ones is the fictionality boundary that intervenes in a literary account."[287] The claim that the fictional divide trumps all the cognitive science concepts applied to fictional minds[288] is also a claim for literature as an authoritative source on minds. As Maria Mäkelä points out, "the potential *unnaturalness*—or the peculiarly *literary* type of cognitive challenge—is always already there in textual representations of consciousness" made perceivable by "the way making sense of fictional minds requires a to-and-fro movement between establishing and transcending natural frames of experience and narrativization."[289]

Among the concepts of the cognitive sciences that have migrated into the purview of literary studies, the concept of theory of mind holds its sway. Talking about theory of mind in the context of literature, it is worth starting with Belmonte´s observations on the "divergence of the scientific and literary senses of this term" which, according to him, is "a product of both the ends to which and means by which each sense is applied."[290] Belmonte elaborates on the divergence:

> For the psychologist, ToM has been a vehicle for understanding evolutionary differences between human and nonhuman social cognition, clinical differences between normal human cognition and abnormal states such as autism or schizophrenia,

[286] David Herman, "Narrative and the Minds of Others," *Style* 42, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 512.

[287] Peter Stockwell, *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 140.

[288] On this topic, Margolin observes that "only in the case of actual human beings can cognitive-science concepts, models, and claims apply quite literally, and that only with respect to them can claims couched in cognitivist terms be empirically tested, be it directly or indirectly. On all other levels we are operating within the confines of a make-believe world, pretending that narrators and storyworld participants exist independently of the text which actually creates them via semiotic means, and that they are sufficiently human-like so that concepts developed in cognitive science to model the activities of actual minds are applicable to them, even if only through analogical transfer." Margolin, "Cognitive Science," 273. More on the notion of fictional minds and entities see below.

[289] Maria Mäkelä, "Cycles of Narrative Necessity: Suspect Tellers and the Textuality of Fictional Minds," in *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*, ed. Lars Bernaerts, Dirk de Geest, Luc Herman, and Bart Vervaeck (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 133. Italics in the original.

[290] Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 192.

and developmental differences between different stages of cognitive maturation. For the literary critic, ToM has been a vehicle for understanding the relations between characters in a text, between characters in a text and readers, and between narrator and reader. […] The modes of application differ, too: psychological ToM is an online, real-time process applied during the act of interpreting behavior, whereas literary ToM is an offline, temporally extended process applied during the act of reading.[291]

While the observations on the different uses and ends to which the term has been put is certainly valid, Belmonte's observation on the literary side is indiscriminate especially in connection to the opposition between online and offline versions of theory of mind. Readers (mind)reading characters and narrators is an offline exercise of theory of mind, since there is not an interaction, but instead a one-way input of clues to be read for the mind (on the mind of fictional characters see below). However, when it comes to the relations and communication among characters, what the reader perceives is an online version of theory of mind as it unravels in the act of reading, albeit with the specifics of fictional worlds dynamics. This mainly means that the online theory of mind is incomplete in the sense that it obtains only to the extent to which the specific text invokes it.[292]

Belmonte reflects that "[t]he term ToM, then, is rather a slippery one […] driven in opposing directions of generality by its psychological and literary uses."[293] Yet, the seed of discord is not sown only by the migration of the concept from psychology to literary studies – the account of theory of mind within psychology itself is far from a consensus. The most heated debate concerning theory of mind is the debate about the genesis of the mindreading ability: how does it come about? The first account, called "theory-theory", puts the theory into theory of mind. It claims that mindreading "is driven by a science-like theory, where a theory is understood as a set of law-like generalizations"[294] one has about how the mind works. The next account that was proposed to compete with theory-theory is the so called "simulation theory." As the name suggests, simulation theory claims that "mind readers simulate a target by trying to create similar mental states of their own as proxies or surrogates of those of the target. […]

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[291] Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 192.

[292] Another interesting specific is the variable of interruptions in the process of reading: whether the breaks are short (physiological needs, small distractions etc.) or long (from hours to days or weeks etc.), memory, or, in other words, forgetting sets in and influences the reading. To remedy this, readers can go back further and reread a certain amount of text to remind themselves of what was going on when they stopped reading. Readers can pick up mindreading where they left off going back to the exact point of conversation or description where they previously interrupted reading.

[293] Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 193.

[294] Alvin I. Goldman, "Theory of Mind," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Cognitive Science*, ed. Eric Margolis, Richard Samuels, and Stephen P. Stich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 403.

In other words, attributors use their own mind to mimic or 'model' the target's mind and thereby determine what has or will transpire in the target."[295]

In opposition to the previous two accounts, another contender for the throne of mindreading, intersubjectivity claims that "[h]uman beings are primordially connected in their subjectivity, rather than functioning as monads who need to 'infer' that others are also endowed with experiences and mentalities that are similar to their own."[296] It sees "[s]uch sharing and understanding [a]s based on embodied interaction (e.g., empathic perception, imitation, gesture and practical collaboration)" while the relevant cognitive capacities are, at least initially, social and interactional.[297] One account of intersubjectivity that has gained a lot of traction is the so called "Narrative Practice Hypothesis" which "rejects the idea that [folk psychology] reduces to or is embodied in a set of laws or principles but sees it rather as a competence fostered by engaging in socially supported story-telling activities."[298] According to this account, our folk psychological capacities "have been structured by social interactions and narratives."[299]

Proponents of intersubjectivity and the Narrative Practice Hypothesis reject the term theory of mind claiming that it denotes something different than what they are trying to account for. Actually, this criticism seems to sometimes take the form of a straw man argument. Daniel D. Hutto, the author of Narrative Practice Hypothesis, often seems to overstress the "theoretical" dimension of theory of mind by emphasizing that interpersonal encounters "are not intellectual products […] they do not involve the manipulation or representation of propositional attitudes" and, thus, "there is no reason to think of folk psychology as any kind of theory at all."[300] Though one of the theorists criticized by Hutto, Baron-Cohen himself highlights that "[w]e mindread all the time, effortlessly, automatically, and mostly unconsciously. That is, we are often not even aware we are doing it", going as far as to prefer the term folk psychology "since it reminds us that it is simply our everyday way of understanding people."[301] Lisa Zunshine, who draws on the work of Baron-Cohen among others, points out that "the words *theory* in Theory of Mind and *reading* in mind-reading are potentially misleading because they seem to imply that we attribute states of mind intentionally

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[295] Goldman, "Theory of Mind," 411.
[296] Jordan Zlatev et al., "Intersubjectivity: What Makes us Human?," in *The Shared Mind: Perspectives on Intersubjectivity*, ed. Jordan Zlatev et al. (Amsterdam: Johns Benjamins, 2008), 3.
[297] Zlatev, "Intersubjectivity," 3.
[298] Daniel D. Hutto and Michael D. Kirchhoff, "Looking Beyond the Brain: Social Neuroscience Meets Narrative Practice," in *Cognitive Systems Research* 34-35 (July 2015): 9.
[299] Hutto and Kirchhoff 9.
[300] Daniel D. Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives: The Sociocultural Basis of Understanding Reasons* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008), 3, 10.
[301] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 3, 21.

and consciously" and underlines "how much mind-reading takes place on a level inaccessible to our consciousness."[302] It should be pointed out that the term itself serves as umbrella term and is, therefore, noncommittal as to the competing theories – this is how I use it as well.[303]

Hutto criticizes what he calls spectatorial folk psychology: "Understanding others in normal contexts of interaction is not a spectator sport. This is not to claim that we never adopt a spectatorial stance—but doing so is the exception, not the rule."[304] For Hutto, instead of being spectators in a third person context, "it is only in second-person contexts that we confidently obtain true folk psychological explanations (to the extent that we do at all), as opposed to merely speculating about possible ones."[305] Hutto outlaws any other means of folk psychology than intersubjective encounters as minor, deviant and unreliable. Yet, his account relies heavily on people behaving in predictable ways according to general and abstract scripts and schemas and the availability of the personal narratives of others. In other words, it relies on a too smooth functioning of folk psychology which cannot account for cultural heterogeneity, deviations from scripts and schemas and contexts in which people do not want to give their personal narratives or such explanations would be inappropriate. Such contexts as well as third person encounters in which one is a spectator are much more frequent than Hutto seems to think.

Within psychology and philosophy of mind one must choose a side and this debate about the origins of mindreading with the taking of sides has spilt over into the cognitive literary studies. Within literary scholarship, committing to one or the other account of mindreading can be relevant in research on the readers' minds. However, moving to the minds of fictional characters, this debate is only as relevant as the various narratives make it. In other words, while there is a lot of mindreading going on in fictional worlds, the problem of how this mindreading obtains does not get thematized in the same way and to the same degree: as Blakey Vermeule observes, "literature obsessively reflects" theory of mind while "[t]he trouble with mind-reading problems in literature is that they are like God: everywhere and nowhere."[306] In a pragmatic sense, it does not really matter how theory of mind comes about as it performs its role either way. Moreover, while the various accounts disagree on the genesis of mindreading abilities, they all call on similar skills and processes enabling everyday mindreading. These

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[302] Lisa Zunshine, "Theory of Mind and Fictions of Embodied Transparency," *Narrative* 16, no.1 (January 2008): 67.

[303] Regarding the topic of the various labels for this ability, Stockwell suggests the term mind-modelling "as an alternative and literary-specific term" for an activity carried out by both readers and characters which "does not bring with it the contentious baggage of ToM debates". Stockwell, *Texture*, 140.

[304] Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives*, 12.

[305] Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives*, 20.

[306] Blakey Vermeule, *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 66.

include, among other things, visual perception, interpretation of movement as intentional, shared attention to objects, or inferences about the mental states based on bodily cues, scripts and schemas. Even though Hutto denies theory of mind the thematization of the social dimension of human encounters as he promotes it, Zunshine simply states that "mind-reading is both predicated on the intensely social nature of our species *and* makes this intense social nature possible."[307] Moreover, committing to one of the accounts creates potential blindspots and limits one's interpretive possibilities.

While Hutto's developmental account of folk psychology relies on narratives such as fairy tales and conversational storytelling, he admits that "there is much more on offer in […] grander literary offerings. […] Little Red Riding Hood is no Madame Bovary, to be sure."[308] Hutto wagers a lot on the claim that "[m]any of our routine encounters with others take place in situations in which the social roles and rules are well established, so much so that unless we behave in a deviant manner we typically have no need to understand one another by means of the belief/desire schema."[309] However, according to Bruner, on whose ideas Hutto draws, narrative is partly constituted by what he terms "the breaches of the canonical": "For to be worth telling, a tale must be about how an implicit canonical script has been breached, violated, or deviated from in a manner to do violence to what Hayden White calls the 'legitimacy' of the canonical script."[310] Literary narratives rely on breaching the canonical even more than daily encounters. This also applies when it comes to the depiction of mind with literature´s focus on the out of the ordinary cases of mental functioning.

With its stress on embodied and social understanding of ourselves and others, Hutto´s account of folk psychology corresponds to the concept of mind presented here. Add to it the stress on narrative as a means of interpreting behavior and Hutto seems to be the preferred choice for application in literary scholarship. Indeed, this explanatory model is appropriate for *Absalom, Absalom!* with its staging of scenes of storytelling that constitute the second person encounters between characters and are connected to the honing of folk psychological skills. The prime example would be Thomas Sutpen telling his life story to General Compson, sitting around a fire in the wilderness while hunting for the escaped architect given that Hutto defines as folk psychological narrative "[a]ny account that has as its subject matter the reason why a person acted on a particular occasion"[311]. Yet, the particulars of that narrative encounter with

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[307] Zunshine, "Theory of Mind and Fictions," 67.
[308] Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives*, 36.
[309] Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives*, 3-4.
[310] Bruner, "Narrative Construction," 11.
[311] Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives*, 4.

its violations of standard narrative expectations (for more see the chapter on *Absalom, Absalom!*) put a spoke in the wheel of Hutto's model relying on the conviction that personal narratives are a reliable source of explanation of others´ behavior.

Conversely, *As I Lay Dying* makes of folk psychology exactly the spectator sport that Hutto considers deviant and, therefore, calls for the model of mindreading developed by Simon Baron-Cohen whose book on theory of mind "speaks of agents, beliefs, and desires and links them to a language of the eyes."[312] Mental attribution in the novel works in an uncannily similar way to Baron-Cohen's account according to which eyes are central to theory of mind. The refinement on the theory which *As I Lay Dying* offers is putting this mechanism in various social contexts and thus showing that it does not operate in a vacuum as in the experimental conditions where the account was devised. The eyes are connected to personal narratives of others, which are not treated as necessarily reliable, or to schemas based on one's experiences. Indeed, what the novel shows is that human understanding of others is a combination of both deploying folk psychological narratives and attentively observing others for clues to read their minds. In effect, the complexity of mindreading in *As I Lay Dying* offers a corrective to Hutto's account by supplanting his exclusive view of folk psychological strategies with an inclusive one: it is not true that mindreading practices "only come into play in those cases in which we lack direct and reliable access to the narratives of others"[313], both modes of understanding complement each other as Faulkner's novel teaches us.[314] Besides, it is the focus on spectatorial folk psychology, and not narrative practice, that provides a point of entry to connecting Faulkner's embodied vision of the mind to his cultural context, i.e. the rise of film as the dominant medium of entertainment and cultural norms.

2.3. Cognitive Literary Studies and Literary Criticism

Thus, the argument for an informed use of cognitive science concepts which is not strictly or necessarily committed to a specific account is an argument for literature as an authoritative source of information on the human mind. It would go against the grain of cognitive literary

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[312] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, xiv.
[313] Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives*, 5.
[314] Alan Palmer is of the opinion that "[s]imulation needs theory and theory needs simulation. Simulation requires a theoretical basis and theory requires an empirical basis. Together, they form a coherent account of ascription" which for Palmer correlates to the readers activity: "On the one hand, the reader must have a kind of basic folk theory about how minds work. It is on this basis that we know that motives and dispositions can be ascribed to others. On the other hand, readers also simulate in their own minds the specific dilemmas faced by characters in novels. […] The reader has to use both their theory of mind and their ability to simulate the mentation of others to follow all of the different individual narratives and, therefore, the whole narrative." Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 144-145.

studies if its practitioners uncritically accepted the insights of cognitive sciences. Putting literature first should be the guiding principle of any literary scholarship and it would thus seem that cognitive literary studies should have had no problem integrating into the stream of other traditions of literary criticism. Indeed, in 2015, Alan Richardson avowed that "cognitive literary studies has now fully arrived as a leading critical and theoretical approach"[315]. At the same time, he admitted that the field is lacking signs of full institutional acceptance and remarked that "[m]ore theory-driven venues—*Critical Inquiry*, *Representations*, and the annual English Institute meetings—have not entirely excluded cognitive approaches, but they have also not welcomed cognitive studies in the way that they have, say, ecocriticism, disability studies, or animal studies."[316]

Hartner, writing two years after Richardson curbs the enthusiasm of his colleague´s assured pronouncement with observations on the slow progress of the field into the academia: "General interest in the field has undoubtedly increased over the past years, but many students of literature still complete their studies without ever being introduced to cognitive approaches, and the majority of scholars remain skeptical, or at least indifferent, towards this field of research."[317] Hartner attributes the situation to several reasons. Firstly, one of the concerns on the part of literary scholars is the "lack of a common theoretical framework"[318], of unity of cognitive literary studies. This, for better or worse, is unavoidable given the protean "nature" of mind and the various interests of both scientists and literary critics – it only stands to reason that the field should be so variegated. Richardson, who agrees that "a certain degree of divergence remains inevitable", makes the point, drawing on Borish Eichenbaum´s remarks on the formal method, that as far as the changeability of concepts stems from the changeability of the studied material in order to be appropriate to that material, the resulting diversity attests to the field´s "genuinely scientific ethos"[319]. Given the various enterprises of the brain and mind sciences, Richardson warns against demands of too much conformity, enthusiastically exclaiming "[l]et a hundred flowers bloom."[320]

The second of Hartner's reasons is "a somewhat irrational anxiety in literary criticism about being infiltrated and contaminated by other disciplines" which, he points out, "is also

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[315] Alan Richardson, "Once Upon a Mind: Literary and Narrative Studies in the Age of Cognitive Science," *Modern Fiction Studies* 61, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 361.

[316] Richardson, "Once Upon a Mind," 361.

[317] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 17. Terrence Cave shares Hartner's opinion that "cognitive methodologies and explanatory frameworks have not yet begun to inflect the common language of literary study" as well as some of the reasons as to why that is. See Cave, *Thinking*, 15-16.

[318] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 18.

[319] Richardson, "Once Upon a Mind," 361.

[320] Richardson, "Once Upon a Mind," 368.

somewhat paradoxical, since most critical approaches within the last hundred years, from structuralism to gender studies and deconstruction, have taken conceptual inspiration from outside the discipline."[321] Due to the perceived infiltration of science by cognitive approaches, this is an anxiety shared by the humanities at large. As Edward Sapir observed a century ago, incidentally by the way of discussing topics relevant to this dissertation – the individual, mind, culture, nature and their relationships –, "[n]othing irritates a student of culture more than to have the methods of the exact sciences flaunted in his face as a salutary antidote to his own supposedly slipshod methods. He feels that he deals with an entirely different order of phenomena, that direct comparison between the two groups of disciplines is to be ruled out of court."[322]

This fear should be laid to rest with the above discussion of the critical adaptation of cognitive concepts suited to the purposes of literary study. As Hartner himself points out, the perceived threat of "positivist clarity, empirical evidence, and the possibility of definite answers" posed by cognitive literary studies is only an "impression" since only "few studies really live up to this image"[323]. Not only is this not achieved, it is also hardly desired: Nancy Easterlin highlights that "[a]dopting a biocultural approach to literary interpretation does not necessitate acceptance of scientific methodology; adoption of a specified set of analytic concepts or a prescribed interpretive model; or adoption of a common groundwork for explanation"; in other words, abandoning the literary ship for a scientific one "is not only inherently undesirable for the study of literature but also unjustified in view of the nature of that object and the process of apprehending it."[324]

I have already suggested that my approach might be considered ethnographic given its interest in and focus on the ecological and cultural aspect of the mind. Put differently, I agree with Zunshine who, drawing on Raymond Williams's concept of cultural studies, has recently argued that "cognitive cultural studies *is* cultural studies […] [f]or just as the concept of the human brain becomes meaningless once we attempt to separate it from the culture in which it develops, so the concept of human culture becomes meaningless once we try to extract the human brain from it."[325] Zunshine makes two points regarding the compatibility of cognitive literary (cultural) studies and literary criticism. Firstly, she defends against the charge that "by

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[321] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 19.
[322] Edward Sapir, "Do We Need a "Superorganic"?" *American Anthropologist* New Series 19, no. 3 (Jul.-Sep. 1917): 441. See also Cave, *Thinking*, 16.
[323] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 21.
[324] Easterlin, *Biocultural Approach*, 20.
[325] Lisa Zunshine, "Introduction: What Is Cognitive Cultural Studies?," 8. Cf. Hogan, *How Authors' Minds Make Stories*, xvii.

making a 'cognitive turn,' a literary critic abandons the traditional paradigms of her own field."[326] In fact, she stresses, "some of the most exciting research in cognitive approaches to literature and culture comes from scholars who develop interfaces between cognitive science and more established literary and cultural theories."[327] Secondly, following logically from the previous, she herself would "be suspicious of any cognitive reading so truly 'original' that it can find no support in any of the existing literary critical paradigms" believing "that it is a sign of *strength* in a cognitive approach when it turns out to be highly compatible with well-thought-through literary criticism."[328] Indeed, in my reading of Faulkner's work I point out examples, where critics have made similar observations without the amenities of cognitive concepts.

The last of Hartner's reasons regards the incompatibility of cognitive literary approaches with "the entire body of approaches traditionally subsumed under the shorthand of 'Theory'."[329] The feeling of incompatibility is not unrequited; there are some qualms about "Theory" within the cognitive literary circles. Peter Stockwell for example begins and ends his *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading* by criticizing the turn away from textuality and texture of literature and the "migration" of literary scholars into "an arid landscape of cultural history."[330] Admitting that cultural, social and political history have their place in literary criticism, Stockwell nonetheless complains that "discussions of literature become ever more abstruse, further distant from the works themselves, divorced from the concerns of natural readers outside the academy, self-aggrandising, pretentious, ill-disciplined and, in the precise sense, illiterate."[331] Being unashamedly "scathing of the institution of literary scholarship as it currently stands", Stockwell calls for a "return to textuality, a reconnection with natural readers, and a further reconsideration of the intricacies, complexities and depths of texture"[332] of literature. Pointing to the same divorce from the experience of literature and addressing theory's recession to its ivory tower, Vermeule notes that theory "spun the question of how we read fiction into a topic of nearly theological complexity" while "[s]ince the 1950s, the tone of this theology has become increasingly dark, driven by formalism in French and American theory and by the linguistic turn in philosophy."[333]

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[326] Zunshine, "Introduction: What Is Cognitive Cultural Studies?," 5.
[327] Zunshine, "Introduction: What Is Cognitive Cultural Studies?," 5.
[328] Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 5.
[329] Hartner, "Scientific Concepts," 18.
[330] Stockwell, *Texture*, 1.
[331] Stockwell, *Texture*, 1.
[332] Stockwell, *Texture*, 192.
[333] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 15.

There are others who are not opposed to see(k)ing continuities stretching from one camp to the other – Zunshine's enthusiasm for "interfaces between cognitive science and more established literary and cultural theories" is one example. Ellen Spolsky points to the way "both the deconstructionist debates of the last thirty years and the evolutionary argument collude in stripping us of our innocence. We are no longer able to continue as if words simply mean what they say, as if we didn´t know that words cannot be entirely reliably identified with the things they normally, habitually represent"[334]. Andy Clark´s cyborg vision of the human nature is essentially a deconstructionist vision (see the previous chapter). It is also worth pointing out that although the second wave of cognitive revolution is a paradigm shift in some senses, it is born of its predecessors, not in a vacuum. Vygotsky is one that has already been mentioned. For example, James V. Wertsch develops the notion of mediated action as human action "mediated" through tools and language, being thus a parallel to the idea of extended mind theory, while drawing heavily on Vygotsky as well as Bakhtin.[335]

Indeed, it is Bakhtin's work above all other traditional literary schools of thought that resonates with the ideas presented here. For Bakhtin, consciousness is fundamentally intersubjective: it "never gravitates toward itself but is always found in intense relationship with another consciousness. Every experience, every thought of a character is internally dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle, or is on the contrary open to inspiration from outside itself"[336]. The nature of the mind, of cognition is cultural, social: any thought "is not a subjective individual-psychological formation with 'p⬚ma⬚⬚t ⬚sid⬚t ⬚ights' i⬚a p⬚so⬚'s h⬚ad; ⬚o, th⬚ idea is inter-individual and intersubjective – the realm of its existence is not individual consciousness but dialogic communion *between* consciousnesses."[337] Language is the main tool of extension deployed in a dialogic, that is, enactivist interaction with the world, because

> only a dialogic and participatory orientation takes another person´s discourse seriously, and is capable of approaching it both as a semantic position and as another point of view. Only through such an inner dialogic orientation can my discourse find itself in intimate contact with someone else´s discourse, and yet at the same time not fuse with it, not swallow it up, not dissolve in itself the other´s power to mean; that is, only thus can it retain fully its independence as a discourse.[338]

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[334] Spolsky, "Darwin and Derrida," 302.
[335] James V. Wertsch, *Voices of the Mind: A Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).
[336] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 32.
[337] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 88.
[338] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 64.

Although not representing strictly literary scholarship, there is an uncanny precursor to the extended mind thesis. Predating the publication of Clark and Chalmers´s seminal paper by more than three decades, Marshall McLuhan´s *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* reads like a companion piece to Clark´s *Natural-Born Cyborgs*. McLuhan speaks of the extensions of both body and mind while observing acutely that "[a]ny extensions, whether of skin, hand, or foot, affect the whole psychic and social complex"[339] thus capturing "the complex reciprocal dance in which the brain tailors its activity to a technological and sociocultural environment, which—in concert with other brains—it simultaneously alters and amends."[340] In (re)describing the myth of Narcissus, McLuhan elegantly presents the idea of coupling with extension tools and the emergent, holistic nature of the resulting cognitive system: "The youth Narcissus mistook his own reflection in the water for another person. This extension of himself by mirror numbed his perceptions until he became the servomechanism of his own extended or repeated image. The nymph Echo tried to win his love with fragments of his own speech, but in vain. He was numb. He had adapted to his extension of himself and had become a closed system."[341]

While there is a possibility, and practice in some cases, of appeasing "Theory" and cognitive literary studies, it should be noted that the theoretical landscape is varied and the idea of competition between the two is deceptive. As in the case of the competition between cognitive sciences and literary studies, cognitive approaches to literature and literary theory are complementary, not in direct competition: as Jørgen Dines Johansen keenly observes, when speaking about cognitive literary study, "when it comes to the interpretation of individual literary texts, its different analytical techniques become a new set of tools in the toolkit that we use, and obviously they can only compete with and maybe replace theories and techniques of analysis of the same nature"; therefore, "[i]t makes no sense, however, to prefer metaphor analysis to a Marxian or psychoanalytical text analysis"[342].

Yet, one tenet of cognitive literary approaches seems sacrilegious to the theologians of "Theory". It is a basic claim of cognitive literary studies that literature is not a phenomenon of special order. Zunshine points out the danger in seeing "art as qualitatively special and thus discontinuous with everyday practices" as it "has historically led to either extolling art as a

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[339] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 19.
[340] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 87.
[341] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 51.
[342] Jørgen Dines Johansen, "Theory and/vs. Interpretation in Literary Studies," *Cognition and Literary Interpretation in Practice*, ed. Harri Veivo, Bo Pettersson and Merja Polvinen (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2005), 263.

superior version of reality or denigrating it as its inferior imitation."[343] This continuity of literature as literature and as fiction with the everyday world spans all its aspects – the medium, the message, and its understanding:

> Literary uses of language, furthermore, are continuous with everyday uses, literary ways of thinking are continuous with everyday ways of thinking; the world as represented in literature—even in science fiction and fantasy—has essentially the same physical properties and sensorimotor laws as the world we live in. Literature, as a product of the mind, can perform remarkable feats, but it does not occupy a space of its own, demarcated with glass walls, where people walk down dimly-lit corridors, getting a thrill out of seeing jellyfish and sharks at close quarters, but without incurring any risk to their persons […] a special (and consequently marginal) aesthetic domain.[344]

Thus, while "Theory" elevated literature to the divine realm, cognitive literary approaches secularize it, considering it still special and specialized, but made of such stuff as mortals are made on. This grounding of literature in the lived reality starts with the medium of literature, language. Contrary to views of literary language as somehow different from normal, natural language, cognitive literary scholars observe that "[t]here is no special literariness module in the brain or as a phenomenon of mind that is activated when we 'do' literature. Instead, our natural language capacities are exploited by writers and activated in literary reading."[345] Such an observation does not detract from the special use of language in literature, the "peculiar and amazing things that literature can do"[346], as Stockwell highlights; it rather points out the constructed nature of the perception of literature: "The feeling that literature is the highest form of language art to the extent that it appears disjunctive with everyday talk is a matter of the value with which it is framed, the intensity with which it is read, and the disposition to find and accept aspects in a literary work that would not even be sought out in ordinary language."[347] The difference of literary or poetic language which "is not intrinsically *sui generis*" lies in that it represents an extreme of the standard, everyday use of language: "There are no features of literary language that don't have a counterpart in everyday speech.

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[343] Zunshine, "Introduction: What is Cognitive Cultural Studies?," 10.

[344] Cave, *Thinking*, 3-4.

[345] Stockwell, *Texture*, 3.

[346] Stockwell, *Texture*, 3-4. In the context of mental health, Billington observes that literature and literary reading are "more *special* than special*ist*. Literary works themselves are special, in the sense that the language is not normal but *un*usual and often testing in the light of the special occasion of literature and the experience that prompts it." Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?*, 134. Italics in the original.

[347] Stockwell, *Texture*, 4. Billington puts it poetically when she remarks that literature has the power "to hold thoughts which humans feel it would almost kill them to contain in themselves." Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?*, 31.

The perceived differences are effects of salience and density."[348] In other words, not everyone is a Shakespeare, but everyone uses metaphors.

The claim about the groundedness of literature in everyday thinking is based on the observation that if understanding literature was discontinuous with other ways of cognitive processing of reality, it would predict and require special brain and mind features. In other words, it would make unreasonable demands on human cognition. This is not to say that literature as a specific discourse is reducible to other kinds of discourses, nor that literature cannot flaunt and break the rules of understanding life; however, it is to say that there are not cognitive processes that apply to understanding "event" in life and then a parallel set of processes that would do the same specifically for literature. While it is theoretically possible, it violates the standard principle of Occam's razor: to make such a claim would necessitate not only a special set of mental phenomena for understanding literature, but probably another set of processes that would translate between phenomena of the literary and quotidian order so that phenomena of life would be recognizable in their representations in literature and vice versa.[349] Grounding literature in the reality of life facilitates "a principled recognition of the fact that literary works – whether fictional or not – have an emotional and tangible effect on readers and on the real world in which we live with literature."[350]

Speaking of emotions, Patrick Colm Hogan observes that "there is no special emotion system for literature. Thus, to understand literary emotion, we need to understand emotion generally."[351] In his book-length study of experiencing narrative fiction, Richard Gerrig observes that much of the inferencing is the same for both narrative worlds and the real world noting that "[i]n some respects, our real world is as much constructed as any narrative world. For exactly that reason, researchers have often turned to narrative comprehension as a microcosm in which to study the processes and memory representations that guide our existence."[352] Christina Ljunberg's observation that humans use the same image schemata in perception as well as in language leads her to the observation that for literature, "this has the implication that not only does it need to use the 'real', experiential world as a model for its fictional universes to be comprehensible but also that, in literary interpretation, these

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[348] Cave, *Thinking*, 84.

[349] Cf. Hogan, *How Authors' Minds Make Stories*, 3.

[350] Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2005), 152.

[351] Patrick Colm Hogan, "On Being Moved: Cognition and Emotion in Literature and Film," in *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 245. Cf. Stockwell, *Texture*, 77-78, 105.

[352] Richard J. Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 27.

diagrammatic structures are excellent cognitive tools for organizing, developing and expressing our understanding of a literary work."[353] The idea that cuts to the heart of the matter is that fictional works are simulations of the real world which covers both the fact that "consumers of literary stories experience thoughts and emotions congruent with the events represented by these narratives" and the fact that "stories model and abstract the human social world. […] Narrative fiction models life, comments on life, and helps us to understand life in terms of how human intentions bear upon it."[354]

2.3.1. Criticizing Cognitive Literary Studies

The notion of literature as not separate and distinct from other uses of language, understanding, and emotional experience of the world at large has elicited defensive reactions on the side of literary scholars. It threatens the critics´ idea of literature as a sacrosanct object of devotion that only they, as the high priests of communi(cati)on with it, are equipped to interpret.[355] Anyone else´s attempt at doing so is seen as lay and thus incommensurate with the task detracting both their vocation and literature itself. One example of a defensive reaction to cognitive approaches to literature is Jennifer Ashton´s article "Two Problems with a Neuroscientific Theory of Art." It seems opportune to look at this case of what amounts to critical malpractice since if this is where literary scholars unfamiliar with cognitive approaches to literature get their information about the field, their view must be misguided as a result.

Ashton is no fan of "neurowhatever" and "all things neuro"[356], her sneering labels for cognitive approaches. Her motivation for the article is to address what she sees as the "main theoretical mistake" of cognitive approaches, namely "a confusion of the meaning of the work of art with, on the one hand, the effects of the work on the reader/listener/beholder, and on the other hand, what we might call its causes […] the tendency to conflate the meaning of a work of art with the experiences that go into making the work and the experiences said to arise from it"[357]. Thus, claiming that "neuroaesthetics" repeats the mistake of the famously identified intentional and affective fallacy, she delves into the two essays by Wimsatt and Beardsley to elucidate her view on intention. Finally, she turns to an example of cognitive literary scholarship, Blakey Vermeule´s *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* to make more

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[353] Christina Ljunberg, "Models of Reading: Diagrammatic Aspects of Literary Texts," in *Cognition and Literary Interpretation in Practice*, ed. Harri Veivo, Bo Pettersson and Merja Polvinen (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2005), 105.

[354] Keith Oatley and Raymond A. Mar, "The Function of Fiction is the Abstraction and Simulation of Social Experience," *Perspective on Psychological Science* 3, no. 3 (May 2008): 173.

[355] Cf. Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 15.

[356] Jennifer Ashton, "Two Problems with a Neuroaesthetic Theory of Art," *Nonsite.org* no. 2 (Summer 2011): 59, 61.

[357] Ashton, "Two Problems," 60.

points on intention and to conclude that "[t]o have an account of what our brains do in making the work or in responding to it is to have an account of the causes and effects of the work. To have an account of its author's intentions – without which, we have no aesthetic interest in the work – is to have an account of something that cannot be assimilated to causes or effects."[358]

Firstly, Ashton´s views on intention and what constitutes the meaning of a literary work are contentious and there is a variety of opinions on this issue in the history of literary and aesthetic criticism. Stockwell, for example, defines meaning pragmatically: "When I ask what does the poem mean, I am really asking what the poem does, which is another way of asking what is it being used for. Meaning, then, is what literature does. Meaning is use."[359] Although his definition would fall on the side of Ashton´s "effects of the work", neither does this mean that her definition is more valid, nor that his definition is representative of the conception of meaning in cognitive literary studies. Sidestepping this issue for the sake of brevity, as I want to look at another problem with her article, one can say, as Vermeule does in her response to Ashton, that her point potentially applies to any kind of criticism and is neither inherent to nor characteristic of cognitive literary studies: "This is really a question about whether the criticism is any good. Crudeness is crudeness, whatever banner it waves."[360]

Secondly, and more importantly here, Ashton´s article has a fundamental problem in misrepresenting, probably because misunderstanding, the field as a whole, as is evident in the sweeping generalizations she makes about a field that represents a vast landscape with varying approaches, purposes and procedures. Therefore, Ashton is one of those "[o]pponents of cognitive and evolutionary approaches to literature [who] enjoy homogenizing its various practitioners, who, in point of fact, have only one shared assumption: that findings about human psychology and behavior might prove illuminating for the study of human artifacts."[361] Bewilderingly, Ashton uses the term "neuroaesthetics" as a label for the field of cognitive literary scholarship, one that, to my knowledge, has never been used as sweepingly. Perhaps a forgivable mistake if she didn´t misuse a term for one particular strand of cognitive scholarship, "the study of the procedures that motivate aesthetic behavior [...] the identification of aesthetic functions and the investigation of their neurobiological causes"[362], and boil the whole field to talk about functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging and evolutionary psychology.

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[358] Ashton, "Two Problems," 68.
[359] Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics*, 4.
[360] Blakey Vermeule, "Response to Ashton, 'Two Problems'," *Nonsite.org* no. 2 (Summer 2011): 72.
[361] Easterlin, *Biocultural Approach*, 12.
[362] Michael Burke, "The Neuroaesthetics of Prose Fiction: Pitfalls, Parameters and Prospects," *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* (August 2015): 5.

At one point, Ashton takes Crane´s *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory* as an example of "neuroaesthetics" and criticizes Crane for turning "brain research into a fairly crude instrument for criticism" claiming about her approach to Shakespeare that "[i]t's no longer the materiality of the theater, or the Elizabethan court or the invisible bullets of transatlantic trade that matter, in other words; it's the materiality of the neurons and the transmitters that make them fire."[363] While it is true that Crane states that she wants to "try to reintroduce into serious critical discourse a consideration of Shakespeare's brain as one material site for the production of the dramatic works attributed to him"[364], her argument for the book and Shakespeare's works, formulated a page later, has nothing to do with brain scans or neurons:

> From this perspective, I argue that at least several of Shakespeare's plays experiment with different forms of polysemy and prototype effects in ways that leave traces of cognitive as well as ideological processes in the text. Further, I show how these traces of cognitive process reveal not only the possibilities but also the limits of individual agency within a biological body and a cultural matrix. I suggest that cognitive theory offers new and more sophisticated ways to conceive of authorship and therefore offers new ways to read texts as products of a thinking author engaged with a physical environment and a culture. […] I argue that in each of the plays examined here a network of words, connected in part by spatial metaphors, functions as a structural element that reflects in its outlines some of the patterns and connections of Shakespeare's mental lexicon. I believe that Shakespeare uses these words as focal points for explorations of the spatially centered experiences of cognitive subjectivity, as it figured in the development of the "individual" in the early modern period and as those new individuals were represented by fictional characters on the space of the platform stage.[365]

Labeling Crane's approach to Shakespeare as concerned with neurology whilst omitting considerations of the Elizabethan court or the materiality of theatre is a crude misrepresentation given her preoccupation with and analysis of concepts such as subject, self, agent or discourse as well as her inclusive position on the nature vs. culture debate in relation to meaning: "Cognitive theory similarly recognizes the powerful role of culture in forming the subject but

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[363] Ashton, "Two Problems," 61.
[364] Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 3. Crane herself admits the impossibility of doing literary criticism with brain scans: "The barrier to considering the brain of an author such as Shakespeare as one material source (among many) for his texts is, of course, that a long-dead author is not available to us in any living, material form. Any attempt to take into account even a living author must usually slide into talk about the immaterial 'concepts' or 'intentions' behind the material text that we possess." Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 9.
[365] Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 4.

insists that there is an interaction between the biological subject and its culture. Meaning is not just the product of an exterior system of signs but is fundamentally structured by human cognitive processes."[366] Turning Crane´s methodology to Ashton´s article, one discovers a mind of an author with an entrenched bias created by a long career in the field of literary studies that led to either not getting past Crane´s remark on the materiality of Shakespeare's brain or disregarding any further explanation of said statement.

This is not to say that there are not examples of bad practice within the field. While one should steer clear of Ashton's article due to its misrepresentation of cognitive literary studies as well as its misrepresentation of the causal relations cognitive science posits between various theories of mind and literature as simple equations, there is one point she makes that has some validity: there is a potential danger when using literature as evidence for cognitive process of producing "a general lack of differentiation between individual works of art"[367]. One must pay attention to the valid criticism of the possible and actual reductions of the status of literature when performing cognitive (literary) science as analyzed insightfully by Harry Veivo and Tarja Knuuttila. By carefully attending to the argument structures of several examples of cognitive research on literature, the authors show that in them literature is being divorced from all its contexts (historical, social, political) and being treated as indicative of cognitive processes, in some cases even as interchangeable with cognitive processes. Consequently, the idea of literature, the object of study is being erased in this way: "In decontextualising literary texts, erasing what distinguishes them from other cultural products, doing away with their internal texture, and in considering meaning as a fundamentally mental phenomenon, cognitive studies of literature run the risk of rejecting what constitutes the empirical ground for interpretation – literature itself."[368] Cases such as these do disservice not only to literature but also to cognitive approaches as "[r]educing texts to the status of stimulus does not do justice to the reality of artistic or scientific discourse."[369] The authors direct this criticism at such authors as Mark Turner, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, all linguistically oriented scholars working with concepts such as conceptual metaphor and blending. My focus here is different – I am interested in literary interpretation, so these problems are not as relevant for the present dissertation.

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[366] Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 21.
[367] Ashton, "Two Problems," 63.
[368] Harri Veivo and Tarja Knuuttila, "Modelling, Theorising and Interpretation in Cognitive Literary Studies," in *Cognition and Literary Interpretation in Practice*, ed. Harri Veivo, Bo Pettersson and Merja Polvinen (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2005), 298.
[369] Veivo and Knuuttila, "Modelling," 295.

2.4. Minds in Fiction

> In the account preferred by storytellers, including Faulkner, an account that we willingly entertain when we read or listen to stories, storytellers (a) inhabit real beings and represent them from the inside, and also (b) by this process create them out of nothing and turn them into real beings. It is a paradoxical position, but it does appear to be a position of some importance to human societies, which, in a paradoxical movement of their own, both (a) entertain it, and (b) dismiss it as nonsense.[370]

My cognitive approach to literature is a thematic approach in that it takes concepts from the cognitive sciences and analyzes them *in* literature. It is thus more akin to the work done by, for example, Alan Palmer who inspects fictional minds in literature rather than to such theorists like Turner, Lakoff and Johnson who approach literature "from the outside", as an artifact of real minds. Thus, my approach brings with it another challenge, the application of cognitive concepts to fictional characters, i.e. fictional minds. One might possibly leave this issue with the observation that seeing lexical constructs as and like human beings is what people do while pointing out that it is somewhat paradoxical or strange – as the motto for this section does. After all, as Blakey Vermeule points out, "[t]he tendency to think of literary characters as if they were real people is a habit lodged deep in the human psyche, and no amount of literary-critical sophistication is likely to cure people of it."[371]

Notwithstanding, I want to devote the last part of this chapter to two related topics. Firstly, an inevitable part of my approach is the presupposition that fictional characters have minds to speak of, that the concept of mind of a fictional character does somehow obtain. This section will address this issue. My argument will seek to answer the partly literary-theoretical and partly philosophical question: Can fictional characters have minds? And if yes, how, that is, what kind of mind is it? Since fictional characters and their minds are parts of fictional worlds "evoked" by a specific medium, my discussion will be couched within the larger debate on the nature of fiction and its status. Fiction is a category that not only transcends genres, but also media; I will focus only on textual, or more specifically, narrative fiction. Secondly, I will address the issue of fictional minds from the cognitive point of view. This will not only point to some aspects of fictional characters that might get ignored otherwise, but it will also allow

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[370] J. M. Coetzee, "Fictional Beings," *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology* 10, no. 3 (June 2003): 134.
[371] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care?*, 176. See also Stockwell, *Texture*, 116.

me to draw some parallels between actual and fictional minds. Last but not least, I will address the accessibility of minds, a crucial aspect of mind as seen by the second wave cognitive sciences that underpins the discourse on minds.

In his *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster devotes two lectures to the topic of literary character. Both lectures bear the title "People." Forster explains the choice of the title in the following way: "Since the actors in a story are usually human, it seemed convenient to entitle this aspect People. […] we may say that the actors in a story are, or pretend to be, human beings."[372] In agreement with Forster, Darko Suvin remarks on the human capacity to anthropomorphize in fiction: "Paradoxically, images of people can be modified out of all empirical or naked-eye recognition – for example, into gods, talking animals, allegorical notions or disembodied narrative voices – yet still remain fabular transpositions and re-creations of possible relationships between people."[373] This anthropomorphization is motivated by pragmatic and prosaic reasons – to keep people interested in stories. As Vermeule observes, telling stories about people-like characters is a way of packaging larger issues at stake in order to make them more understandable and palatable:

> The problems we care about come packaged in human form. Other people set our puzzles of practical and moral reasoning for us. We think about most things – facts, values, norms, history, morality, society, even our own fates – by bundling them up into figures and stories about other people. To reason practically about the world, to set our caps for it, we personify many of its elements.[374]

Forster has famously compared fictional characters and people in terms of the extent to which one can know them: "We cannot understand each other, except in a rough and ready way; we cannot reveal ourselves, even when we want to; what we call intimacy is only a makeshift; perfect knowledge is an illusion. But in the novel we can know people perfectly […]."[375] Even though not obvious from the often-quoted passage itself, Forster makes clear that the difference concerns the problem of the mind at the beginning of the same lecture:

> In daily life we never understand each other, neither complete clairvoyance nor complete confessional exists. We know each other approximately, by external signs, and these serve well enough as a basis for society and even for intimacy. But people in a

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[372] E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London: A Harvest Book, 1955), 43-44.

[373] Darko Suvin, "Can People Be (Re)Presented in Fiction?: Toward a Theory of Narrative Agents and a Materialist Critique beyond Technology or Reductionism," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 668.

[374] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 23-24.

[375] Forster, *Aspects*, 63.

novel can be understood completely by the reader, if the novelist wishes; their inner as well as their outer life can be exposed. And this is why they often seem more definite than characters in history, or even our own friends; we have been told all about them that can be told; even if they are imperfect or unreal they do not contain any secrets, whereas our friends do and must, mutual secrecy being one of the conditions of life upon this globe.[376]

It is evident from this passage that Forster takes the existence of mind of fictional characters for granted. In a sense, "people in a novel" can seem even more definite than "people in history" and people one knows personally. Interestingly, the sense of definiteness of characters comes about through something that does not have much foundation in the actual world: complete information about another human being, be it through clairvoyance or confessional. In terms of this differentiation, minds of characters can be even more real than those of people: they can be fully revealed, fully accessible for perusal to the readers' eyes. Nevertheless, Forster's differentiation of human and fictional minds is couched in notions of cartesian dualism. His view is based on the "binarized model that makes fictional minds external and accessible and actual minds internal and hidden", a paradigm which within the 4e approaches "gives way to a scalar or gradualist model, according to which minds of all sorts can be more or less directly encountered or experienced – depending on the circumstances."[377]

This view is a corollary of the conception of the mind advanced here, as Herman points out, "if minds are not closed-off, inner spaces but rather lodged in and partly constituted by the social and material structures that scaffold people's encounters with the world, then access to the I-originarity of another is no longer uniquely enabled by engagement with fictional narratives."[378] It is a key feature of the human mind that has not been explicitly mentioned yet that while not being either closed off or transparent, it is accessible. Since the mind is spread across brain, body and world, "in any communicative encounter, I can experience another's I-originarity by engaging with the propositional content of that person's utterances as well as his or her facial expressions, bodily orientation, gestures, and so forth—and also with the way our encounter is situated within a broader material and social context."[379]

There is a related cartesian prejudice which should be adjusted and that is the assumption that the first-person view of the mind (observing one´s own mind) is more direct and privileged

[376] Forster, *Aspects*, 47.
[377] Herman, "Introduction," 9. See also Herman, "Introduction," 17.
[378] Herman, "Introduction," 9.
[379] Herman, "Introduction," 11.

than the third-person ascription of mental phenomena (observing someone else´s mind).[380] Elaborating on the fact that first-person ascriptions of mental states are often confabulated, i.e., fictions since people interpret their mind post hoc in a way that is acceptable in terms of their self-image[381], Palmer summarizes that, "[p]ut simply, first-person ascription can be less reliable, and third-person ascription more reliable, than is commonly supposed."[382]

While calling characters "people", Forster himself is well aware of the textual nature of literary characters, observing that the novelist "makes up a number of word-masses […], gives them names and sex, assigns them plausible gestures, and causes them to speak by the use of inverted commas, and perhaps to behave consistently. These wordmasses are his characters."[383] Even though "wordmasses," they not only have minds, but the author "gives" them sex and gestures – both phenomena tethered to a bodily existence. The problem at hand is broader than the problem of minds of fictional characters – that is only a facet of the issue of the relation of fiction to reality. While too broad for the present thesis, the problem can be broached to provide a working resolution for the present purpose.

Literary characters can be spoken of as having minds, sex, gestures etc. through the mimetic relation of fiction to reality. Firstly, if a character is described, for example, as male ("man," "boy," "the son of his father," "her husband of twenty years" etc.) it is through the conventional signification of the linguistic signifier that a concept of the real world is evoked. Since "language used in fiction" is language full stop, as I have pointed out above, the concept evoked is the real concept.[384] Concepts of the real world are automatically associated to fictional discourse unless there is a suggestion to the contrary. In science fiction for example, some concepts of the actual world might be voided or altered due to the specificity of the fictional world of the text. The mimetic association is vital for without it one could not understand

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[380] Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 127. As Palmer notes, this hierarchy was subverted by behaviorism which conceived of the mind as consisting of observable and measurable phenomena while ignoring any notion of consciousness. Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 125.

[381] Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 126-127.

[382] Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 125. See also Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 141 on the first-person and third-person ontology of fictional minds.

[383] Forster, *Aspects*, 44. Palmer essentially elaborates on Forster´s notion of wordmasses when he claims that "we are able to read a character's mind as an embedded narrative by applying what I call the *continuing-consciousness frame*" and describes the process as one where "[t]he reader collects together all of the isolated references to a specific proper name in a particular text and constructs a consciousness that continues in the spaces between the various mentions of that character. The reader strategy is to join up the dots." Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 175-176.

[384] I am well aware that I am doing myself disservice by this phrasing. The word "real" is one of the most problematic in critical discourse and it does not help that I use it in relation to a category like "sex" which in the wake of deconstruction has been shown as discursively/ideologically constructed, most famously by Judith Butler in *Bodies that Matter*. For purposes of manageability and in order to stick to my argument, I am suspending this aspect of the problem in favor of a pragmatic understanding of linguistic signs in which speakers of a language can, more or less, agree on the meaning of these signs.

literary/fictional discourse: either an entirely new language would have to be invented to be used in fiction or the discourse of fiction would turn into a Wittgensteinian language game in which all terms of language would have to be defined anew.[385] While real concepts play a key role in understanding the fictional world, they are always trumped by the autonomy of the fictional world of the text as I have argued above.[386]

Mimesis concerns literary characters themselves directly. In his *Reading People, Reading Plots*, James Phelan has devised a concept of fictional characters that distinguishes three components. The first, synthetic component concerns the artificiality of fictional characters "and part of knowing a character is knowing that he/she/(it?) is a construct."[387] It is noteworthy that even though speaking of the artificiality of fictional characters, Phelan refers to a linguistic construct with the neutral pronoun only tentatively. Using parentheses and a question mark, Phelan suggests the counterintuitiveness of such a reference: the already gendered pronouns pose no problem or questioning. If characters can have gender, why not a mind? As Uri Margolin rightly points out that since we ascribe to characters other attributes of people, such as actions, denying them a mind would be a strange purism.[388] The synthetic component bespeaks the fact that "[u]nlike real-world confessors," as Mäkelä observes, "fictional first-person narrators are not necessarily speaking for themselves, not even *to* themselves, but instead they demonstrate—in their involuntary discursivity—how the fictional mind is conditioned by verbalization and the communicative structure of the narrative text."[389]

The second, mimetic component concerns the way in which "the description creates its effect by playing off – and with – the way characters are images of possible people."[390]

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[385] Bruner wonders about the indistinguishability of the language of fact and the language of fiction: "Given the specialization of ordinary languages in establishing binary contrasts, why do none of them impose a once-for-all, sharp grammatical or lexical distinction between true stories and imaginative ones? As if to mock the distinction, fiction often dresses itself in the 'rhetoric of the real' to achieve its imaginative verisimilitude. [...] Indeed, most Western languages retain words in their lexicon that seem perversely to subvert the distinction between *Dichtung* and *Wahrheit: storia* in Italian, *histoire* in French, *story* in English. If truth and possibility are inextricable in narrative, this would put the narratives of folk psychology into a strange light, leaving the listener, as it were, bemused about what is of the world and what of the imagination." Bruner, *Acts*, 52-53.

[386] On the potential reduction of fictional minds as well as the artfulness of literature by applying real world concepts see Mäkelä, "Cycles of Narrative Necessity," 130.

[387] James Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 2.

[388] See Margolin, "Cognitive Science," 274.

[389] Mäkelä, "Cycles of Narrative Necessity," 147.

[390] Phelan, *Reading People*, 2. Here, I agree with Suvin´s observation that speaking of "representation" in mimetic terms presents a reductive picture of the exchange between fiction and reality. Suvin suggests substituting representation with "the more productive and communicative two-way duplicity of 'presenting': presenting images taken from outside fiction as propositions or formative hypotheses for a narrative, but also presenting images transmogrified within fiction as proposals to the pragmatic world." Suvin, "Can People Be (Re)Presented," 666.

Explaining the natural inclination to see characters as people, Stockwell unpacks the mimetic aspect in how language is perceived as an index of an embodied presence:

> The most natural assumption in encountering language is that someone has produced that language, and this approach simply projects that basic intuition into the imaginary and virtual realm. The fact that this is reader-centred means that – at a primary level of the readers encounter – it does not matter whether the author, narrator, character or any variants of these are as real as the reader or not. Furthermore, since the minds of others are indivisible parts of the bodies of others (a cognitive linguistic principle and a basic premise of human experience), there is a very strong (perhaps even unavoidable) inclination to generate a sense of physical existence in textual and even fictional characters, narrators and authors.[391]

The third and last component is thematic in which the character serves "to express ideas or as representative of a larger class than the individual character."[392] The distribution of these three components is not necessarily equal: a character "is a literary element composed of three components, the mimetic, thematic, and synthetic […] the mimetic and thematic components may be more or less developed, whereas the synthetic component, though always present, may be more or less foregrounded."[393] Thus, even though the mimetic aspect of a character is not as inherent as the synthetic one, the vast majority of characters is "human-like" as Forster observed and thus "[f]ictional individuals, no less than actual ones, are often endowed with a rich mental life."[394] This predominance of anthropomorphic characters, connected with the mimetic relation of fiction to reality, as remarked above, is pragmatic: for human readers, human-like characters are more interesting than any other kind of characters. Suvin, similarly to Vermeule, points to the pragmatic aspect of making stories about "people" and says, expanding on a remark by Brecht, that "if people do not fit […] into the worlds of fiction, then fiction does not fit into the world of people."[395]

Indeed, this is a fundamental point about the mimetic nature of characters: their humanness makes fiction engaging. Not only are we interested in fiction because stories

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[391] Stockweel, *Texture*, 108-109.
[392] Phelan, *Reading People*, 12
[393] Phelan, *Reading People*, 3. Suvin answers the eponymous question of his essay – "Can people be (re)presented in fiction?" – in the negative saying that "empirical individuals, *people* in the bourgeois individualist sense, *cannot* be represented in fiction; they necessarily become, on the one hand, *exempla* (Auden's paragons) and, on the other hand, shifting nodes of narration." Suvin, "Can People Be (Re)Presented," 690. Thus, he ties together all of Phelan's three components.
[394] Uri Margolin, "Character," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2008), 54.
[395] Suvin, "Can People Be (Re)Presented," 667.

concern beings like us, but we also care about these beings. This is because we make these characters in that way so that we can care: "The prototypical literary character is an entity with human-like exteriority and internal mental states defined by current cultural concepts."[396] This emotional involvement is no added value, but a fundamental part of the experience of fiction. As Keith Oatley observes, "[t]here is perhaps no sharp dividing line between fiction and nonfiction. […] Nonetheless, the typical emotional functions of fiction contrast with the typical informative effects of nonfiction."[397]

Increasingly, in psychological research, stress has been put on the fact that the human brain uses the same processes when analyzing information about "reality" as when analyzing fictional information. In his book-length study of the metaphor of transportation during the experience of fiction, the psychologist Richard J. Gerrig states that readers "must use their own experiences of the world to bridge gaps in texts. They must bring both facts and emotions to bear on the construction of the world of the text."[398] The resultant experience of fiction is thus a mix of fictional construction material with real-world architecture. Much of the psychological research on processes of the human mind thus "applies equally well to the experience of the real world as to the experience of narrative worlds. We continually draw inferences and exhibit participatory responses in everyday life. In some respects, our real world is as much constructed as any narrative world."[399]

In other words, reality and fiction become blurred: fiction, and consequently, minds of fictional characters are, in some sense, real; or, maybe more disturbingly, our "reality" is, in some sense, fictional. Where and in what way is then the fictional mind located? To answer this question, one must first answer another question: what is reading? In a nutshell, reading is a mental simulation in which the reader "executes the incomplete script of the text into an ontologically complete, three-dimensional reality."[400] The simulation proceeds through the already described process of using "experiences of the world to bridge gaps in texts" which process in itself is made possible by the mimetic relationship of fiction to reality. As Oatley observes, "fiction is a kind of simulation that serves as a coherence form of truth."[401] This form

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[396] Uri Margolin, "Character," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 73. Cf. Suvin, "Can People Be (Re)Presented," 669.
[397] Keith Oatley, "Why Fiction May Be Twice as True as Fact: Fiction as Cognitive and Emotional Simulation," *Review of General Psychology* 3, no. 2 (June 1999): 114.
[398] Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 17.
[399] Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 27. Colm Hogan observes that "our brains respond in roughly the same manner when we imagine something and when we perceive it." Colm Hogan, "On Being Moved," 243.
[400] Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 112.
[401] Oatley, "Why Fiction," 109.

of truth which is opposed to "truth as empirical correspondence"[402] that forms the bedrock of modern science lays a foundation for the "reality" of fiction.

Margolin describes the way in which character is formed in the process of reading in readers' minds:

> The conceptual unit that readers intuitively label "character" is thus mentally generated in response to textual clues. As one reads on, guided by the "read for character" control system, one gathers textual cues which characterize the mental entity in focus. This is bottom-up or data-driven processing, involving both explicit property ascription and character-related information which could serve as basis for such ascription. Once a certain number of properties have been gathered, they often activate a knowledge structure stored in long-term memory under which these properties can be subsumed and integrated into a character model.[403]

Character models are one way in which the text is simulated. Even though, as Margolin continues, "[w]hile the model reader and professional literati will give the literary ones precedence, ordinary readers tend to give precedence to entrenched actual-world models,"[404] both of them play a role in the construction of the mental image of the character. It seems appropriate and important to state at this point that while I argue for the cognitive view of fictional characters I do not argue against other views: my argument is for endorsing all the facets of fictional characters, their artificiality as well as the way in which they seem to be "real". If my claim seems controversial, it is due to the particular critical climate that "has scoffed the question of why we care about literary characters into irrelevance"[405]. As Marie-Laure Ryan reminds, "[e]motional participation in the fate of imaginary characters," presupposed on the existence of imaginary characters' minds, "was accepted as a natural response to literature until textualist approaches overtook realist paradigms and dissolved the human essence of characters into actantial roles or aggregates of textually specified features (or 'semes'). In the heyday of structuralism and deconstruction, it became heretical even to mention the phenomenon of emotional response."[406]

Neither am I arguing for a naïve way of reading. Speaking of the ways of reading, Phelan suggests that endorsing the cognitive view of fictional characters leads to a more complex way of seeing characters:

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[402] Oatley, "Why Fiction," 103.
[403] Margolin, "Character," 54-55.
[404] Margolin, "Character," 55.
[405] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 15.
[406] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 148. Cf. Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 14-15.

By identifying the basic elements, the structuralist can indicate something about the materials out of which the mimetic analyst will build his account, but such an indication comes at the price of failing to offer any well-developed interpretation of its own.

The mimetic analysis, on the other hand, commits one to developing an account of the structure and effect of a work. Judged by that shared criterion, it does offer a superior way of theorizing about character.[407]

Fictional characters (whole fictional worlds actually) become "real" in the readers' minds as part of the simulation of the text which serves as a script that is transformed through various mental operations into mental images. Margolin describes the process as follows:

Technically speaking, character can be defined from this perspective as a contingently created, abstract cultural entity, depending essentially for its existence on actual objects in space and time and on the intellectual activity of authors and readers. On this view, characters are invented or stipulated by a human mind, and generated in particular cultural and historical circumstances through the use of language, following certain literary-artistic conventions. They are ultimately semiotic constructs or creatures of the word, and it is the socially and culturally defined act of fictional storytelling that constitutes and defines them.[408]

2.4.1. Knowing Minds in Fiction and Reality

Fictional minds (again, as well as characters and the whole world of the text as such) are ontologically fictional from the point of view of the real-world reader (or audience). It goes without saying, that within the fictional world, they are real. Yet, given the simulated nature of fictional minds, one can say with Vermeule that "the meaningful distinction between fictional and nonfictional characters is not ontological but technological. Our social brains are just as capable of being stimulated by fiction as our sexual selves are capable of being stimulated by pornography. We mostly overlook the fact that something is a representation unless the representation itself is a spur to greater stimulation."[409] Gerrig makes the fundamental observation, based on experiments, that designating information as fictional is an extra, conscious effort and, thus, subverts Coleridge´s old adage about fiction:

Thus it appears, just as Spinoza proposed, that conscious appraisal is needed for readers to disbelieve false (or fictional) information. […] On this view, *fictional information* in fact fails to refer to a category that has any a priori psychological coherence. Information

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[407] Phelan, *Reading People*, 7-8.
[408] Margolin, "Character," 67.
[409] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 17.

becomes tagged as fictional only as a function of readers' conscious scrutiny. Even then, "fictional" information is unlikely to be represented in memory in a fashion different from any other sort of information readers have worked at disbelieving. The account I am advocating, therefore, replaces a "willing suspension of disbelief" with a "willing construction of disbelief." The net difference is that we cannot possibly be surprised that information from fictional narratives has a real-world effect.[410]

In the actual world, fictional minds are real epistemologically: in our minds, fictional minds are as real as knowledge of the actual world because based on the same mental processes. As Margolin mentions, we can meaningfully speak of fictional beings and such statements are subject to the correspondence form of truth. These statements can be axiologically judged as true or false only concerning determined "facts" about particular characters. The mental simulation of characters is crucial here since "[w]hether characters are considered artifacts or non-actual individuals, we must first form mental images of them in order to be able to make claims about them."[411] Although I say that fictional minds exist in real minds, their mental images are anchored in their textual basis: "Texts are necessary for characters to exist and subsist; individual minds are needed to actualize them; and the end result is a relatively stable and enduring inter-subjective entity which can be the subject of legitimate public argument about its properties […]."[412] Margolin follows by pointing out that "while literary characters depend for their existence on both physical objects (texts) and individual states of mind, they are not reducible to or identifiable with either."[413]

The epistemological reality of fiction becomes pronounced in its revelatory nature of an insight into reality. This is the third form of truth, as Oatley expounds it, swaying the pendulum of truthfulness in favor of fiction over reality: fiction "can be involving; it can serve as a personal truth and give rise to insight."[414] It is only fitting that fictional minds are real also in giving rise to insight, a principal mental function. Josie Billington eloquently describes the dynamic of insight that is gained by reading: "Reading the book *outside*, happens at the same moment, so to speak, as it's reading the person *inside*."[415] Yet, while Oatley argues that fiction

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[410] Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 230. The resonance of this observation in the age of fake news and information overload is painfully obvious. Cf. McLuhan on this topic who also seems to counter Coleridge: "The business of the writer or the film-maker is to transfer the reader or viewer from one world, his *own*, to another, the world created by typography and film. That is so obvious, and happens so completely, that those undergoing the experience accept it subliminally and without critical awareness." McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 249.
[411] Margolin, "Character," 76.
[412] Margolin, "Character," 67.
[413] Margolin, "Character," 67.
[414] Oatley, "Why Fiction," 109.
[415] Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?*, 125. Phelan has recently analyzed the cognitive gain that literature provides *qua* literature. For his discriminating treatment of the subject see J. W. Phelan, *Literature and Understanding: The*

can be "twice as true as fact", there is a standard challenge to the reality of fictional characters – their incompleteness: fictional entities are necessarily incomplete, it is what distinguishes them from real phenomena.[416] The attendant epistemological difference between real people and fictional beings is that while one can always find out more about the former, this is impossible when it comes to the latter: one can theoretically learn more about Faulkner, but one cannot learn more about Quentin Compson beyond what Faulkner wrote about him.

In other words, gaps in knowledge are epistemological regarding people, but they are ontological regarding fictional characters. While I do not want to suggest any obliteration of these distinctions, it is worth pointing out with Palmer and Vermeule that they lose some of their weight and, therefore, value under normal circumstances. Palmer points out that in "our *experience* of others" these differences become tenuous: "We only ever know a fraction of what is going on around us. Obviously, the difference is that it is *theoretically* possible for us to find out simple facts, and so it is an epistemological not an ontological issue. But, in *practice*, what is the difference? Readers who access fictional worlds and people who live in the actual world both have to make inferences and construct hypotheses on the basis of limited information."[417]

Vermeule, pondering similar issue (the difference of engaging with people and literary characters), muses that "[f]rom an evolutionary point of view, our ability to continue interacting with people after they die is something of a mystery, but that habit has surely given us our gift for engaging with people who never cross into our physical space."[418] She concludes her thought by stating that "[t]he right analogy for fictional reasoning is not somebody who dips in and out of our presence. […] The right analogy is to somebody who we know is gone forever but with whom we still feel connected."[419] This leveling of reality and fiction is not self-serving; it has a crucial implication for the problem at hand: understanding fictional minds proceeds along the same lines as understanding real minds. Stockwell asserts that characters "share the same ascribed characteristics as people in our families, houses and workplaces", the difference in relating to them being a sense of texture:

> Our relationships with them all are different only to the extent that we are conscious of crossing boundaries of spatial or temporal displacement, hearsay recounting,

Value of a Close Reading of Literary Texts (New York: Routledge, 2021). I have been using observations about literature, narrative, and fiction indiscriminately – my only but fundamental excuse is that since the focus here is Faulkner's work which qualifies as all of the above, all the observations apply.

[416] See for example Lubomír Doležel, *Heterocosmica: fikce a možné světy* [*Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds*] (Praha: Karolinum, 2003), 35-36.

[417] Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 199-200.

[418] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 47.

[419] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 47.

speculation, or fictional edges. It is the crossing of world-boundaries itself that generates this sense of texture. In all cases, all we have to go on is our perceptual, often discursive, representations not only of these other people in the world(s), but all the objects and beliefs they seem to have about everything.[420]

To use Vermeule´s suggestive example: "Kobe Bryant is not a fictional character like Sherlock Holmes or Tess of the D'Urbervilles. Yet he is no more real to me as a reader of the gossip press than they are."[421] Although somewhat anecdotal, this illustration hits at what Stockwell keenly observes about contemporary lived reality of relating to others – the "fictionalization", so to speak, of real persons by means of media(liza)tion:

> There is no difference in the basic mechanics that we use to interact with other people in our world compared with fictional people. The face-to-face scenario, with instant gestural evaluations and interlocution, is the basis for all our cognitive capacities of forming relationships with people, whether they are physically right in front of us, or displaced by telephone, email, text, messaging, letter, television, newspaper report, court transcript, biography, obituary, literary fiction, or allegorical mythology, to give some examples in increasing radiality of displacement from the prototypical situation. But all these and other displacements draw on the same cognitive resources that we evolved as a species.[422]

The evident implication in this is that reading narrative fiction is like reading minds of others. As Mäkelä remarks, "[m]aking acquaintance with fictional characters may indeed bear more resemblance to a real-life cocktail party where everybody tries to figure out other people than to meticulous linguistic analysis where alleged thought-segments are classified as direct, indirect, and free indirect discourse."[423] Palmer criticizes the speech category approach to classifying the presentation of fictional thought pointing out its shortcomings[424] while summarizing the general problem with it as "the verbal bias [which] works against an

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[420] Stockwell, *Texture*, 132-133. As he says elsewhere, cognitive poetics sees "reality and fiction not as cognitively separate, but as phenomena that are processed fundamentally in the same way." Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics*, 152.
[421] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, xi.
[422] Stockwell, *Texture*, 131-132.
[423] Mäkelä, "Cycles of Narrative Necessity," 130.
[424] "1. *The privileging of the apparently mimetic and rather glamorous categories of free indirect thought and direct thought over the diegetic and seemingly uninteresting category of thought report.* […] 2. *The overestimation of the verbal component in thought.* […] 3. *The resulting neglect of the thought report of characters' states of mind.* […] 4. *The privileging of some novels over others, and some scenes in novels over others.* […] 5. *The tendency to give the impression that characters' minds really only consist of a private passive flow of consciousness.* (The final problem is perhaps the most important one.)" Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 57-59 (italics in the original).

understanding of the social and publicly accessible nature of thought."[425] On his part, Palmer maintains that narrative fiction and mindreading in the specific sense as theory of mind as discussed above are interconnected: "We are able to make attributions of states of mind to others because we have a theory of mind. Readers of novels have to use their theory of mind in order to try to follow the workings of characters´ minds by attributing states of minds to them. In particular, readers have to follow the attempts that characters make to read other characters´ minds. […] Novel reading is mind-reading."[426]

Blakey Vermeule highlights that mind reading is "the most important cognitive mechanism of human sociability, and literature obsessively reflects that mechanism" and continues to observe regrettably that "[t]his sentence, alas, is unlikely to shed much light. It is like saying that literary narratives obsessively reflect our capacity for *language*. […] The trouble with mind-reading problems in literature is that they are like God: everywhere and nowhere."[427] Vermeule also contextualizes mind reading observing that it is "an evolved cognitive process that is subject to change under different historical and economic conditions" and, therefore, it is "universal and elastic, and fictional narratives are turbo machines to trigger it – or at least that's what they become as the novel grows more complex and serious over the decades."[428] Taking an evolutionary perspective, Zunshine posits theory of mind and fiction in a causal relationship:

> Thus one preliminary implication of applying what we know about theory of mind to our study of fiction is that theory of mind makes literature as we know it possible. The very process of making sense of what we read appears to be grounded in our ability to invest the flimsy verbal constructions that we generously call "characters" with a potential for a variety of thoughts, feelings, and desires, and then to look for the "cues" that allow us to guess at their feelings and thus to predict their actions.[429]

For all the similarity between understanding people and characters, between processing real and fictional minds, when it comes to literary analysis, the material substrate of fictional minds, the literary text cannot be abandoned. Disregarding it would be to commit the above-mentioned crime of decontextualizing literature in the service of demonstrating the obvious:

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[425] Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 64.
[426] Palmer, "Social Minds," 208. As Palmer notes, the obverse result is that "[a]nyone who has a condition such as autism or Asperger's Syndrome, and who therefore suffers from what is called *mind blindness,* will find it difficult to understand a novel." Palmer, "Social Minds," 208.
[427] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 66.
[428] Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 57.
[429] Lisa Zunshine, "Theory of Mind and Experimental Representations of Fictional Consciousness," in *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 198. See also Vermeule, *Why Do We Care*, 57, 66.

that it is a cognitive artifact, a product of the mind for the mind. As discussed above, trailing the fictional mind consists in following and stringing together linguistic signs related by the common denominator of reference to specific mental phenomena. Fictional minds do not "reside beneath the surface of the characters´ verbal and nonverbal actions", they are "rather spread out as a distributional flow in what they do and say (as well as what they do not do and do not say), the material setting that constitutes part of their interaction, the method of narratorial mediation used to present the characters´ verbal and nonverbal activities, and readers´ own engagement with all of these representational structures."[430] As Mäkelä importantly points out, all this that constitutes the mind of a character has unavoidable linguistic/narrative/textual nature: "The cognitive trick lies in the fact that in literary representation, telling, experiencing, and the construction of the fictional world and its agents all happen on the same level—that of narrative discourse. We have no 3-D model of embedded consciousnesses, but only a syntactic-linear display from which the reader's mind has to infer the relevant levels of mediation."[431]

Thus, in a final approximation of fiction and reality, of characters and people, it is worth pointing out that not only is reading fiction like mind reading, but also, as Heyes describes, mind reading is like print reading:

> Like print reading, mindreading involves the derivation of meaning from signs. In print reading, the signs are usually marks on paper, and their meaning relates to objects and events in the world. In mindreading, the signs are facial expressions, body movements, and utterances – many of them conventional – and their meaning relates to the actors' mental states. […] In summary: mindreading is like print reading in having regulative as well as interpretive aspects; in being cognitively demanding and slow to develop; and in being characterized by neural specialization, developmental disorders, and cultural variation. Furthermore, evidence from natural experiments, observational studies, and traditional experiments indicates that, like print reading, mindreading is learned through scaffolding and explicit instruction. It is culturally inherited; a cognitive gadget. […] However, mindreading is comparable to print reading not only in terms of its weak dependence on genetically inherited mechanisms and strong dependence on teaching, but also in the shape and size of the cultural legacy. Like print reading, mindreading mechanisms represent representational relations – between mental states, behavior, and

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[430] David Herman, "Narrative Theory after the Second Cognitive Revolution," in *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 157.
[431] Mäkelä, "Cycles of Narrative Necessity," 138.

events in the world – and allow the mindreader to regulate and interpret a virtually limitless range of mental contents. Consequently, along with print reading, mindreading is a special cognitive ingredient of teaching – a practice with enormous potential to enhance the fidelity of cultural inheritance.[432]

Thus, reading minds has come full circle: reading minds of textually constructed characters is like reading minds of real people, which is like reading texts, the material scripts of fictional minds. Reading minds of people and reading minds of characters are both semiotic activities set in specific contexts determined culturally as well as by the immediate affordances of the mind reading situation. Such a situatedness and cultural determination is characteristic also of reading literary texts, even though nowadays the practice of solitary reading might suggest otherwise. As Stockwell points out, "[r]eading seems solitary but we are capable of it on the back of a long and intersubjective process of learning to read as a social practice. Solitary reading is thus threaded through already with social design."[433]

I have put stress on the interrelations of literature, mind, culture and literary studies throughout the chapter to try to dispel the idea that prefixing the discipline of literary studies with the adjective cognitive creates an oxymoron that negates the specifics of and, therefore, invalidates both elements participating in the merger. Turning now to Faulkner's work, it is important to bear Zunshine's lesson that "cognitive is cultural" in mind. Mind is not just brain and brain is not just material. Terence Cave prophesies that the future of cognitive literary studies "will be anthropological in essence"[434]. Cave finishes his treatment of the field with a twelve-point virtual manifesto for cognitive approaches to literary studies; I will finish with quoting a few of those points that guide my approach to reading Faulkner's minds:

> 2. an engagement with the ways in which 'folk' accounts of the cognitive domain (folk psychology, etc.) are reflected but also challenged or disrupted by literary enactments of human cognition; […]
>
> 4. an adherence to the principle that cognition (mind), body, language, and their products, including culture in general and literature in particular, are continuous aspects of 'nature', such that there can be no rupture between (for example) language and world that is not itself a second-degree product of the cultural imagination;
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> 5. a constant awareness of the relation between historico-cultural particulars and their longer-term infrastructures (both ways round); […]

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[432] Heyes, *Cognitive Gadgets*, 148, 167-168.
[433] Stockwell, *Texture*, 78-79.
[434] Cave, *Thinking*, 155.

7. a willingness to accept the anthropological focus in cognitive work on individual and collective agency, the viability (as well as the problems) of mutual communication and understanding, the role of language as a cognitive affordance; […]

9. a use of intuitively viable terminology derived from adjacent disciplines in order to make salient aspects of literary works that have either seemed 'self-evident' or been otherwise neglected […];

11. a commitment to preserving the special character of literature and literary study while being ready to move out into dialogue with other disciplines and with the public at large […].[435]

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[435] Cave, *Thinking*, 156-157.

3. Mind Reading in *As I Lay Dying*

> Who can say how much of the good poetry in the world has come out of madness, and who can say just how much of super-perceptivity the – a mad person might not have? It may not be so, but it's nice to think that there is some compensation for madness. That maybe the madman does see more than the sane man. That the world is more moving to him. That he is more perceptive. He has something of clairvoyance, maybe, a capacity for telepathy.
>
> William Faulkner[436]

To see is to know. That might be the lesson drawn from William Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying*. At least in light of the centrality of the character Darl for the novel and the answer Faulkner is giving above to a question about Darl from the audience of one of his many sessions at the University of Virginia taking place in 1957 and 1958. In that answer Faulkner is linking perception, especially sight with knowledge: he is explicitly framing the act of looking as a cognitive act. This link is crucial not only because of the particular context of the answer, but also because there is a connection between looking, seeing and knowing that is general, not specific to the "madman." At its most bland, but also perhaps at its most fundamental, this link is made habitually in the phrase "I see" which takes an act of perception, sight to stand for an act of understanding, insight.

I am going to focus on eyes and looks in the novel as a way of reconstituting the mind-body relationship, that of an embodied mind in a novel that has been traditionally seen as positing this relationship in terms of cartesian dualism: the body as belonging to the material world and the mind as belonging to the spiritual world. Criticizing this separation, Gilbert Ryle famously called Descartes' distinction between *res extensa* (extended, i.e. material things) and *res cogitans* (thinking things) "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine" using this term "with deliberate abusiveness."[437] This cartesian view of the mind-body relationship in *As I Lay Dying* is encapsulated in the reading of the novel by Eric J. Sundquist as a book which "is obsessively concerned with problems of disembodiment, with disjunctive relationships between character and narration or between bodily self and conscious identity."[438] While there is some basis for this view in the novel, there is also an opposing (re)presentation of the mind as fundamentally

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[436] Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph Blotner, eds., *Faulkner in the University* (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), 113.

[437] Gilbert Ryle, "Descartes' Myth," in *The Concept of Mind*, 60th Anniversary Edition (London: Routledge, 2009), 5.

[438] Eric J. Sundquist, *Faulkner: The House Divided* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 29.

embodied which is central to the whole novel. My claim is that in *As I Lay Dying*, there is not superiority or superimposition of voice or consciousness over body, as the novel prominently presents a unity of mind and body, an embodied mind. If anything, there is an uneasy alliance between the two views evident throughout the novel.

The link between the prominence of eyes and looks in the novel and the conception of mind as embodied can be captured best in terms of the so called "theory of mind." Alternatively called mind-reading or folk psychology, this cognitive concept puts forth an explanation of how one understands others' motivations, beliefs, desires etc. in an everyday and largely unconscious manner. The conceptualization of this cognitive disposition posits the mind as fundamentally embodied: it treats the body as a language through which the mind expresses itself. One theorist notes that theory of mind "could be dubbed Practice of Body without losing much of its functional content."[439] In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner makes the connection between eyes and looking, and communication and knowledge, thus, hitting on theory of mind, a fundamental cognitive ability of the human mind, and puts it center stage, both on the level of the story, as a "content" feature of the narrative, and the level of discourse, as a "formal" feature of the narrative.

In reading against the grain of the critical tradition by claiming that *As I Lay Dying* presents a view of the mind as embodied, I endorse Jay Watson's proposition that "[t]o place human bodies in the foreground of the critical enterprise – to make them, methodologically, bodies that matter – is a strategy with the potential to alter, sometimes radically, the way we read virtually any text, any literature."[440] In his book, Watson is thinking of the body in "[t]he writings of the twentieth-century U.S. South"[441] in terms of various ideologies in the service of forging both national and regional identity. While I am also interested in various cultural forces at play in relation to the body, especially the novel's contemporary media such as a graphophone or silent film as artifacts, media of modernization that potentially influence and bespeak Faulkner's conceptualization of the self, I am treating the body as explicitly mind-body, or embodied mind. In other words, at the centre of my focus lies the recuperation of the body for the novel's representation of the mind as an argument for Faulkner's insight into the

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[439] Mikko Keskinen, "Reading Phantom Minds: Marie Darrieussecq's *Naissance des fantomes* and Ghosts' Body Language," in *Theory of Mind and Literature*, ed. Paula Leverage et al. (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2010), 201.
[440] Jay Watson, *Reading for the Body: The Recalcitrant Materiality of Southern Fiction, 1893-1985* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 26.
[441] Watson 26.

working and nature of the mind as fundamentally embodied and extending beyond the boundaries not only of the brain but also of the skin.

3.1. "meeting one another's eye and making like they hadn't touched": Eyes, Looks, and Mind Reading

It is appropriate that in *As I Lay Dying* which focuses so much on identity, on the attempts to articulate it, to maintain it and on losing it, Faulkner gives centrality to the organ of sight. In other words, it is appropriate that in the figurative center of this narrative that revolves around a presence that is an absence – Addie as she lay dying – should stand the *eye*. The chosen sense in its homophony with *I*, the first person singular personal pronoun one usually uses to refer to one´s self, doesn't seem to be accidental as so much hinges on the connection between *eye* and *I* in this book. Eyes as windows to the soul are always eyes of another. Thus in establishing eye as an access point to an *I* that is not *me*, Faulkner foregrounds identity as inextricably intersubjective. As Darl's, Dewey Dell's and Vardaman's struggles to establish a viable identity for themselves abundantly show, self is always an *I* only in relation to *you*, *he*, *she* and ultimately *we* and *they*. This intersubjectivity as well as the struggle to separate an *I* from all the other *I*'s/*eyes* is inscribed in the very structure of the novel: nineteen characters/narrators speaking in fifty-nine sections clearly demarcated graphically in individual sections bearing names (the indivisible appendage of every I), yet all bound together by the plot and by the covers of the book. A book that is this novel of minds and bodies, or rather embodied minds on the move and in transit. As the bodies move through the space of Yoknapatawpha, the minds move towards what's in store for them: both literally, as various members of the Bundren family desire things that can be bought in town (graphophone, train, new teeth) where "we never get to the presumptive climax of an actual burial scene, but instead witness a frenzy of acquisition"[442], and figuratively, as they progress towards their futures (madhouse, pregnancy, new Mrs Bundren). At the same time, they (at least try to) move on.

Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* is about looking more than any other novel in the author's oeuvre. Characters look, gaze, watch, observe, see or avert their eyes. As far as visual perception goes, Faulkner almost exhausts the English vocabulary in his various descriptions of the eyes' activities. Visual perception is the most reported on event in the novel, sometimes almost teetering on the cartoonish in the saturation of the text with the eyes' activity. The following

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[442] Matthews, *Seeing through the South*, 153.

passage is a scene of Addie's death; I have highlighted all sections related to eyes and their activity:

Pa stands beside the bed. From behind his leg Vardaman *peers*, with his round head and *his eyes round* and his mouth beginning to open. She [Addie] *looks at* pa; all *her failing life appears to drain into her eyes, urgent, irremediable.* "It's Jewel she wants," Dewey Dell says. […] For a while yet she *looks at him*, *without reproach*, *without anything at all*, as if her *eyes* alone *are listening* to the irrevocable cessation of his voice. Then she raises herself, who has not moved in ten days. […] She *is looking out* the window, at Cash […] He *looks up at* the gaunt face framed by the window in the twilight. It is a composite picture of all time since he was a child. He drops the saw and lifts the board *for her to see*, *watching* the window in which the face has not moved. He drags a second plank into position and slants the two of them into their final juxtaposition, gesturing toward the ones yet on the ground, shaping with his empty hand in pantomime the finished box. For a while still she *looks down at* him from the composite picture, neither with censure nor approbation. Then the face disappears.

She lies back and turns her head *without so much as glancing at* pa. She *looks at* Vardaman; her *eyes, the life in them, rushing suddenly upon them*; *the two flames glare up for a steady instant. Then they go out* as though someone had leaned down and blown upon them. […] From behind pa's leg Vardaman *peers* […] He begins to move slowly backward from the bed, *his eyes round*, his pale face fading into the dusk like a piece of paper pasted on a failing wall, and so out of the door. […] Cash *looks down at* her face. […] He *is looking down at* her peaceful, rigid face fading into the dusk as though darkness were a precursor of the ultimate earth, until at last the face seems to float detached upon it, lightly as the reflection of a dead leaf. […] After a while he turns *without looking at* pa and leaves the room.[443]

The whole scene constitutes a complex interplay of looks; not to mention that whenever face is mentioned and/or described, eyes appear metonymically. Like Cash's gesturing towards the coffin in progress, the exchanges of looks in the novel sometimes reach an expressivity and intricacy of a veritable pantomime (see the section 3.2. for more). What the extensive quote also demonstrates is that eyes and looks are not treated as neutral organs and acts of perception. On the contrary, looks acquire various meanings and expressive connotations: Addie's look is largely synonymous with the life she has still left since her body is practically immobile except

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[443] William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, ed. Michael Gorra (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 28-29. All references are made to this edition and are hereafter quoted parenthetically within the text.

for her last stance, "[o]nly her eyes seem to move" (26). Anse "is gazing out beyond the crest of the bluff, out across the land" (11) meditatively while Vardaman is "looking at pa" (11) as if searching for an answer. Throughout the novel, Jewel returns dead stares with his eyes "pale as two bleached chips in his face" (84) while Dewey Dell returns deadly stares with Samson observing "[i]f her eyes had a been pistols, I wouldn't be talking now. I be dog if they didn't blaze at me" (65).[444] For Cora, looking might reveal the divine: "It was the sweetest thing I ever saw. Sometimes I lose faith in human nature for a time; I am assailed by doubt. But always the Lord restores my faith and reveals to me His bounteous love for His creatures" (15).

Whatever the style in which looks are cast, the predominant function of eyes and looking is communication. The intensity and frequency of looks observable during the scene of Addie's death shows that in the pantomime of eyes, looks supplant dialogue. Cora notes that looks can substitute words when reporting Darl's visit to his mother: "He said nothing, just looking at her. […] He just stood and looked at his dying mother, his heart too full for words" (16). Darl can often do without speaking since he is endowed with clairvoyance – an exchange of looks with Darl amounts to a verbal exchange:

> It was then, and then I saw Darl and he knew. He said he knew without the words like he told me that ma is going to die without words, and I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with the words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us. But he said he did know and I said "Are you going to tell pa are you going to kill him?" without the words I said it and he said "Why?" without the words. And that's why I can talk to him with knowing with hating because he knows. (17)

Knowing others' minds by observing their bodies is how theory of mind works. This common way of mind-reading designates an "ability to explain people's behavior in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires."[445] In the words of the psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen, we entertain theory of mind "all the time, effortlessly, automatically, and mostly unconsciously. That is, we are often not even aware we are doing it."[446] Considering the unconscious nature of mind-reading points to the fact that the "theory" in "theory of mind" does not really refer to any complex set of ideas that one must believe in and keep them on one's mind all the time in order to attribute mental states to others. Sometimes, the term "folk psychology" is thus preferred to get rid of the theory and to point to the everydayness of the

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[444] Significantly, when MacGowan observes Dewey Dell's deadliness, he connects it to her eyes and appearance: "She looked pretty good. One of them black eyed ones that look like she'd as soon put a knife in you as not if you two-timed her. She looked pretty good" (139).
[445] Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 6.
[446] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 3.

mind-reading activity.[447] In this context, Lisa Zunshine speaks of the effortlessness of mind-reading "in the sense that we 'intuitively' connect people's behavior to their mental states."[448]

From an evolutionary perspective, mind-reading has become the default way of interpreting people's behavior: "In the heat of a social situation, it pays to be able to come up with a sensible interpretation of the causes of actions quickly if one is to survive to socialize for another day. Non-mentalistic explanations are just not up to the job of making sense of and predicting behavior rapidly."[449] Our cognitive ability to understand others in mentalistic terms has been evolutionarily primed. Baron-Cohen explains "why mind-reading is a wonderful thing for us to have: Attributing mental states to a complex system (such as a human being) is by far the easiest way of understanding it."[450] Thus, theory of mind is a social compass that bears directly on communication in several aspects: in hypothesizing about the speaker's mental states, in judging the relevance of information to be communicated (i.e. judging whether the audience already possesses the information necessary to understand the message or not), and in attending to whether the meaning of the message has been understood as intended, dialogue "becomes much more than the production of speech: it is revealed as intrinsically linked to the use of mind-reading skills."[451]

As an interpretation of behavior in mentalistic terms, mind-reading is the attribution of the mind to the body. Consequently, posture, gestures, facial expressions and dynamics of movement of the body in general are the clues to be interpreted as indicative of mental states. Yet, it is the eyes that are central for mind-reading. As Baron-Cohen says in the preface to his seminal work on theory of mind, the work "speaks of agents, beliefs, and desires and links them to a language of the eyes. This language is generated by still other mechanisms that detect eye direction and feed the data into a variety of social inference modules."[452] In Baron-Cohen's account, eyes are central to theory of mind: starting at the root with a perceptual mechanism "that interprets motion stimuli in terms of the primitive volitional mental states of goal and

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[447] For example, Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 25. For a radical refusal of the term "theory of mind" as well as a challenge to the concept as a whole see Daniel D. Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives: The Sociocultural Basis of Understanding Reasons* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008). I cannot sufficiently address Hutto's challenge here; however, I will make two points about why his challenge to the concept does not invalidate my approach. Firstly, while Hutto argues that for most of the time we do not need to invoke folk psychology since we rely on people's behavior conforming to familiar scripts and the narratives of these people available to us, he does not reject mind-reading completely, but assigns it a supplementary role. Secondly, my "evidence" is the text at hand, William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, and since it invokes mind-reading and the centrality of eyes and looking, it calls for my chosen account.

[448] Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 16

[449] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 4.

[450] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 21.

[451] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 27-29.

[452] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, xiv.

desire"[453] through a mechanism that "interprets stimuli in terms of what an agent sees"[454] through a mechanism that builds "triadic representations [which] specify the relations among an Agent, the Self, and a (third) Object"[455] all the way to the Theory of Mind Mechanism "for inferring the full range of mental states from behavior,"[456] eyes play the central role.

Thus, going back to the quoted scene of Addie on her deathbed, Addie watching Cash make her coffin and his pantomime of the process of crafting finds all the above mentioned mechanisms at play: in order to understand, Addie has to interpret Cash's gestures and movements in mental terms as a communication of the creative procedure and not as a random dance routine involving boards lacking any meaning; Cash must recognize and in turn make sure that he and Addie are attending to the same object with their eyes in this prime triadic structure. Moreover, eyes are able to betray a lot just on their own. Baron-Cohen et al. have tested subjects' ability to understand mental state terms and match them to photographs of eyes and the area around them and have found that "normal adults could judge mental states from even minimal cues (expressions around the eyes alone)" thus establishing "the ability to 'read the mind in the eyes'."[457] Cash's pantomime is communicated successfully since Cora who watches Addie but not Cash reports on Addie watching him out of the window that "[i]f we were deaf we could almost watch her face and hear him, see him" (6). Thus, in this observation, she demonstrates her own ability to "read the mind in the eyes."

Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* is most prominently about mind-reading. This has not been lost on some critics who have formulated the prominence of theory of mind in the novel on their own terms. In his study of the novel, André Bleikasten all but says the name of the game (which, of course, was not available to him at that time): "Actions, gestures, attitudes, all the movements of the body thus constitute a most revealing pantomime [while] the language of the eyes obviously engages Faulkner's interest more than any other. It is in their look that the characters' secret lives are concentrated, their hopes and anxieties disclosed, and it is primarily through their eyes that they communicate with one another."[458] In formulating this observation, Bleikasten paraphrases the old adage, found in *As I Lay Dying* and whose latest permutation

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[453] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 32.

[454] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 39.

[455] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 44.

[456] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 51.

[457] Simon Baron-Cohen et al., "The 'Reading the Mind in the Eyes' Test Revisited Version: A Study with Normal Adults, and Adults with Asperger Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 42, no. 2 (February 2001): 242. See also Simon Baron-Cohen et al., "Another Advanced Test of Theory of Mind: Evidence from Very High Functioning Adults with Autism or Asperger Syndrome," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 38, no. 7 (October 1997): 813-822.

[458] André Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, Revised and Enlarged Edition, trans. Roger Little with the collaboration of the author (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 70.

theory of mind is, that eyes are the windows to the soul: folk psychology indeed. Yet, the attention paid to eyes and looking and its specificity of detail in *As I Lay Dying* allows drawing parallels to the specifics of the mind-reading process.

Descriptions of the characters' mental states by various narrators proceed according to the model suggested by Baron-Cohen almost step by step: the eyes or the face are described, the direction of the look, and the object being looked at after which the particular narrator proceeds to the ascription of mental states. This descriptive procedure does not always feature all of the above, but always infers mental states from at least one of the spectating features. The following is Tull's description of the Bundrens, the "witch's brew of a family,"[459] before they cross the river:

> Anse was setting there, looking at the bridge where it was swagged down into the river with just the two ends in sight. He was looking at it like he had believed all the time that folks had been lying to him about it being gone, but like he was hoping all the time it really was. Kind of pleased astonishment he looked, setting on the wagon in his Sunday pants, mumbling his mouth. Looking like a uncurried horse dressed up: I don't know.
>
> The boy was watching the bridge where it was mid-sunk and logs and such drifted up over it and it swagging and shivering like the whole thing would go any minute, big-eyed he was watching it, like he was to a circus. And the gal too. When I come up she looked around at me, her eyes kind of blaring up and going hard like I had made to touch her. Then she looked at Anse again and then back at the water again. […] Darl was looking at me, and then Cash turned and looked at me with that look in his eyes like when he was figuring on whether the planks would fit her that night, like he was measuring them inside of him and not asking you to say what you thought and not even letting on he was listening if you did say it, but listening all right. Jewel hadn't moved. He sat there on the horse, leaning a little forward, with that same look on his face when him and Darl passed the house yesterday, coming back to get her. (71)

Significantly, Darl's look passes without a remark – Darl is not ascribed any mental state (see below). It might seem that the same goes for Jewel; however, Tull refers to Jewel's mental state as that of the day before, thus implicitly ascribing it in explicitly referring to its permanence. Just like Tull, Moseley sees Dewey Dell outside his drugstore and describes her "just standing there with her head turned this way and her eyes full on me and kind of blank too, like she was waiting for a sign" (115). After Anse takes Jewel's horse and takes off on it,

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[459] "Unsigned review, *New York Times Book Review*," in *William Faulkner*, ed. John Bassett (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1975), 93.

Armstid remarks that Jewel "hung around in that swole-up way, watching the road like he was half a mind to take out after Anse and get the horse back" (108). Besides exemplifying the operation of the mechanisms of theory of mind, *As I Lay Dying* provides a corrective to the scientific model of "reading the mind in the eyes" of Baron-Cohen et al. Unlike the experiment, mind-reading in Faulkner's novel does not operate in a vacuum but makes use of relevant context[460]: either a more general one, like Moseley drawing on his experience with girls and young ladies hesitant before (entering) his drugstore, or an immediate one, like Armstid drawing in his mental attribution on the events shortly preceding his description.

The only character who consistently does not indulge in mind-reading is Vardaman. For some time, it has been taken for granted that the development of mind-reading skill occurs at around the age of four. As determined by the so called "false belief test" in which the child is tested on its ability to differentiate between what it believes and what others believe, and between what it believes now as opposed to what it believed in the past, "psychologists have discovered that the soul enters the body not at conception or at birth, but at age four."[461] As the false belief test and the resultant findings have been recently challenged, the need to assess the mind-reading abilities at various ages has become clear: it is not as if at a certain age, suddenly, a person becomes equipped with the ability to assign complex, sometimes contradictory mental states to others.[462] Thus, Vardaman's lack of exercising theory of mind would point to Faulkner recognizing that as an eight-year-old, Vardaman has not yet reached the potential of the other characters' capacities.

Another, more interesting possibility is the suggestion that Vardaman suffers from a certain form of autism, maybe intensified by the trauma of his mother's death. Simon Baron-Cohen sees the inability or only limited and problematic ability to mind-read as the defining feature of autism.[463] Vardaman not only does not mind-read, but he also rarely even reports on others' eyes and looks and if he does, they are treated as neutral organs and acts of perception. As he "avoids" others' eyes in this way, avoiding thus the fundamentally communicative and social theory of mind, Vardaman evinces the confusion and thus attendant fear of the social

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[460] Ian A. Apperly points out the individual and social differences in motivation for exercising one's mind-reading abilities as a variable of theory of mind. See Ian A. Apperly, "What is 'theory of mind'? Concepts, Cognitive Processes and Individual Differences," *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 65, no. 5 (2012): 825-839.

[461] Keith Oatley, "Theory of Mind and Theory of Minds in Literature," in *Theory of Mind and Literature,* ed. Paula Leverage et al. (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2010), 13.

[462] On the problems of the false belief test see, for example, Apperly, "What is 'theory of mind'?", 830 or Matthew K. Belmonte, "Does the Experimental Scientist," 198.

[463] See Baron-Cohen *Mindblindness*.

world that an autistic person feels.[464] "Chanting" "my mother is a fish" (49), thus assigning identity based on analogy underwritten by the proximity in time and space,[465] Vardaman can be seen as falling into the category of "most children with autism [who] really are unaware of the appearance-reality distinction, as well as being blind to their own past thoughts and to other people's possibly different thoughts, their world must be largely dominated by current perceptions and sensations."[466] Bleikasten observes that "Vardaman constantly feels the need to count (for example, the buzzards), to enumerate, to break any whole down to its constituent parts,"[467] thus evincing something of the (stereo)typical behavior of an autistic person. In this reading, the novel would not only contain an autistic child next to a schizophrenic young man, but it would also represent theory of mind on a spectrum stretching from a lack of mind-reading skills through their everyday use to the supernatural form of clairvoyance and telepathy.

Darl, standing on the other side of this spectrum than Vardaman,[468] is the character connected to the language of the eyes the most. In the words of Cleanth Brooks, "Darl is pure perception."[469] Darl obviously stands out: he is a mindreader in two senses. Darl vigorously employs theory of mind as an acute observer of others and is literally able to read minds as Faulkner endows his character with clairvoyance: "Half *voyeur*, half *voyant*, Darl is nothing but his look, and this look probes peoples' hearts as easily as it covers distances."[470] Faulkner the caricaturist blows up mind-reading out of proportion into the parapsychological telepathy of Darl giving his character non-anthropomorphic features to shed light on the human mind in the name of modernist experiment; Darl's ability is an artistic overstatement, a hyperbole.

Darl's supernatural ability can be seen, as already suggested, as an extreme end of a cline: his clairvoyance is based on the cognitive mechanisms of everyday mind-reading, on the same mechanisms all the other characters in the novel utilize. Most often, though, Darl deals in extremes. On the one hand, he reports only the physical without any mental ascriptions: Cash's "eyes are closed, his face is gray, his hair plastered in a smooth smear across his forehead as though done with a paint brush" (90). On the other hand, being the poet figure, Darl makes

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[464] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 82.
[465] Cf. Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 96.
[466] Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 82.
[467] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 98.
[468] Though on the other side of the spectrum, Darl is closer to Vardaman than any other character – their bond is possibly based on their extraordinary sensibilities. See Frederik N. Smith, "Telepathic Diction: Verbal Repetition in *As I Lay Dying*," *Style* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 73, or Olga W. Vickery, "The Dimensions of Consciousness: *As I Lay Dying*," in *The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 59.
[469] Cleanth Brooks, "Odyssey of the Bundrens," in *As I Lay Dying*, ed. Michael Gorra (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 250-251.
[470] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 71.

faces canvases on which he paints with words. Describing Anse when helping Cash with finishing the coffin, Darl indulges in "the pyrotechnics of [his] rhetoric"[471]:

> Pa lifts his face, slack-mouthed, the wet black rim of snuff plastered close along the base of his gums; from behind his slack-faced astonishment he muses as though from beyond time, upon the ultimate outrage. […] again he looks up at the sky with that expression of dumb and brooding outrage and yet of vindication, as though he had expected no less […] Pa looks at him, his face streaming slowly. It is as though upon a face carved by a savage caricaturist a monstrous burlesque of all bereavement flowed. (44-45)

The furthest extreme is Darl's clairvoyance and telepathic communication with other characters. Darl finds out, knows Addie's and Dewey Dell's secrets, again, by looking. Remembering about how he found out about Jewel's true father, i.e. about Addie's extramarital affair, Darl notes,

> that may have been when I first found it out, that Addie Bundren should be hiding anything she did, who had tried to teach us that deceit was such that, in a world where it was, nothing else could be very bad or very important, not even poverty. And at times when I went in to go to bed she would be sitting in the dark by Jewel where he was asleep. And I knew that she was hating herself for that deceit and hating Jewel because she had to love him so that she had to act the deceit. (75)

Sitting in the privacy of the dark that shrouds her, by the bed of her favorite child, and lost in thought in the love hate ambiguity of her motherhood, Addie constitutes an example of what Lisa Zunshine terms "moments of embodied transparency" which put "protagonists in situations in which their bodies spontaneously reveal their true feelings, sometimes against their wills."[472] The connection between observing the body and "divining" a secret is made explicit also in the case of Dewey Dell's pregnancy. Just before reporting how Darl tells her that he knows "without words" (17), she describes him sitting "at the supper table with his eyes gone further than the food and the lamp, full of the land dug out of his skull and the holes filled with distance beyond the land" (17). Land is later in the novel connected with female sexuality by Dewey Dell: "The land runs out of Darl's eyes; they swim to pin points. They begin at my feet and rise along my body to my face, and then my dress is gone: I sit naked on the seat above the unhurrying mules, above the travail" (69). Land is associated more specifically with breasts in connection to pregnancy, to fertility when Darl observes that, "[s]quatting, Dewey Dell's wet dress shapes for the dead eyes of three blind men those mammalian ludicrosities which are the

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[471] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 21.
[472] Zunshine, "Theory of Mind and Fictions," 72.

horizons and the valleys of the earth" (94).[473] The three blind men are Anse, Cash and Jewel who do not see Dewey Dell's pregnancy. Although just two months into the pregnancy, as one knows from Dewey Dell's attempts to obtain an abortifacient, Darl might be simply perceptive to the changes the female body undergoes during this process.

While his clairvoyance might be at least partly naturalized in the mechanics of mind-reading, the telepathic communication defies psychologizing: Faulkner carves out a zone of fictionality that resists a mimetic reduction and by offsetting the other means of communicating the mental, he brings the operations of the human mind sharply into focus. This is mainly so as the other characters in the novel figure Darl's look in the same way they figure the "normal" looks of the other characters. Above, I have pointed out that it is significant that Tull passes Darl's look without a comment when he mind-reads the Bundrens. Several characters in the novel describe the strangeness of Darl's eyes and his look, but Tull himself may put it best: "He is looking at me. He dont say nothing; just looks at me with them queer eyes of hisn that makes folks talk. I always say it aint never been what he done so much or said or anything so much as how he looks at you. It's like he had got into the inside of you, someway. Like somehow you was looking at yourself and your doings outen his eyes" (82).

Tull cannot ascribe any mental states to Darl, because looking at him he does not find Darl, but himself. Darl functions as a mirror: upon looking at him, he returns a (self)reflective sight – the characters' eyes, and, therefore, minds encompassed by Darl's. Looking at Darl, Dewey Dell finds the fact of her pregnancy she is trying to conceal and Jewel the secret of his conception. Ultimately, looking at Darl, characters find what he sees, and what he sees is in the description of his eyes as "queer" figured as what he knows: there is one more pair of "queer" eyes in the novel which is queered precisely by knowledge and reflection. Darl reminisces how Jewel used to sneak out of his bed at nights and disappear while nobody knew where and why until Cash followed him one night and found out, and Darl found out that Cash knew: "And when I saw him I knew that he knew what it was. Now and then I would catch him watching Jewel with a queer look, like having found out where Jewel went and what he was doing had given him something to really think about at last" (76-77). Thus Darl embodies the central trope of *As I Lay Dying* and of theory of mind: to see is to know, to look is to communicate. His queer eyes "makes folks talk" both in folks talking about the eyes and in the eyes talking of the folks, that is, disclosing their secrets in view of Darl's mind-reading.

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[473] Matthews points out the power dynamics implied in this association, noting that the novel "illuminates the alignment of Western colonialisms: domestic, of the female body; regional, of the rural South; global, of the world-producing classes." Matthews, *Seeing through the South*, 152.

Besides being queer, Darl's look and his communicating eyes are also cast in terms of traversing distances and penetrating solid boundaries: "Cash's face is also gravely composed; he and I look at one another with long probing looks, looks that plunge unimpeded through one another's eyes and into the ultimate secret place where for an instant Cash and Darl crouch flagrant and unabashed in all the old terror and the old foreboding, alert and secret and without shame" (82). Throughout the novel, communication with eyes is figured similarly: for example, when people attend Whitfield's sermon, Tull notes "we move, shifting to the other leg, meeting one another's eye and making like they hadn't touched" (53). Looks are not only embarrassingly tactile, they can reach an intensity of unnerving intrusion – this is how Cora describes Addie's eyes in her last moments: "It's like they touch us, not with sight or sense, but like the stream from a hose touches you, the stream at the instant of impact as dissociated from the nozzle as though it had never been there. […] Her eyes look like lamps blaring up just before the oil is gone. […] She watches me: I can feel her eyes. It's like she was shoving at me with them" (26-27). Look as communication is figured in the novel in terms of other senses (touch, hearing), in terms of elements (water, fire/light): in other words, look is figured as something palpable, something with materiality of its own.

Pulling against the penetrative and revelatory ability of looks in *As I Lay Dying* are the eyes that resist easy, or at least single interpretation. At one point, Darl observes how Jewel's "swift alert calm gaze sweeps upon us and on" (85), a look that can be described in its complexity only as a contradiction of "swift alert" and "calm." Similarly, Dewey Dell observes how "Cash's head turns slowly as we approach, his pale empty sad composed and questioning face following the red and empty curve" (69). After Addie dies, Anse keeps "gazing out beyond the crest of the bluff, out across the land" (11). Is his look meditative showing him lost in grief over the death of his wife? Is he "insensitively," at the moment of his wife's death, looking out for his land? It can be both and as John T. Matthews observes, Anse "is thinking about a real problem: the conflict between emotional and economic obligations. The summer of 1929 saw ruinous floods destroy cotton crops, whose value had fallen steadily throughout the decade."[474] There is a third possibility that edges its way into Anse's eyes. As he keeps looking, his eyes "full of land," he might be thinking of the "duck-shaped woman" (149), the new Mrs Bundren. As pointed out above, the connection between land and female sexuality and fertility, stressing the curves of the female body, is established in the novel in Darl's look.

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[474] John T. Matthews, "*As I Lay Dying* in the Machine Age," *boundary 2* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 92.

Therefore, even though looks are probing, they are not a guarantee of finding out the truth; especially, if they are sometimes so complex, even contradictory as the ones above. When Cora sees Darl come to look at Addie and sees him standing at the door, not coming in and looking at Addie, she asserts that she "saw that with Jewel she had just been pretending, but that it was between her and Darl that the understanding and the true love was" (15). Addie's monologue clearly disproves any such affection for Darl: Addie's favorite child is Jewel, although her love for him is not requited, at least not in an equal measure. As far as Darl is concerned, whatever "understanding and the true love" he might have for Addie, it goes unacknowledged. Similarly with Armstid; when he sees Jewel taking off on his horse, after Anse has informed him of the deal he made with Snopes (swapping Jewel's horse for a new team), Armstid proclaims "that would be the last they would see of him. And I be durn if I could blame him" (111). When he later finds out that he was wrong and that Jewel delivered his horse to Snopes, Armstid proclaims that Jewel got "shut of such a durn fool as Anse" (111) and is certain again, and wrong again, that "that'll be the last they'll ever see of him now, sho enough. Come Christmas time they'll maybe get a postal card from him in Texas, I reckon" (112). Finally, when the Bundrens are staying overnight at his place, Samson experiences the failure to mind-read correctly cast largely in the comedic mode as the unfathomable twists and turns of the female mind in opposition to, it is implied, the straight thinking of men: "A man cant tell nothing about them. I lived with the same one fifteen years […] You cant tell about them. Just about when you decide they mean one thing, I be durn if you not only haven't got to change your mind, like as not you got to take a rawhiding for thinking they meant it" (67).

3.2. Performing and Mediating the Mind

The semantic multivalence of eyes and language of the body resisting an easy interpretation is part and parcel of theory of mind. Zunshine points out this paradox: "We perceive people's observable behavior as both a highly informative and at the same time quite unreliable source of information about their minds. This double perspective is fundamental and inescapable, and it informs all of our social life and cultural representations."[475] Continuing on the topic of this paradox, Zunshine extracts a crucial implication for our everyday behavior:

> Because we are drawn to each other's bodies in our quest to figure out each other's thoughts and intentions, we end up *performing* our bodies (not always consciously or successfully) to shape other people's perceptions of our mental states. A particular body

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[475] Zunshine, "Theory of Mind and Fictions," 69.

thus can be viewed only as a time-and-place-specific cultural construction, that is, as an attempt to influence others into perceiving it in a certain way. […] Indeed, work on Theory of Mind indicates that our everyday mind-reading turns each of us into a performer and a spectator, whether we are aware of it or not.[476]

Most often, the performance of the body in *As I Lay Dying* takes on the form of characters trying to hide their minds through the manipulation of their eyes: "Someone comes through the hall. It is Darl. He does not look in as he passes the door. Eula watches him as he goes on and passes from sight again toward the back. Her hand rises and touches her beads lightly, and then her hair. When she finds me watching her, her eyes go blank" (7). Here Eula realizing that Cora is watching her observe Darl and revealing her mind through a moment of embodied transparency, suddenly starts performing – even if the performance is "blank" it is still a pretense, a front she puts up in order to conceal her mind. Characters in *As I Lay Dying* are aware of the potential for the body, and especially eyes to reveal their mind. Thus, Jewel is possibly the character hardest to mind-read as he, from the first moment he is introduced by Darl, walks and rides throughout the whole narrative not looking at characters, passing without a glance, "[s]till staring straight ahead" (3). The only exception to his "wooden" composure are intense moments of embodied transparency when he turns and "his pale eyes like wood set into his wooden face" (3) become a palette of fury: "In his face the blood goes in waves. In between them his flesh is greenish looking, about that smooth, thick, pale green of cows cud; his face suffocated, furious, his lip lifted upon his teeth. […] Jewel's face goes completely green and I can hear teeth in his breath. […] his face suffused with fury and despair" (57).

In his vigilant avoidance of eye contact, Jewel seems to be aware of the more disturbing aspect of the intense mind-reading going on in the novel. If everyone is watching everyone, then the obverse is that everyone is being watched by everyone, all the time. In this novel concerned with looks as appearances and as acts trying to uncover the truth behind those appearances, characters live, and die in the state of constant surveillance[477]: a point flagrantly made in the showcase of Addie's corpse. This surveillance receives another dimension through Cora: "I have tried to live right in the sight of God and man, for the honor and comfort of my Christian husband and the love and respect of my Christian children" (15). Omniscient and omnipresent, God is the ultimate observer. In view of Cora's observance of the Christian way of life, her antipathy towards Addie's sin can be read as the antipathy of someone who has spent her whole life performing her body in the public and private eyes and is jealous of Addie as

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[476] Zunshine "Theory of Mind and Fictions," 69-70.
[477] Cf. Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 72.

someone who, at least to a certain degree ("I merely took precautions that he thought necessary for his sake, not for my safety, but just as I wore clothes in the worlds face" [101]) has freed herself from putting up such a front and allowed herself, her body to stop performing in a prominent way – through sexual activity. Addie, conversely, recognizes in Cora's Christian life the performance that it is, by observing that words have no basis in reality (at least what Addie sees to be reality):

> And so when Cora Tull would tell me I was not a true mother, I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other; and that sin and love and fear are just sounds that people who never sinned nor loved nor feared have for what they never had and cannot have until they forget the words. (100)

Seeing herself under constant surveillance by God, Cora is the book's most consistent performer; although, considering the nature of belief, who is to say where her performance ends and reality begins. Precisely because of her constancy, she is not the novel's most conspicuous performer. That title has to be reserved for Anse. Surveillance bears a different inflection with Anse: he is an actor. After Addie dies, Anse looks over the land not making much eye contact with other characters and he "looks like right after the maul hits the steer and it no longer alive and dont yet know that it is dead" (36). Anse is awoken from this dazed confusion by the arrival of an audience – people coming to say goodbye to Addie: "He looks folks in the eye now, dignified, his face tragic and composed, shaking us by the hand as we walk up onto the porch and scrape our shoes, a little stiff in our Sunday clothes, our Sunday clothes rustling, not looking full at him as he meets us" (50). The situation actually reverses in Tull's description as people now avoid eye contact with the widower who performs his new role perfectly – "dignified, his face tragic and composed."

Anse's most frequent act is that of a man unfairly treated by the whole world, by fate. This is revealed as a performance especially when Anse returns from Snopes, elated from striking a deal: "He looked kind of funny: kind of more hang-dog than common, and kind of proud too. Like he had done something he thought was cute but wasn't so sho now how other folks would take it" (109). When Armstid reminds Anse of the journey ahead of the Bundrens by suggesting that they want an early start the day after,

> he quit looking like he had been for a while. He got that badgered look like he used to have, mumbling his mouth.

> "I do the best I can," he said. "Fore God, if there were ere a man in the living world suffered the trial and floutings I have suffered." (110)

When it comes to admitting all the things that Anse promised to buy the team, he intensifies his performance as his audience grows as well: "They were all watching him now, quiet and steady. […] He begun to mumble his mouth again, standing there like he was waiting for somebody to hit him and him with his mind already made up not to do nothing about it" (110).

The whole scene again constitutes a pantomime of looks. Knowing that Anse has just returned from Snopes on Jewel's horse where he made a deal to buy a new team, the reader can figure out that Anse sold Jewel's horse based just on the behavior of the characters with all dialogue excised:

> Anse stood there, mumbling his mouth. Jewel watched him. He aint never blinked yet. […] Anse looked at Jewel, quick, kind of sliding his eyes that way, then he looked down again. […] Still they didn't say nothing. They just watched him, waiting, and him sliding his eyes toward their feet and up their legs but no higher. […] Anse stands there, dangle-armed. […] Jewel stands with his hands on his hips, looking at Anse. Then he looks away. He looked out across the field, his face still as a rock, like it was somebody else talking about somebody else's horse and him not even listening. Then he spit, slow, and said "Hell" and he turned and went on to the gate and unhitched the horse and got on it. It was moving when he come into the saddle and by the time he was on it they was tearing down the road like the Law might have been behind them. They went out of sight that way, the two of them looking like some kind of a spotted cyclone. (110-111)

Given passages like this one, a possible source of Faulkner's conception of human mind as embodied reveals itself: *As I Lay Dying* is a silent film of a novel. With its close attention to the language of the body (postures, gestures, facial expressions), especially to looks (both appearance and acts of observation) that one can visualize as close-ups of faces, with the sometimes sparse dialogue almost as rare as title cards in silent films (the single "Hell" I left in the passage quoted above), and, above all, with the assignment of meaning and significance to all these leaving the reader with not much else to go on than the characters' bodies, the novel's representation of the mind as embodied is informed by silent film aesthetics. At the time when the novel was written, 1929, the first "talkie," *The Jazz Singer*, had appeared only two years before. Faulkner thus wrote the novel at a time of rapid change in the medium when the introduction of synchronized sound was about to dominate the scene: as film historians Kristin

Thompson and David Bordwell note, "by mid-1932, the conversion to sound was virtually complete in the United States."[478]

The early film theorist Béla Balázs, while clearly biased in favor of film over literature in some of his observations, saw the arrival of film as a cultural shift and correctly predicted the gaining dominance of the image during the twentieth century from cinema, through TV, to the computer. Speaking about the changes brought about by the printing press, he notes that in its introduction "the *visual spirit* was transformed into a legible spirit, and a *visual culture* was changed into a conceptual one. […] Now another device is at work, giving culture a new turn towards the visual and the human being a new face. It is the cinematograph, a technology for the multiplication and dissemination of the products of the human mind, just like the printing press, and its impact on human culture will not be less momentous."[479] Balázs saw film as a medium of radical embodiment of the mind as opposed to literature which in his view presented mind (or spirit in his words) as radically disembodied. While my contention is that the opposition is not as radical and that in works such as *As I Lay Dying* this disembodying tendency is countered by presenting the mind as embodied even in the narrative techniques, it is true that the visual aspect of film approximates[480] the human body better than linguistic signs. In its absorption of silent film aesthetics, *As I Lay Dying* is halfway in a transformation into a silent film script: a novel with only a sparse dialogue attending above all to the movement of its characters' bodies.

My claim is not necessarily that Faulkner knowingly and intentionally employed the presentation of the mind in the body, and especially in the face as a method, type or a formula of the popular art of his period that the silent film was. It is rather a claim about a pertinently visual presentation of the theory of mind as an embodied practice of mindreading which fed into Faulkner's style as an available technique. Even if only at a subconscious level, its significance remains undiminished as it points to the cultural circulation of forms, means of representation, and ways to conceptualize the world. What is at play is also the process by which

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[478] "Once the Hollywood studios decided what [sound] systems to adopt, they quickly began installing equipment in theaters. Independent theaters often used one of the cheaper sound systems. Many smaller theaters could not afford to buy any sound equipment at all, especially since the spread of sound coincided with the onset of the Depression. As a result, many American films were released in both sound and silent versions. Still, by mid-1932, the conversion to sound was virtually complete in the United States." Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction*, Third Edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010), 179.

[479] Béla Balázs, *Béla Balázs: Early Film Theory*. Visible Man *and* The Spirit of Film, ed Erica Carter, trans. Rodney Livingstone (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 9.

[480] Even in film there is not 1:1 correspondence of the visual image to the body: a lot could be said here about representation in film as well as about the nature of the flat surface of the screen or the virtualization of representation in the age of digital information. While this is neither the place nor my aim, one should bear this in mind.

an introduction of a new medium changes the whole media landscape, affecting the relations among the various media, as McLuhan observes: "A new medium is never an addition to an old one, nor does it leave the old one in peace. […] Once a new technology comes into a social milieu it cannot cease to permeate that milieu until every institution is saturated."[481]

Attending to the embodiment of mind that runs throughout *As I Lay Dying* helps to pinpoint a significant source of Faulkner's (novels') view of the human mind in a technique employed by the dominant cultural art form and medium of his time and of modernism. Such an observation goes against the traditional view of Faulkner as nothing but critical of modernization,[482] but is in accordance with the scrutiny under which this view has recently come. As Julian Murphet writes in his introduction to the collection of essays *Faulkner in the Media Ecology*, "Faulkner's oft-remarked antimodernity – his discomfort with the new in general, and his specific repertoire of complaints against the technological forms that it took – is secretly undone by a persistent figural feedback loop, in which the techno-mediatic-new inscribes itself indelibly into the available matrix of representational means for making the past present."[483]

Echoing McLuhan, this reconsideration leads in Murphet's words to shifting the view of Faulkner from a "purportedly regional artist" to "one of the greatest artists of technological mediation in the literary tradition. Far from being simply the reclusive, private artist of the underdeveloped periphery, Faulkner turns out to have been as attuned to the waves and radiation of modernity's evolving media system as any to have taken up pen and ink against that systems predations upon what had once given value to social life: embeddedness, organic community, and historical depth."[484] Peter Lurie, one of the seminal authors of this reconsideration through his work on Faulkner and film, makes the case for Faulkner as a writer who despite his self-proclaimed distaste for modern popular culture very much utilized it for his own purposes:

> William Faulkner hated the movies. Or so he was fond of saying and apocryphal accounts
> of his life have made famous. […] Despite these protests and their suggestions of a distaste
> for the products of mass culture, however, Faulkner was keenly aware of the methods,
> types, and formulae of the popular art of his period. […] Faulkner's novels in the thirties

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[481] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 158, 161. See also McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 61-62, 70.

[482] "Faulkner's work is usually considered modernist and correspondingly critical in its relationship to the social contexts in which and about which Faulkner wrote." Richard C. Moreland, "Faulkner and Modernism," in *The Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner*, ed. Philip M. Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 18.

[483] Julian Murphet, "Introduction," in *Faulkner in the Media Ecology*, ed. Julian Murphet and Stefan Solomon (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015), 4-5.

[484] Murphet, "Introduction," 6-7. On the artist's perception of and attunement to media see McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 33, 70-71.

show continued involvement with a popular art that defined its form and its cultural role differently than did the high modernism with which he is regularly identified. […] Appearing at first glance as an alternative to popular culture, Faulkner's modernism is, in fact, heavily mediated by his relationship to it, a relationship that included envy, fascination, frustration, contempt – and that produced some of the most powerful as well as the most unsettling effects of his writing.[485]

More specifically, Lurie claims that Faulkner's engagement with popular art of his time manifests itself "through Faulkner's imaginative use of formal and representational modes of the mass arts, above all, the cinema" while "most compelling as a way of reading Faulkner's modernism is its inflection by what we might call the 'film idea,' the manner of impression and visual activity his novels emulate from the cinema."[486] The embodiment of the mind visible in silent film that Balázs propounds is one such visual activity Faulkner employs in *As I Lay Dying*. Lurie sees "the increasing role in the first decades of the twentieth century of that supremely visual and reifying form: film"[487] as one of the reasons for Faulkner's stress on the activity of looking in his writing of the 1930s. Although published in 1930, *As I Lay Dying* was written in 1929 and that might be why Lurie does not include it in his study. Yet, given the novel's utilization of silent film aesthetics, Faulkner emerges as an author of the new age of the image returned (with a revenge) from the Middle Ages after the early modern and enlightenment period of (belles) letters, as an author of the iconographic atavism of the human mind at least since 1929.

It is worth noting here what a perfect example for the importance of theory of mind and what an exercise in mind-reading a silent movie is: relying heavily on moving bodies, the audience is left to figure out the plot with the challenge ostentatiously being the absence of almost any means for the characters to state their intentions or reveal their minds verbally. Considering an audience for the novel which is used to such a challenge to its mind-reading capabilities, the pantomime of *As I Lay Dying* does not cause trouble in understanding. This intelligibility is put bluntly by Balázs who in his book published in 1924 claims that under the new dominant medium of silent film "[t]he screens of the entire world are now starting to project the *first international language*, the language of gestures and facial expressions. […] The few intertitles required are readily translated from one language into another. But the

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[485] Peter Lurie, "Introduction: Adorno's Modernism and the Historicity of Popular Culture," in *Vision's Immanence: Faulkner, Film, and the Popular Imagination* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 1-2.
[486] Lurie, "Introduction," 5-6.
[487] Lurie, "Introduction," 10.

actors' facial expressions must be comprehensible to the whole world."[488] Balázs also aptly points out the feedback loop between the culture and its representations: observing that "[w]e may say that the language of gestures has become standardized in film,"[489] he points out the way cultural artifacts create their own audiences, condition their own interpretation and ultimately affect real world – through mimicry these standardized gestures and expressions in film seep into common use to insure intelligibility of bodily communication.

Out of necessity, the language of the body in silent films is overperformed. Every gesture, every look, every expression is taken to an extreme in order to allay the problems attendant to its form, a technological limit of its time – the inability of the characters to speak their minds. Subtle, ambiguous performances would lead to misunderstandings, multiple interpretations of the characters and the plots, and, therefore, to a loss of coherence of the narrative. This is yet another point of contact between the silent film aesthetic, theory of mind and *As I Lay Dying*. In order to perform one's body to deceive others and conceal one's true state of mind, one has to make sure to perform it in a way that the others are able to read one's mind in the intended way. To assure that is to overperform; not too much, though, as that would have the exact opposite effect. Anse the performer is so anxious to convince everyone of his suffering on this Earth that he overshoots the mark: he constantly repeats the same lamentations and wears his dejected look wherever he goes and loses it only when he loses sight of his performance. Anse is grotesque both in the sense of being strange, incongruous and even unpleasant and ugly, and in the sense of being like a character from a silent film. Even though being able to conceal his real intentions, characters (and readers) can see his performance of misery for what it is: a show. Armstid certainly sees (through) it as he closes his section in which he speaks of Anse's return from Snopes with the words "I be durn if he [Anse] aint a sight" (112).

3.3. Voicing the Mind, Minding the Body and Embodying the Voice

Both silent film and theory of mind put the embodied mind center stage, in front of one's eyes and their intertwining in *As I Lay Dying* stresses the importance of the body in the novel, especially in its inseparability from the mind. However, the standard account of the problem of the body in the novel is one of disembodiment. Eric J. Sundquist claims that characters "exist in the novel's form as disembodied" and that "the narrative episodes do indeed seem a collection

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[488] Balázs, *Béla Balázs*, 14.
[489] Balázs, *Béla Balázs*, 14.

of voices in the air."[490] For John T. Matthews "Darl identifies what I will call the disembodiment effect, which characterizes almost every major facet of the novel. The image of voices loosed in the air, floating bodiless around the listener's head, precisely marks the status of voice and body in the novel."[491] Here, one has to be careful about the word choice. Sundquist opposes body and mind while also observing that the book is produced by "narrative voices that, while they are careful to record identical dialects differently, nonetheless seem utterly severed from the peculiar bodily selves that ostensibly produce them."[492] Sundquist seems to use "voice" and "consciousness" interchangeably. Considering that consciousness is one facet of the mind, I propose an opposing view of the relation between body and mind in the novel. Opposing, in the sense of not entirely subverting the idea of disembodiment, but as creating a counternarrative of the self's constitution in the novel.

The very structuring of the text into 59 "individual" sections, i.e. separate sections each "spoken" by a single narrator is one of the main reasons for the perceived "disembodiment" central to the novel: the sections are presented as interior monologues, understood traditionally as mental products representing "the actual texture of consciousness"[493] isolated from the world. Commenting on Darl setting fire to Gillespie's barn, Heide Ziegler notes that "Darl has seemed to live almost exclusively in a mental realm; he takes action in a desperate attempt not to lose his hold on his slipping identity."[494] While Darl is an extreme case due to his clairvoyance, and while there is a specific problem with Ziegler's claim as Darl takes action previous to the burning of the barn when during the crossing of the river he saves Addie, all the characters seem to critics like her or Sundquist to be in a sense "exclusively in a mental realm." Yet, bodies do feature in the novel prominently. One example for all: the very plot of the novel. Instigated by death, the cessation of all bodily functions, the plot has the dead body grotesquely paraded in front of everyone's eyes: although hidden from sight in a coffin, it still makes itself known through smell. Moreover, as Cleanth Brooks observes, Addie's "dead body becomes a monstrous token – the only available token – of her fierce identity," which is fitting since when alive "Addie does not believe in the spiritual – not, at least, in any of its conventional senses – she can make the assertion of her identity only in terms of the body."[495]

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[490] Sundquist, *Faulkner*, 39.
[491] Matthews, "*As I Lay Dying* in the Machine Age," 86.
[492] Sundquist, *Faulkner*, 34.
[493] Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness*, 26.
[494] Heide Ziegler, "*As I Lay Dying*: A Modernist Epic," in *Approaches to Teaching Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, ed. Patrick O'Donnell and Lynda Zwinger (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2011), 90.
[495] Brooks, "Odyssey," 253.

While both minds and bodies are central to the novel, the dispute is about the (dis)connection between them. My argument is that mind and body meet in the novel through the concept of theory of mind which sees mind through the body. Intertwined in this way embodied mind lays a foundation for identity. *As I Lay Dying* portrays a spectrum of relationships of body and mind in terms of theory of mind. Besides standard mind-reading, there is Darl, "[h]yperconscious and hypersensitive,"[496] whose "mind can range freely and identify with any other mind it encounters on its way. Darl can become anyone because he is nothing himself."[497] However, Darl is not as substanceless as Bleikasten would have him – his body is quite active in the novel: Darl struggles against the violent current of the river as he struggles against his captors at the end of the novel when he is being sent to the mental asylum. It is interesting and significant to note that the other characters can conceive of getting rid of Darl's mind and his penetrating inference of their own states of mind only by getting rid of his body.

On the opposite side of this spectrum stands Darl's foil, Jewel who is repeatedly described in inanimate terms: "Motionless, wooden-backed, wooden-faced" (55) with eyes "pale as two bleached chips in his face" (84) "like pieces of a broken plate" (72), "endued with life from the hips down" (3). There is a tendency then to present Jewel predominantly as a body which is inanimate in the original meaning "without spirit/mind" and, thus, nonhuman and objective in that it is cast as an object, mainly wood. Significantly, it is Jewel's body "from the hips down" that is the animate, i.e. moving part of the body: it is the part associated in popular imagination with instincts, mainly sexual ones, as opposed to the upper part of the body associated with mind. This is, clearly, a matter of perception: Jewel's inanimateness lies in the eyes of the beholders caused by his behavior that does not lend itself easily to mind-reading (see above). In these various, often problematic relations of the mind and body, *As I Lay Dying* (re)presents their connection in the way Dorothy J. Hale sees the novel to represent the relation of the public and the private: as "impossible either to unify or to separate fully."[498]

The connection of mind and body comes through the very narrative technique of the novel where all narrators are also characters. Bleikasten describes this technique aptly as a "two-way mirror, each section reflects external events as well as their impact upon a consciousness; each section strives to link up with the object of the narration […] and tends at the same time to flow

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[496] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 61.
[497] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 89.
[498] Dorothy J. Hale, "*As I Lay Dying's* Heterogeneous Discourse," *NOVEL: A Forum for Fiction* 23, no. 1 (Autumn 1989): 13.

back to its source, to be reabsorbed into the narrator's voice."[499] In this ebb and flow of perception and in the frequent changes in narrators, it is an aim or at least a function of the novel to constantly remind the reader of the body and mind connection in seeing the same characters from the "inside" at one moment and from the "outside" at another. A comparison to *The Sound and the Fury* makes this only more obvious as there are only three interior monologues, each accessed only once: the "interior"/consciousness presented in such a monolithic way harbors much more potential to obliterate the "exterior"/body.

The constant shifting of perspective in *As I Lay Dying* communicates much more forcefully that experience still impacts character's minds even when they are not narrating. They do not suddenly become puppets with "weary gestures wearily recapitulant: echoes of old compulsions with no-hand on no-strings: in sunset we fall into furious attitudes, dead gestures of dolls" (120). Significantly, this image produced by Darl's poetic imagination is infused with theory of mind in the negative: like one of Faulkner's favorite privatives, it brings it to the fore by denying it. Readers do not suddenly consider a character's behavior a result of their bodies being on strings rendering their body language random and meaningless; the readers only temporarily lose sight of the "interior" of the characters. Thus, the novel inscribes the mind-body unity in its narrative technique.[500]

Some critics might not find this account of the unity of mind and body satisfactory as the problem of voice remains. Going back to Matthews, he formulates one of the problems with voice in the novel, that of belonging: "Each narrative creates the impression of a distinct human voice belonging to a real person [...] At the same time, each section also sounds like Faulkner's own voice, a highly stylized, empathetically literary rendering of sensibilities too culturally impoverished to command such aesthetic resources."[501] Being composite in this way, the novel presents a problem in its "formal disjunctions of speaker and utterance."[502] The formal disjunction lies between the language used by the characters in the dialogues and in their interior monologues. That is, it is unrealistic that uneducated farmers in Yoknapatawpha, i.e., in the 1920s Mississippi would be able to muster such a vocabulary, such diction as they do in their interior monologues. Stephen Ross provides an analysis of the conventions upon which criticisms of this aspect of the novel rest:

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[499] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 57.

[500] Cf. Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 65-66.

[501] John T. Matthews, "*As I Lay Dying*: Approaching the Postcolonial," in *Approaches to Teaching Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, ed. Patrick O'Donnell and Lynda Zwinger (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2011), 167. See also Matthews, *Seeing through the South*, 152 on the ambiguity of speaking for others.

[502] Matthews, "*As I Lay Dying* in the Machine Age," 87.

This complaint carries beneath its surface the assumption that voice must be an index of personal identity. [...] It is assumed not only that a voice belongs to some person but also that it is in crucial ways "appropriate" to that person – to his or her socioeconomic class, level of education, and so on. Any loosening of the bond between voice and person violates verisimilitude and "sounds unnatural" to the reader's ear, because the reader has accepted the representation of that person as an actuality. Violations of point of view, of what we can plausibly *see*, disgruntle commentators on *As I Lay Dying* less than do violations of voice.[503]

There are two points to add to this. Firstly, as a piece of literary writing, *As I Lay Dying* is only loosely bound by any necessary correspondence to reality: if Darl has the mind of a poet, then he does. In Phelan's terms, the novel foregrounds the synthetic, i.e. constructed aspect of character. Hale approaches this problem in terms of the public and private dichotomy and shrewdly observes that

[t]he fact that in *As I Lay Dying* the characters think in words they cannot know shows that in "reality" they know things that they cannot say. Rather than trying to present, as it were, a transcript of a character's mind, a narrative practice which would contradict his philosophy of self, Faulkner offers a stylized representation of consciousness. Thus the confusion between narratological and characterological voices is indeed purposeful: Faulkner draws on a variety of narrative discourses in order to show that the private self continually escapes the decorum, the consistency that constitutes the public self.[504]

My second point is actually running through Hale's observation though she does not take it up explicitly. Any complaint about the exalted language in which the characters "think" presumes that consciousness is nothing but language: the verbal nature of consciousness springs from and in turn reinforces a cartesian notion of the mind.[505] Such a reduction then leads to the presumption that Darl cannot indulge in his existential ruminations because if consciousness is language and the language Darl speaks is that of a simple farmer, he cannot possibly be a rhetorician. Such an exalted language is precisely a "stylized representation of consciousness,"

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[503] Stephen M. Ross, "'Voice' in Narrative Texts: The Example of *As I Lay Dying*," *PMLA* 94, no. 2 (March 1979): 302-303. Going back to a point I made in the introduction, it is only when one sees the characters as (if) real people, that one can object to the disconnect between the character's identity, or rather the real-world socioeconomical implications of its identity and their interior.

[504] Hale, "*As I Lay Dying*," 12. See also Hale, "*As I Lay Dying*," 9. Strictly speaking, the private and the public are not easily separable, the one being of necessity permeated by the other as the nature of identity is fundamentally social. Nevertheless, since one can perform one's identity to others' eyes in order to conceal one's "true" self (see above), the public and the private can be seen as a set of Venn diagrams with only a partial overlap leaving zones without points of contact which are visually detached in the graphic representation, but inseparable from the zone shared by the two sets.

[505] See the previous chapter and Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 57-59.

an attempt to represent in language that which cannot be represented, or at least resists representation in the medium of language: "The narrative discourse becomes, from this interpretive perspective, a symbolic medium bearing no implication that actual discourse is being quoted. We 'hear' in our reading whatever is necessary for a full portrayal of a character's intuitive consciousness."[506]

This is the special power literature has, as Josie Billington argues, "to hold thoughts which humans feel it would almost kill them to contain in themselves", thoughts "barely thinkable except inside the book, yet also barely avoidable at times in the world outside".[507] This is relevant for consciousness in the novel since in a kind of a metafictional gesture, Faulkner gives his narrators the means of literary language to express "not only the prosaic reality but the poetry that exists hiddenly and precariously within the prose of life."[508] The fact "that literature can 'think' reality when ordinary human thought falls short; that a book can have thoughts that humans *cannot* have" saves the experientiality of consciousness from the fact that "[t]oo often the language of personal experience is not personal: it is over-familiar, made cliché, or fitted to contemporary vocabularies and agendas."[509] In this sense, the novel, more specifically the discourse level of the narrative presents a therapeutic outlet for the narrators who suffer such psychological and physical hardships as characters of the story level of the narrative: as Billington puts it, "literature does something deeper still than *recover* an inner voice. It can summon a voice that does not exist under the ordinary conditions of life."[510] Thus equipped, the narrators of *As I Lay Dying* possess the appropriate language to speak their minds which, however, is too charged for, transcends the mundane reality to be spoken out loud – a disjunction that Cleanth Brooks has acutely observed:

> This is one of the conventions which must be accepted in a reading of *As I Lay Dying*. The language with which the author provides the character to express his innermost thoughts is not necessarily the same language the author has him use when he speaks to another character. It would certainly not occur to Dewey Dell to *tell* anyone that she felt like a "wet seed wild in the hot blind earth."[511]

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[506] Ross, "'Voice' in Narrative Texts," 303.

[507] Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?*, 31.

[508] Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?*,76.

[509] Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?*, 44, 91.

[510] Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?*, 106. Italics in the original. Billington contends that "literature has a role and power analogous to that of psychoanalysis in amending and aiding deprivations in human thought function." Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?*, 17.

[511] Brooks, "Odyssey," 258.

Here, once again, the influence of silent film on *As I Lay Dying* comes to the fore: the disconnect between the "inner" and "outer" (spoken) voices of the characters can be seen as an aesthetic necessity of silent film. In his book called *Der sichtbare Mensch* (Visible Man), Béla Balázs speaks about the representation of mind in silent film. The following passage from the book is uncannily relevant to both the embodied nature of mind and the problem of voice in *As I Lay Dying*:

> To say nothing is by no means the same as having nothing to say. Those who remain silent can still be overflowing with things to say, which, however, can be uttered only in forms, pictures, gestures and facial expressions. For the man of visual culture is not like a deaf mute who replaces words with sign language. He does not think in words whose syllables he inscribes in the air with the dots and dashes of the Morse code. His gestures do not signify concepts at all, but are the direct expression of his own non-rational self, and whatever is expressed in his face and his movements arises from a stratum of the soul that can never be brought to the light of day by words. Here, the body becomes unmediated spirit, spirit rendered visible, wordless.[512]

Similar to the characters of silent film, the characters of *As I Lay Dying* cannot speak in their inner, poetic voices: their expressive mode is constituted largely by facial expressions, gestures and the body in general. Yet, the problem of disembodiment of voice remains. This problem has its source in two passages of the novel presenting an image of the disjunction between body and voice. Approaching the Bundren house, Darl is "hearing the voices before I reach the door. […] As you enter the hall, they sound as though they were speaking out of the air about your head" (13). Later, Tull describes Whitfield's sermon:

> Whitfield begins. His voice is bigger than him. It's like they are not the same. It's like he is one, and his voice is one, swimming on two horses side by side across the ford and coming into the house, the mud-splashed one and the one that never even got wet, triumphant and sad. Somebody in the house begins to cry. […] Whitfield stops at last. The women sing again. In the thick air it's like their voices come out of the air, flowing together and on in the sad, comforting tunes. When they cease it's like they hadn't gone away. It's like they had just disappeared into the air and when we moved we would loose them again out of the air around us, sad and comforting. (53)

Indeed, especially in the second passage, voice is figured as an ontologically separate entity. As in the relation of body and mind, I propose "counter-images" that point to the

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[512] Balázs, *Béla Balázs*, 9.

necessary connection of body and voice, although, again, the connection is not perfect. Contrary to the genesis of voice, let me first introduce Stephen Ross's insight into the perceptual nature of voice in *As I Lay Dying*, before turning to its production: "When Anse speaks his heaviest dialect, we discover, he is always being quoted by a 'town' person […]. When quoted by country folk, Anse's talk exhibits fewer signs of the vernacular. *As I Lay Dying* seems to imitate not how a character sounds but how one character sounds to another."[513] Ross concludes that the "'real' sound of Anse's speech would seem to depend on the ear of the listener."[514] Here, then, is voice as sound waves traversing distance and hitting the eardrums. Hand in hand with this purely physical nature of voice goes the social aspect: "Peabody quotes Anse as saying 'hit' and 'keer' because that is how he experiences Anse's socially inferior dialect […]."[515] The social dimension is, to a certain extent a dimension of the body since one's position in the society is a position of a body within the matrix of other bodies. This bodily aspect of society is perhaps most prominently observable in the accidence of birth: one of the things the self cannot control is when, where and in what form (sex, size, skin color, hair and the whole plethora of predispositions that condition the physical life of the body) it comes to life and enters society.

The body as a social platform entails not only the perception of voice, but also its production: the fact that Peabody hears Anse talking with an accent is the result of both of their bodies' positions in the social matrix. If silent film is the medium, the technology whose aesthetics assert the bodily aspect of the mind in *As I Lay Dying*, then the medium, the material artifact that encapsulates the production of voice, the nature of voice as well as the tension within the mind-body unity presented by the novel, is Cash's coveted graphophone. A technical device which allows a voice to be detached from the body and reproduced across time and space, the graphophone is a metaphor for the disconnect between body and voice and the deconstructive conception of discourse at the same time: "This structural possibility of being severed from its referent or signified (and therefore from communication and its context) seems to me to make of every mark, even if oral, a grapheme in general, that is, as we have seen, the nonpresent *remaining* of a differential mark cut off from its alleged 'production' or origin."[516] Yet, attending to the materiality of the graphophone, one can, again, read against the excision of the body from voice. Cash draws attention to the substitution of the graphophone for real

[513] Ross, "'Voice' in Narrative Texts," 303.
[514] Ross, "'Voice' in Narrative Texts," 303.
[515] Ross, "'Voice' in Narrative Texts," 303.
[516] Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 318.

bodies by appreciating how much like a real orchestra the music sounds. The biological body is not so much gotten rid of, as merely substituted for by a mechanical one: the graphophone with its characteristic protruding horn necessary for the sonority of the sound substitutes for the oral and nasal cavities amplifying the sounds produced by the vibrations of the vocal cords. Thus, while voices necessarily travel through the air, disconnected from the body, they retain their material, embodied qualities of production and reception.

Putting forth a conception of embodied mind while drawing on silent film aesthetic, Faulkner makes theory of mind, albeit unconsciously, a pivotal principle of *As I Lay Dying*. Theory of mind is doubly important for the novel. Firstly, the observation of other bodies and ascription of their mental states forms a large part of the content of the novel, one of the most prominent topics as various narrating characters, "watchful sentinels of the mind"[517] observe the way other characters look (their gestures, movement and posture) and how they look (their eyes and gaze), and infer their mental states. The mind-reading that seeps through a large part of the narrative discourse shows Faulkner conceiving of human mind as inseparable from, although potentially in a problematic relationship with the body. Through this unstable synthesis, in *As I Lay Dying*, "at the same time as being face, body, attitude, or action, the character comes to life through his inner speech."[518] Secondly, in a multiperspective novel employing successively various characters as narrators with the adjoining, mostly realistic limitations of temporal and spatial location as well as their mostly realistic epistemology, the observation of other bodies and the inference of their mental states is a *sine qua non* of the narrative technique.

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[517] Bleikasten *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 72.
[518] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 65-66.

4. Extending the Mind in *Absalom, Absalom!*

Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction.

(Mikhail Bakhtin)[519]

I think that no one individual can look at truth. It blinds you. You look at it and you see one phase of it. Someone else looks at it and sees a slightly awry phase of it. But taken all together, the truth is in what they saw though nobody saw the truth intact.

(William Faulkner)[520]

Absalom, Absalom! is a problem. That much can be said by way of a summary of the novel´s baffling effect on its readers, the critics notwithstanding. The novel has bewildered its audience since its publication in 1936. Peter Brooks addresses the core problematic of Faulkner's ninth novel: "There is narrative aplenty […] but no apparent *grounds* for narrative. […] not only a problem *in* the narrative but the very problem *of* narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!*, where ultimately narrative itself is the problem."[521] At the same time, narrative itself is the focus of the book and upstages the story. As Joseph W. Reed Jr. puts it, "[i]n *Absalom* it is not the figure in the carpet but the process of weaving and knotting that is both essence and subject."[522] The often commented on problem of the narrative stems from a lack, a void at the center that cannot hold which determines the shape of the novel.[523]

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[519] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 110.

[520] William Faulkner, "Remarks on *Absalom, Absalom!*", *William Faulkner's* Absalom, Absalom!*: A Casebook*, ed. Fred Hobson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 290.

[521] Peter Brooks, "Incredulous Narration: *Absalom, Absalom!*", *Comparative Literature* 34, no. 3 (July 1982): 250.

[522] Joseph W. Reed, Jr., *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 146.

[523] A critical distinction must be made when it comes to talking about the "absence" at the heart of *Absalom, Absalom!* To use an interesting example in Faulkner criticism, Jo Alyson Parker opts for an epistemological void at the center of the novel – there is something, but it cannot be reached, known – as opposed to an ontological void – there is nothing there: "It is tempting to make this motif of absence and lack exactly that—a gaping hole at the center of the text around which the various narrative explanations endlessly spiral. But we would do better to envision Faulkner's structure in terms of a strange attractor, that multidimensional emplotment of a certain class of nonlinear systems. There are real 'facts'—an actual 'history'—around which the narrative explanations twine, but they are unreachable in themselves. Nevertheless, the trajectories of the narratives fall onto an attractor generated by those unreachable facts." Jo Alyson Parker, *Narrative Form and Chaos Theory in Sterne, Proust, Woolf, and Faulkner* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 122. The important aspect of the lack for me is the epistemological one – whatever there is or is not (was or was not), it remains unrecoverable.

Put briefly, "the facts are few, the mystery great."[524] The motivation to tell in the novel is to fill in the lack, to unravel the mystery. As John T. Matthews writes, in his deconstructive reading of the novel in which language steps in for and as reality, "*Absalom, Absalom!* is Faulkner's most accomplished, moving, and sustained meditation on the act of fabricating meaning [filled with] the painfully blissful, dangerously necessary methods of supplementing absence."[525] Ultimately, all the narrators face a paradoxical situation: they are in search of truth in a land where information about the past is in scarce supply, yet, in a land where the rich history pervades, even oppresses the present.

Absence, mystery, after all, are the breeding ground for storytelling. Walter Benjamin saw information and storytelling as inimical. For him, information "proves incompatible with the spirit of storytelling"[526] because information and storytelling represent two opposing modes of wisdom: "The intelligence that came from afar – whether the spatial kind from foreign countries or the temporal kind of tradition – possessed an authority which gave it validity, even when it was not subject to verification. Information, however, lays claim to prompt verifiability. The prime requirement is that it appear 'understandable in itself'."[527] The distance in the origin of the wisdom in storytelling and information is mirrored in the distance this wisdom can travel when imparted: "The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time."[528]

While Benjamin contrasted storytelling with the novel as a genre, assigning the novel the status of the mark of the apocalypse of storytelling, *Absalom, Absalom!* carries the wisdom of a story. This is because Faulkner fills the pages of the book – the material ball and chain of novelistic discourse for Benjamin – by staging a series of scenes of storytelling. The story in question comes from a distant time, pregnant with the meaning acquired by the culture it tells of. For Benjamin, "the nature of every real story" was that it "contains, openly or covertly, something useful. The usefulness may, in one case, consist in a moral; in another, in some practical advice; in a third, in a proverb or maxim."[529] Though the various storytellers of

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[524] Renard Doneskey, "'*that pebble's watery echo*': The Five Narrators of *Absalom, Absalom!*", in *Heir and Prototype: Original and Derived Characterizations in Faulkner*, ed. Dan Ford (Conway, Arkansas: University of Central Arkansas Press, 1987), 113.

[525] John T. Matthews, *The Play of Faulkner's Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 115-116.

[526] Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Random House, 2007), 89.

[527] Benjamin, "Storyteller," 89

[528] Benjamin, "Storyteller," 90.

[529] Benjamin, "Storyteller," 86.

Absalom, Absalom! seem to be telling the same story, they are all very different versions partly because the moral, the advice of the story differs for each one of them and is obscured in revelation, revealed in obscurity for the reader.

The "usefulness" of the story told is conspicuously missing since the first question regarding the narrative that arises is "why tell the story?" As Quentin Compson listens to Rosa Coldfield introduce the main character of their *tête-à-tête*, Thomas Sutpen, he cannot but wonder about the reason for the telling. He questions her explanation of passing on the story as a possible future means of income in case he "enters the literary profession"[530] and supplies his own explanation: "*Only she dont mean that* he thought. *It's because she wants it told*" (5). Even though he conjectures a reason for the telling a while later as the explanation of the Civil War, the burden and trauma of the South, he immediately reconsiders this explanation as insufficient (6) and the mystery persists. As will become clear, it is not so much that she, Miss Rosa, wants it told, but that the story wants to be told – it is in want of telling.

The story transcends any individual teller. This transcendence is manifested in the novel by always putting two (and two in the case of Quentin and Shreve) together: it couples a teller and a hearer in various scenes of storytelling. John T. Irwin famously made pairs a central trope of his analysis of *Absalom, Absalom!*. I will approach the issue from a different angle: not so much as doubling, but as coupling. I will, thus, partly argue against Irwin for whom, "[f]or Faulkner, doubling and incest are both images of the self-enclosed – the inability of the ego to break out of the circle of the self and of the individual to break out of the ring of the family – and as such, both appear in his novels as symbols of the state of the South after the Civil War, symbols of a region turned in upon itself."[531] For me, doubling, or better, coupling – as well as incest – in *Absalom, Absalom!* is a sign of the opposite: an attempt of the ego "to break out of the circle of the self" and to reach beyond its boundaries.

The idea of coupling is central for the Extended Mind Thesis as conceived by Andy Clark and David J. Chalmers. In their article, published originally in 1998, they brashly announced that "[c]ognitive processes ain't (all) in the head!",[532] putting forth a protean conception of mind which changes its domain based on the environment and using various "tools" to extend beyond the skin. This is done through the process of coupling:

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[530] William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (New York: Vintage, 1990) 5. All following quotations are from this edition and are subsequently quoted parenthetically within the text.
[531] John T. Irwin, *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge: A Speculative Reading of Faulkner*, Expanded Edition (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 59.
[532] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 29.

[…] the human organism is linked with an external entity in a two-way interaction, creating a *coupled system* that can be seen as a cognitive system in its own right. All the components in the system play an active causal role, and they jointly govern behavior in the same sort of way that cognition usually does. If we remove the external component the system's behavioral competence will drop, just as it would if we removed part of its brain. Our thesis is that this sort of coupled process counts equally well as a cognitive process, whether or not it is wholly in the head.[533]

As is evident from the description, the coupled system of human cognition and the environment has a spread of, what Clark and Chalmers call, "epistemic credit" in that the separate parts do not do the (cognitive) job unless coupled. In other words, this coupling has to be taken holistically as a single, indivisible unit. I will approach the scenes of storytelling in the novel in exactly this way: as indivisible units with coupled teller and listener where context (immediate, historical, cultural, natural etc.) plays crucial role. This approach finds additional support in the sociology of human interaction of Erving Goffman who assumed that "the proper study of interaction is not the individual and his psychology, but rather the syntactical relations among the acts of different persons mutually present to one another. […] Not, then, men and their moments. Rather moments and their men."[534] Most importantly, this approach is necessitated by *Absalom, Absalom!* itself: after all, Faulkner casts the most successful coupling of the novel, the most successful storytelling union – that of Quentin and Shreve – in terms of an ultimate form of coupling as "some happy marriage of speaking and hearing" (253). It is my claim that in the more or less happy "marriages" of tellers and listeners, Faulkner presents the human mind as extended, enacted, and engaged with its environment and other minds in general, reaching an apogee in the creative, playful merger of the minds of Quentin the Southerner and Shreve the Canadian.

While these couplings on the discourse level of the narrative are the most conspicuous thematization of the mind as extended, there are ideas and opinions voiced by the characters themselves that speak to the nature of an engaged human mind. *Absalom, Absalom!* marks Faulkner's exploration of the human mind in interaction with its environment and other humans. Throughout the novel, Faulkner presents the human mind as: embedded in its immediate environment and, therefore, constituted by it; culturally determined by the society as well as the physical, i.e. natural world of the region; collaborative and mutually constituted and

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[533] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 29.
[534] Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 2-3.

constitutive in interaction with other minds. I aim to analyze the factors relevant for the depiction of the mind and to elucidate the various scenes of storytelling, their dynamics and reasons for failure or success, and the various tools for the extension of mind that Faulkner puts forth. The most important extension tool will be language, particularly storytelling, or narrative. This will provide an answer to the question of why Shrevlin McCannon would be interested, even invested in a story from a foreign land and a foreign time, and at the same time participate in the most successful narrative engagement in the novel. All this will complement the picture of the human mind as conceived by Faulkner by moving from the matter of mindreading and the embodiment of mind to the matter of mind reaching and spreading beyond the body.[535]

4.1. Extending the Mind

"Where does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?"[536] ask philosophers Andy Clark and David J. Chalmers in their seminal essay "The Extended Mind". The boundary between the mental and the physical is one that has avoided capture for centuries as philosophers have tried to solve the mind-body problem: the problem, in other words, of how we get from the physical matter of our brain to the mental phenomena of the human mind. In the extended mind thesis (EMT), as posed by Clark and Chalmers, that boundary shifts once again to demarcate the limits of the cognitive: the "old puzzle, the mind-body problem, really involves a hidden third party. It is the mind-body-*scaffolding* problem."[537] What does the thinking, so to speak: is it merely the brain itself, the brain and the body in conjunction, does the mind extended beyond the skin into the "world outside"? Clark and Chalmers opt unwaveringly for the last option promoting "an active externalism, based on the active role of the environment in driving cognitive processes."[538] So does William Faulkner in his 1936 novel *Absalom, Absalom!*

Clark and Chalmers start from the premise that in epistemic actions, i.e. actions which "alter the world so as to aid and augment cognitive processes", "[i]f, as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as a process which, *were it done in the head*, we would have no hesitation in recognizing as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world *is* (so we claim) part of the cognitive process."[539] The authors claim an active role of the world in the

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[535] This does not mean that embodiment becomes meaningless and cognition stops being embodied for Faulkner. Indeed, the environmental factors I will treat significantly affect the body and, therefore, cognition. What I mean is that my analysis of *Absalom, Absalom!* and the extended mind investigates another dimension of Faulkner's idea of the human mind.

[536] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 27.

[537] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 11.

[538] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 27.

[539] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 28-29.

cognitive process, calling their approach "active externalism," putting the external features on a par with internal ones in a coupled system.[540] What can become coupled with the human mind is defined functionally: speaking of belief, they remark that "there is nothing sacred about skull and skin. What makes some information count as a belief is the role it plays, and there is no reason why the relevant role can be played only from inside the body."[541] As Clark clarifies, lest there be any doubt, "[t]his is not behaviorism but functionalism. It is systemic role that matters, not brute similarities in public behavior (though the two are of course related)."[542]

Clark and Chalmers´s argument is an argument for a constitutive account of extension as they stress "the active role of the environment in driving cognitive processes."[543] The environment, the tools for thinking do not just influence mental functioning, they do not remain external factors, they are part of the mental functioning, "the interactive link *is* the cognitive processing."[544] In cases when coupling occurs, "the relevant parts of the world are *in the loop*, not dangling at the other end of a long causal chain. […] The external features in a coupled system play an ineliminable role—if we retain internal structure but change the external features, behavior may change completely."[545]

Such an account of cognition has not gone without criticism. The most outspoken detractors of the extended mind thesis Fred Adams and Ken Aizawa have attacked the idea on several occasions. It is instructive to look at their criticism and its refutation to get a better understanding of the thesis put forth while the observations that follow are also crucially relevant to Faulkner's presentation of the human mind as extended. Adams and Aizawa start one of their critiques of the extended mind thesis with the following attempt at a joke: "Question: Why did the pencil think that 2 + 2 = 4? Clark's answer: Because it was coupled to the mathematician."[546] This farcical attack comes out of the authors´ fundamental misunderstanding of the idea of coupling. For them, the idea "that object or process *X* is coupled to object or process *Y* does not entail that *X* is part of *Y*."[547] Indeed, it does not, but this does not speak to the soundness of their criticism. Clark and Chalmers's concept clearly postulates

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[540] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 29.
[541] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 35.
[542] Clark, "*Memento's* Revenge," 52. For John Preston, the account is too behavioristic. See John Preston, "The Extended Mind, the Concept of Belief, and Epistemic Credit," in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2010), 363. For a functionalist interpretation of the extended mind thesis see Menary, "Extended Mind," 5-6.
[543] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 27.
[544] Menary, "The Extended Mind in Focus" 2.
[545] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 29-30.
[546] Adams and Aizawa, "Defending the Bounds," 67.
[547] Adams and Aizawa, "Defending the Bounds," 68.

that if "object or process *X* is coupled to object or process *Y*", they are both part of *Z*, an emergent structure bigger than the parts that constitute it.

Moreover, Adams and Aizawa's joke example focuses on the wrong aspect of the cognitive coupling. They mistakenly take the pencil itself as the site of the cognitive; however, as Mark Rowlands points out, it is not the pencil itself, but what we do with it, how we use it and what for that is important for cognitive processing:

> The thesis of the extended mind should not be understood as claiming that cognitive states can be identical with environmental structures. […] It is the things we do with external structures – our manipulation, exploitation, and transformation of them – that constitute properly cognitive parts of overall processes of cognition. This is compatible, of course, with the idea that environmental structures can form parts of cognitive processes. They do so, but not because they are identical with cognitive states. It is the manipulation of environmental structures that forms part of the cognitive process; and so these structures form part of the process only insofar as they are part of the process of their being manipulated.[548]

The usefulness, the usability of structures for cognitive processing can be elucidated by connecting the idea of the extended mind with James Gibson´s theory of affordances. Gibson´s theory is an ecological account of a functional interaction of a living organism and its environment: "The *affordances* of the environment are what it *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill. […] I mean by it something that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. […] they have to be measured *relative to the animal*. They are unique for that animal. They are not just abstract physical properties."[549] Just like structures in cognitive coupling, affordances are preexisting to the organism, yet they become affordances only in connection to the organism. Gibson expounds the duality by suggesting that "an affordance is neither an objective property nor a subjective property; or it is both if you like. An affordance cuts across the dichotomy of subjective-objective and helps us to understand its inadequacy. It is equally a fact of the environment and a fact of behavior. It is both physical and psychical, yet neither."[550] Once again, it is not the pencil itself, but how the pencil gets used that constitutes the cognitive processing: "Affordances are properties taken with reference to the observer."[551]

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[548] Rowlands, *New Science*, 67.
[549] Gibson, "Theory," 127.
[550] Gibson, "Theory," 129.
[551] Gibson, "Theory," 143.

The basic misconception that Adams and Aizawa have about the coupled system leads them to their following critique: "So, if the fact that an object or process *X* is coupled to a cognitive agent does not entail that *X* is a part of the cognitive agent's cognitive apparatus, what does? The nature of *X*, of course. One needs a theory of what makes a process a cognitive process rather than a noncognitive process. One needs a theory of the 'mark of the cognitive.'"[552] For Adams and Aizawa the decisive factor of a process or object to be considered cognitive is "that cognitive states must involve intrinsic, non-derived content. […] the cognitive states in normal cognitive agents do not derive their meanings from conventions or social practices."[553] Their need for a clear "mark of the cognitive" is connected to the concern of the so called "cognitive bloat": "The threat is of pancognitivism, where everything is cognitive."[554]

Teed Rockwell dismantles the notion of non-derived content and shows it to be sham. As he points out, the seeming solidity of Adams and Aizawa's argument for non-derived content rests on their rhetoric: they "are apparently saying our brain states have literal, intrinsic, nonderived content, which provides the foundation and starting point for the metaphorical, relational, derived content of conventional symbol systems"; however, "[u]nfortunately, this description derives its plausibility from the fact that it is completely negative. As long as we limit ourselves to saying what brain states do not derive their meanings from, it seems plausible that their meaning is intrinsic."[555] The distinction between derived and non-derived does not hold up as it rests on the distinction between natural and cultural that has no bearing on the extension of the mind:

> All their arguments prove is that some content is derived from natural causes, instead of social conventions. The natural causes that create so-called nonderived content are every bit as extracranial as the social conventions that create derived content. […] To say that meaning derives from natural selection is to say that it derives from the interactions between an organism and its world. Disembodied brains do not evolve.[556]

As far as the "mark of the cognitive" is concerned, Mark Rowlands devotes himself to the problem at great length in his *The New Science of the Mind*. Firstly, he stipulates four conditions for a process to count as a cognitive process:

1. *P* involves *information processing* – the manipulation and transformation of information-bearing structures.

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[552] Adams and Aizawa, "Defending the Bounds," 68

[553] Fred Adams and Ken Aizawa, "The Bounds of Cognition," *Philosophical Psychology* 14, no. 1 (2001): 48.

[554] Adams and Aizawa, "Bounds of Cognition," 57.

[555] Rockwell, "Extended Cognition," 750.

[556] Rockwell, "Extended Cognition," 750-751.

2. This information processing has the *proper function* of *making available* either to the subject or to subsequent processing operations information that was, prior to this processing, unavailable.

3. This information is made available by way of the production, in the subject of *P*, of a *representational state*.

4. *P* is a process that *belongs* to the *subject* of that *representational state*.[557]

He makes the important observation that "it is simply false to claim that *anything* that is to count as cognitive must possess nonderived content. Some processes that are clearly cognitive never possess nonderived content – for the simple reason that they never possess content at all."[558] In his view, the decisive factor is functional: "It is the role in contributing to the production of states that possess nonderived content that is crucial in determining the cognitive status of a process: whether or not it actually is a state that possesses such content is irrelevant."[559] He then draws an important conclusion regarding the fourth point of his definition of cognitive processes, the problem of ownership:

> Once you accept functionalism, you cannot cling to a conception of cognitive ownership based on spatial containment. […] Rather than spatial containment, the ownership of subpersonal cognitive processes is more plausibly understood in terms of the essentially functionalist idea of *integration*. Ownership of a subpersonal cognitive process is to be understood in terms of the function of that process and, crucially, with respect to *whom* it fulfills that function.[560]

For Rowlands, the problem of ownership boils down to the idea of revelation or disclosure: cognition is a form of "*revealing* or *disclosing* activity" and as he points out, "[t]here is no such thing as revelation or disclosure in itself. Disclosure is always disclosure *to* someone or something. […] Cognitive processes are essentially owned because revealing activity is essentially owned."[561] It is important for the idea of the extended mind that "revealing activity performed by an organism can, but often does not, stop at the organism's skin."[562] Rowlands continues to make the following important argument:

> Consciousness has no content, because consciousness is intrinsically intentional, and any content of consciousness (understood as something *of* which the subject is aware)

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[557] Rowlands, *New Science*, 110.
[558] Rowlands, *New Science*, 133.
[559] Rowlands, *New Science*, 133.
[560] Rowlands, *New Science*, 142.
[561] Rowlands, *New Science*, 164.
[562] Rowlands, *New Science*, 164.

would not be intrinsically intentional. […] If intentionality is understood as the *directedness* of consciousness toward its objects, it is in this noneliminable intentional core of experience that this directedness resides. This has one implication that is crucial for the purpose of defending the theses of embodied and extended cognition: intentional directedness toward the world consists in a form of *revealing* or *disclosing activity*.[563]

Thus, the problem of cognitive bloat disappears, since "all cognition must ultimately relate back to the revealing activity of a subject. […] if there is no world disclosure of a particular form occurring at any given time, then neither is cognition. […] There is no problem of bloat on the view defended here: the bounds of cognition are limned by the activities of world disclosure."[564] Interestingly, Shaun Gallagher presents the same picture of cognition as processual, without content and intentional (directed at something) by flatly refusing the validity of the mark of the cognitive as "too closely tied to the traditional conception of the mind that is being challenged by the extended mind hypothesis. To accept the established terms of the debate is to already concede too much":

> On the enactive view, we need to conceive of the mind or brain, not as the place where all the mental processing and representing happens, but as part of a larger, embodied and enactive system. Cognition is not about content (whether non-derived or derived) being carried by vehicles (whether neural or extra-neural); cognition is an enactive and emotionally embedded engagement with the world by which we are able to solve problems, control behavior, understand, judge, explain, and generally do certain kinds of things – much of that constitutionally shaped by tools, environmental factors, social practices, etc.[565]

More broadly, the reason for the criticisms such as Adams and Aizawa´s is that the extended mind thesis challenges the Western idea of the mind which still rests heavily on a Cartesian conception of the duality of mind and body and of the intactness of the ego. Addressing the criticism, Clark notes that "much opposition to the idea of nonbiological cognitive extension trades on a deeply mistaken view of the thinking agent as some distinct inner locus of final choice and control."[566] In his showcase of and argument for the "naturalness" of human-technology couplings, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, Clark assigns this

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[563] Rowlands, *New Science*, 185-186.
[564] Rowlands, *New Science*, 217.
[565] Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 11.
[566] Clark, "*Memento's* Revenge," 56.

Western bias about the mind to a certain sense of exceptionalism about the "residence" of our mental life "within the primitive bioinsulation (nature's own duct-tape!) of skin and skull." [567]

In his extreme view of the tool enhancement of our mind, Clark deconstructs any idea of the self, of presence, substituting "the seductive idea that all these various neural and nonneural tools need a kind of privileged user" with an assemblage of "just tools all the way down"[568] without a stable structure, always changing depending on the particular context: "No single tool among this complex kit is intrinsically thoughtful, ultimately in control, or the ´seat of the self.´ We, meaning we human individuals, just are these shifting coalitions of tools. We are ´softselves,´ continuously open to change and driven to leak through the confines of skin and skull, annexing more and more nonbiological elements as aspects of the machinery of mind itself."[569] The illusion of a centered mind stems from a staple of psychological methods and a basis of our own sense of self, self-observation: "Tools-R-Us. But we are prone, it seems, to a particularly dangerous kind of cognitive illusion. Because our best efforts at watching our own minds in action reveal only the conscious flow of ideas and decisions, we mistakenly identify ourselves with the stream of conscious awareness."[570]

Before going further to examine three ways of extension, three "tools" that are crucial for the analysis of *Absalom, Absalom!*, let me summarize the picture of mind, of cognition that emerges from this reconsideration of the old idea of brain isolated by skull from the rest of the world. Such a notion misconstrues mind as a substance with the consequences that as such, it can be localized and owned: "To ask 'whose mind is it?' is to presuppose that the mind is an object that can be owned. […] 'Mind' is not a name for a substance; rather it names a whole host of cognitive processes, dispositional states, connotative and agential behavioral dispositions."[571] The idea of the extended mind is a functional (roles, not places, are cognitive), constitutive (the extension is cognition), emergent (the extended system as a whole is cognitive), intentional (cognition is directed at something, it discloses the world to a specific subject) and processual (it is an active engagement with the world) notion of a mind without content in which cognitive processing occurs embedded in its context and is used for immediate purposes.

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[567] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 26.
[568] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 136.
[569] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 137.
[570] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 137.
[571] Deborah Perron Tollefsen, "From Extended Mind to Collective Mind," *Cognitive Systems Research* 7, no. 2-3 (June 2006): 147.

4.1.1. From Hardware to Mindware

For Andy Clark, cyborg is the paramount image of the very essence of humans, of what makes them distinct from other animals, of their cognitive history, present and future. It might seem that the idea of the extended mind is an idea of humans using tools and machines (in the common sense of artificial industrial products) to extend their mental domain beyond their bodily confines. However, as Clark clarifies at the beginning of his book about the cyborg nature of our mental functioning, this is a misleading idea:

> The cyborg is a potent cultural icon of the late twentieth century. It conjures images of human-machine hybrids and the physical merging of flesh and electronic circuitry. My goal is to hijack that image and to reshape it, revealing it as a disguised vision of (oddly) our own biological nature. For what is special about human brains, and what best explains the distinctive features of human intelligence, is precisely their ability to enter into deep and complex relationships with nonbiological constructs, props, and aids. This ability, however, does not depend on physical wire-and-implant mergers, so much as on our openness to information-processing mergers. Such mergers may be consummated without the intrusion of silicon and wire into flesh and blood, as anyone who has felt himself thinking via the act of writing already knows. […] It is because we are natural-born cyborgs, forever ready to merge our mental activities with the operations of pen, paper, and electronics, that we are able to understand the world as we do.[572]

While humans certainly make use of artifacts such as pens, papers, calculators, computer software etc. in their cognitive processing, this is only part of the picture. Moreover, it is a picture which has enjoyed an unwarranted privilege in the categorization of the "tools" of extension. The central "tool" of our extension is actually one that we might not be aware of as such: "Language appears to be a central means by which cognitive processes are extended into the world. […] Where the fish flaps its tail to set up the eddies and vortices it subsequently exploits, we intervene in multiple linguistic media, creating local structures and disturbances whose reliable presence drives our ongoing internal processes. Words and external symbols are thus paramount among the cognitive vortices which help constitute human thought."[573]

Clark continues to expand on the most significant contribution of language to our mental functioning: metacognition. While, "[w]ords, on this account, can be seen as problem-solving artifacts developed early in human history,"[574]

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[572] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 5-6.
[573] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 32-33.
[574] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 70.

[t]he deepest contribution of speech and language to human thought, however, may be something so large and fundamental that it is sometimes hard to see it at all! For it is our linguistic capacities, I have long suspected, that allow us to think and reason about our own thinking and reasoning. And it is this capacity, in turn, that may have been the crucial foot-in-the-door for the culturally transmitted process of designer-environment construction: the process of deliberately building better worlds to think in.[575]

Language is the most powerful extension of our mind that intervenes in the world: a fact that Faulkner demonstrates amply in *Absalom, Absalom!* by letting almost all of the novel consist of talking, specifically storytelling. Language, importantly, serves to communicate thoughts and ideas, which leads to the next important extension of the mind – one as important for *Absalom, Absalom!* as language – other minds. If mind extends beyond the limits of our bodies and into the world, it must, at some point, encounter other extending minds. As Teed Rockwell notes, "[w]e obviously do not live in a multisolipsistic universe in which each organism has its own self-contained world. The world in the mind's brain–body–world nexus contains not only other physical items, but also other minds. The symbiotic relationship that mutually constitutes minds and physical items is both different from and similar to the sympathetic relationship that mutually constitutes minds in a shared world."[576]

It is language that facilitates the meetings of minds. Clark and Chalmers attribute the decisive role of the entrance of the mind into the social world to language, saying that "the major burden of the coupling between agents is carried by language" without which "we might be much more akin to discrete Cartesian 'inner' minds, in which high-level cognition relies largely on internal resources. But the advent of language has allowed us to spread this burden into the world. Language, thus construed, is not a mirror of our inner states but a complement to them. It serves as a tool whose role is to extend cognition in ways that on-board devices cannot."[577]

Gibson's observations on the ecological notion of cognition and behaviour provide an instructive comparison and elaboration on the idea of the extended mind, and a bridge to the last key extension of the mind:

> The richest and most elaborate affordances of the environment are provided by other animals and, for us, other people. […] These bodies are subject to the laws of mechanics and yet *not* subject to the laws of mechanics, for they are not *governed* by these laws.

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[575] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 78.
[576] Rockwell, "Extended Cognition," 756 n2.
[577] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 39.

[…] When touched they touch back, when struck they strike back; in short, they *interact* with the observer and with one another. Behavior affords behavior, and the whole subject matter of psychology and of the social sciences can be thought of as an elaboration of this basic fact. Sexual behavior, nurturing behavior, fighting behavior, cooperative behavior, economic behavior, political behavior – all depend on the perceiving of what another person or other persons afford, or sometimes on the misperceiving of it. […] The other person, the generalized *other*, the *alter* as opposed to the *ego*, is an ecological object with a skin, even if clothed. It is an object, although it is not *merely* an object, and we do right to speak of *he* or *she* and not it.[578]

Gibson touches upon the last area of extension that is, besides language and other minds, crucially important for Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*: the mental environment. Shaun Gallagher calls this "mental institutions" and their role is part of the recursive loop, the "designer-environment" that Clark speaks of regarding language. It is also an elaboration of the social dimension of extension that Clark and Chalmers "allow" in their original article: "What about socially extended cognition? Could my mental states be partly constituted by the states of other thinkers? We see no reason why not, in principle."[579] At the beginning of Gallagher's argument is a word, so to speak. He starts with the observation that "[t]aking a critical metacognitive perspective on a problemsolving act of cognition […] may sometimes necessitate a certain institutional or collective arrangement."[580] Since metacognition is enabled by means of language, this is partly an acknowledgment of its necessarily social dimension. However, Gallagher pushes the idea further and claims that "some critical perspectives clearly involve processes that supervene on a social institution, and may do so in a way that is even more trustworthy or reliable, than biological memory."[581]

Gallagher calls these processes "mental institutions" "in the sense that they are not only institutions with which we accomplish certain cognitive processes, but also are such that without them such cognitive processes would no longer exist. They are at least enabling

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[578] Gibson, "Theory," 135-136.
[579] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 38.
[580] Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 6.
[581] Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 6. Even this particular statement contains the whole issue of the mind in a nutshell. The implicit value assigned traditionally to biological memory is ultimately an expression of the implicit bias preferring the sphere of the individual over the sphere of the social. The primacy of the individual subject and its biological self over the social community that it partakes in produced in modern times by Western society is what is at stake in the end. Extended mind thesis and other 4e approaches to cognition are trying to redraw the picture.

conditions, and on the most liberal reading, constitutive of those processes."[582] Either a precondition or the very constitutive element of cognition, each mental institution:

1. Includes cognitive practices that are produced in specific times and places.

2. Is activated in ways that extend our cognitive processes when we engage with them (that is, when we interact with, or are enactively coupled to them in the right way).[583]

It is possible to see these institutions as extending our cognition, because Gallagher, in agreement with Clark, Chalmers and other theorists of the extended mind thesis, thinks of the mind not "as a repository of propositional attitudes and information, or in terms of internal belief-desire psychology, but as a dynamic process involved in solving problems and controlling behavior and action – in dialectical, transformative relations with the environment."[584]

Since they are products of a certain place and time, it means that we either "create these institutions via our own (shared) mental processes, or we inherit them as products constituted in mental processes already accomplished by others."[585] Engaging with these institutions does not always bear a positive mark as they "sometimes constitute, sometimes facilitate, and sometimes impede, but in each case enable and shape our cognitive interactions with other people."[586] Echoing ideas and findings of cultural cognitive studies, engagement with mental institutions occurs in a feedback loop that has bearing not only on the mind, but also on the brain: Gallagher stresses that this view suggests that "cognition does not simply extend from the brain outward to incorporate tools, technologies, and institutions, but that it sometimes works from the outside in; tools, technologies and institutions often shape our cognitive processes, make our brains work in certain ways, and may even elicit plastic changes in neuronal structure."[587]

I agree with Gallagher that the "conservative criteria endorsed by Clark and his colleagues"[588] are too restrictive when it comes to their definition of extension through the "parity principle": "If, as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as a process which, *were it done in the head*, we would have no hesitation in recognizing as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world *is* (so we claim) part of the cognitive process."[589]

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582 Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 6.
583 Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 6.
584 Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 7.
585 Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 7.
586 Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 7.
587 Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 7.
588 Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 7.
589 Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 29.

As Menary points out, the problem of such a definition is that it leaves room for an interpretation of the principle as concerning localization and not function: "formulation of the PP does not rule out the misleading interpretation of the extended mind as ´the externalizing of internal processes.´ Nor does it rule out identifying external processes/vehicles as cognitive because of the relevant similarity of the external with the internal."[590] He continues to stress that "[f]ocus on the function, not the location, is the purpose of the PP. It is not a simple comparative exercise; if external process X is sufficiently similar to internal process Y, then X is cognitive."[591] Even though one takes the functionalist view of the principle, there are phenomena, such as Gallagher's mental institutions that, on the one hand, clearly enable and sometimes constitute our cognitive processes and, on the other hand, clearly violate this parity principle. They violate it by transcending it, by transcending the ability of a single mind to "do in the head" such phenomena as "legal systems, research practices and cultural institutions."[592] Yet, as Gallagher rightfully claims, a violation or a lack of parity with internal mental states shouldn't "disqualify such processes from being considered cognitive if they are processes to which the human organism is linked in the right way."[593]

Considering the above definition of extended mind and the various challenges to it, I take the extension of the mind to be a "cognitive field" or "mind field" which can be conceived of analogically to Teed Rockwell's formulation of mind given in the first chapter.[594] This mind field contains both immediate and distant tools for extending the mind: both a socially inherited know-how how to "use" a tool to extend cognitive processing and the immediate availability of such a tool, including features such as, among others, the presence or absence of a tool, its state, conditions for use as well as factors motivating or demotivating the use of a specific tool. Part of this field is a human mind as defined in the previous section, alongside tools for extension including material artifacts, sign systems for communication (especially language), other minds present immediately as other people to a certain mind, or distantly through mental institutions and other artifacts (here I am thinking especially of such material-mental, semiotic products as letters, journals, books, movies etc.). Such a field does not exist in a vacuum and is embedded in a specific time and place which is distinguished by various features: dimensions, atmospheric conditions, sensory stimulation, landscape and so on. In other words, approaching Faulkner, it is significant and – in the parlance of the discourse on the extended mind – constitutive that the

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[590] Menary, "Extended Mind," 5.
[591] Menary, "Extended Mind," 6.
[592] Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 6.
[593] Gallagher, "Socially Extended Mind," 6.
[594] Rockwell, "Extended Cognition," 747-748.

characters of *Absalom, Absalom!* extend their minds in various ways in either the heat, dampness and the sweet "*pervading of everywhere of wistaria*" (115) of the Yoknapatawpha county or "in the cold air, the iron New England dark" (303).

4.2. Dire Tellings

Faulkner layers his palimpsest of a narrative, "a palimpsest of designs – plans, schemes, and narrative patterns – imposed by characters, narrators, readers, and […] Faulkner himself"[595] predominantly by staging scenes of storytelling. While these layers are often identified with individual narrators of the story (or stories),[596] it is a palpable fact of the novel's texture that the narrating that produces the narrative takes place mostly in pairs coupling a teller and a listener. The narrative and narrating union of Quentin and Shreve is often given privilege and, thus also authority for various reasons: the amount of text it produces, the final position in the series of telling unions, and the "happy marriage of speaking and hearing" (253) they achieve. However, the other pairs also achieve various degrees of coupling, of union and it must be and will be observed that Quentin and Shreve´s narrative marriage has its ups and downs. In fact, those other pairings are very telling and bear on Quentin and Shreve´s narrative situation.

I will focus on these scenes of storytelling which are responsible for the production of the Sutpens´ story. An important point must be made here. There are no four or five narrators in *Absalom, Absalom!* as is often the claim.[597] The exclusion of Thomas Sutpen himself as a narrator is unwarranted. It seems that it is generally made because of his mediated status: he is distanced by occupying the story level the narrative produces, whereas the other narrators (also) occupy the narrative level. Based on this diegetic hierarchy, Rosa Coldfield who is a character in the story like Sutpen is, nevertheless, considered a narrator because she occupies the "present" of the narrative level. Yet, both undertake the practice of narrating in the novel. However, if the deciding factor is being contained in (others') narrative, then Rosa, Quentin, Mr. Compson and Shreve should also be ruled out as narrators since they are contained in the discourse of the impersonal narrator.[598] The argument for Sutpen as a narrator is strengthened by the fact that he participates in the structure of storytelling couples in which the narrative of

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[595] Dirk Kuyk, Jr., *Sutpen's Design: Interpreting Faulkner's* Absalom, Absalom! (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 29.
[596] Lynn Gartrell Levins, "The Four Narrative Perspectives in *Absalom, Absalom!*," *PMLA* 85, no.1 (January 1970): 35-47.
[597] See for example Levins, "Four Narrative Perspectives"; Doneskey, "Five Narrators"; Irwin, *Doubling and Incest*, 26-27; or Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *A Glance Beyond Doubt: Narration, Representation, Subjectivity* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996), 25, 43.
[598] Kuyk, *Sutpen's Design*, 35.

Absalom, Absalom! unfolds. My focus thus will be on narrative pairs Sutpen-Grandfather Compson, Rosa Coldfield-Quentin Compson, Mr. Compson-Quentin and Quentin-Shreve/Shreve-Quentin and their narrative situations.

The first thing that strikes one on inspecting the narrative situations is how hostile, how "unconducive to the work at hand"[599], the labor of storytelling, as Charles Hannon puts it, they actually are. Take the very beginning of the novel which introduces Rosa and Quentin´s scene of storytelling:

> From a little after two oclock until almost sundown of the long still hot weary dead September afternoon they sat in what Miss Coldfield still called the office because her father had called it that – a dim hot airless room with the blinds all closed an fastened for forty-three summers […] and which (as the sun shone fuller and fuller on that side of the house) became latticed with yellow slashes full of dust motes which Quentin thought of as being flecks of the dead old dried paint itself blown inward from the scaling blinds as wind might have blown them. (3)

The scene is not conducive to storytelling, taking place in a stifling heat and dusty vacuum of an old house sealed with blinds. Since the house is practically a tomb filled with "the dim coffin-smelling gloom" (4), the environment is hostile to life itself. Rosa herself is not an enchanting figure of a storyteller – a grotesque old lady who has features of a child and, besides conjuring up ghosts, looks like a ghost, a vision of death herself:

> […] opposite Quentin, Miss Coldfield in the eternal black which she had worn for forty-three years now, whether for sister, father, or nothusband none knew, sitting so bolt upright in the straight hard chair that was so tall for her that her legs hung straight and rigid as if she had iron shinbones and ankles, clear of the floor with that air of impotent and static rage like children's feet, and talking in that grim haggard amazed voice […] and the rank smell of female old flesh long embattled in virginity while the van haggard face watched him above the faint triangle of lace at wrists and throat from the too tall chair in which she resembled a crucified child […] (3-4)

Contrary to the obstruction these conditions might seem to be and to the obstruction Hannon takes them to be, seeing storytelling as "more than an act of narrative diegesis; it is a metaphor for labor"[600], they are in fact one of the constitutive factors of the extension of mind

[599] Charles Hannon, *Faulkner and the Discourses of Culture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 81.

[600] Hannon, *Faulkner*, 82. Interestingly, Hannon also addresses the point I raise about readers' privileging Quentin and Shreve as narrators putting it in the context of 1930s Hollywood: "The tendency among Faulkner's readers to seek out Quentin and Shreve as the two storytellers 'really' responsible for the narrative of Sutpen's life reiterates

in *Absalom, Absalom!* While some of the instances of dire consequences can be seen as merely causal, contributing to or influencing the extension, some are clearly constitutive as the extension is not realized at other points in the novel. These dire conditions take on various forms throughout the novel, but always become factors in the storytelling process. They all share a visible physical effect on the narrators that receives notable attention: they are described by the impersonal narrator while also commented upon by the narrators who are affected themselves. While potentially constitutive, they do not exist in a vacuum and are only one of various factors of the novel´s narrative situations.

Taking Sutpen's often denied narrative role as an example, one can observe the raw environment in which the storytelling takes place, i.e., during the hunt for the escaped French architect working on building Sutpen's Hundred. The circumstances of the situation directly shape Sutpen's narrating: "He and Grandfather were sitting on a log now because the dogs had faulted. […] It was three hours before one of the wild niggers (the dogs wouldn't leave the tree; they said he was in it) found where he had come down. So he and Grandfather sat on the log and talked, and one of the wild niggers went back to camp for grub and they ate, and he told Grandfather some more of it while they waited" (193). Sutpen's willingness to tell is conditioned on him being alone with Grandfather: "Then the other guests began to ride up, and after a while the niggers came back with the coffee pot and a deer haunch and the whiskey (and one bottle of champagne which they had overlooked, Grandfather said) and he stopped talking for a while" (196).

Although hunting and in the discomfort of the swamp, the scene of Sutpen telling his story to Grandfather is the primal scene of storytelling with the two "sitting again now, having decided that they had gone far enough for that night, and the niggers had made camp and cooked supper and they (he and Grandfather) drank some of the whiskey and ate and then sat before the fire drinking some more of the whiskey and he telling it all over" (199). Around a campfire, a storyteller passes on a tale, an experience. Yet, Sutpen fails in the crucial feature of this ancient narrative rite: connection with the audience. The most remarkable aspect of Sutpen's narration is its disregard for comprehensibility, "for cause and effect […] logical sequence and continuity" (199):

> […] Sutpen was talking about it again, telling him again before he realised that this was
> some more of it […] He was telling some more of it, already into what he was telling
> yet still without telling how he got to where he was nor even how what he was now

involved in (obviously at least twenty years old now, crouching behind a window in the dark and firing the muskets through it which someone else loaded and handed to him) came to occur, getting himself and Grandfather both into that besieged Haitian room as simply as he got himself to the West Indies by saying that he decided to go to the West Indies and so he went there; this anecdote no deliberate continuation of the other one but merely called to his mind by the picture of the niggers and torches in front of them; he not telling how he got there, what had happened during the six years between that day when he, a boy of fourteen who knew no tongue but English and not much of that, had decided to go to the West Indies and become rich, and this night when, overseer or foreman or something to a French sugar planter, he was barricade in the house with the planters family […] (198-199)

What Sutpen's narrative especially eschews are conventions of realism, of verisimilitude:

He went to the West Indies. That's how he said it: not how he managed to find where the West Indies were nor where ships departed from to go there, nor how he got to where the ships were and got in one nor how he liked the sea nor about the hardships of a sailors life and it must have been hardship indeed for him, a boy of fourteen or fifteen who had never seen the ocean before, going to sea in 1823. He just said, ´So I went to the West Indies´ […] (193)

Sutpen denies its audience (including the readers) that prime realistic plot of the subject being formed – the bildungsroman: as Philip M. Weinstein describes it, "realism is crafted to tell that 'common sense' story (even as modernism is crafted to call it into question) – the story of *a subject coming to know the territory*. The subject comes to know by learning (through trial and error) to recognize and exploit the arrangements of the external world (nature or culture, objects or others) in which he or she moves."[601] Sutpen is a prime hero of realism, progressing from obscurity and ignorance to knowledge and power, thus embodying the Enlightenment episteme which goes hand in hand with domination and exploitation: "Narratives invested in instrumental reason and aligned with its secular embodiment – ever-expansive Western capitalism – intimate all too clearly that the subject´s engagement with the object-as-known has

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[601] Philip M. Weinstein, *Unknowing: The Work of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 24. Kuyk relates Sutpen's story generically to a picaresque novel: "As Sutpen talks, General Compson notices in him the traits that usually mark the hero of an episodic, elementary quest-romance. Making Sutpen sound like the young King-Arthur-to-be […] Sutpen, indeed, often breaks his story into episodes. […] he is not the hero of a quest-romance but much more the blinded butt of its reverse, the ironic quest in which the hero fails to attain his goal." Kuyk, *Sutpen's Design*, 85-86.

degenerated into an engagement with the object-as-commodity – the object as mere counter in a schema of acquisition."[602] At the same time, by refusing to impart details fleshing out the story of his life, Sutpen the master avoids being mastered. Hence the proliferation of stories of his life and legacy: Faulkner's modernist attack on "realist narrative´s constitutive compact joining subject, space, and time"[603] becomes the problem he serves his narrators and the readers to solve and stages their struggle to do so knowing that it is an impossible task.

Sutpen's sketchy narrative is motivated by his cognitive aim. The failure to connect with the audience is no shortcoming on the narrator's part because that has never been Sutpen's design. Sutpen's story betrays the signs of one telling for himself rather than for others. His aim for the telling is not to seek a connection through a meaningful and engaging story and its telling, but an analysis of his design to find the fatal mistake which prevents it from succeeding.[604] As a result, Grandfather is present to the telling through no virtue of his own: he is a replaceable stand-in for an audience for which Sutpen has merely a functional need. This disengagement from the audience goes the "opposite" way as well, since the protagonist of the story seems to be as replaceable to Sutpen as who listens to him telling it: "[…] still it was not absolutely clear – the how and the why he was there and what he was – since he was not talking about himself. He was telling a story. He was not bragging about something he had done; he was just telling a story about something a man named Thomas Sutpen had experienced, which would still have been the same story if the man had had no name at all, if it had been told about any man or no man over whiskey at night" (199). There is no empathy nor sympathy towards the protagonist of the story from the creator of that story, albeit they are the same person.

Despite this disconnect, Sutpen's narrative is still a means of extension: the verbal, oral structure of linguistic signs ordered in the form of his narrative containing the bare essentials of his story provides him with better means of inspection, of scrutinizing his progress, his design than were he only thinking about it "in his head". This narrative scaffolding does not extend to include the audience. Grandfather's presence is necessitated not by Sutpen's need for him, but by the logic of the story of *Absalom, Absalom!* as Sutpen's only friend and by the logic of its narrative as a medium in the transmission of the story from the past to the present (or from the present to the future from the point of view of the moment of telling), i.e. from Thomas Sutpen to Quentin Compson. This is the reason that Sutpen's narrative does not conform to the demands

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[602] Weinstein, *Unknowing*, 114.
[603] Weinstein, *Unknowing*, 45.
[604] Cf. Kuyk, *Sutpen's Design*, 87: "As he gives General Compson the synopsis, Sutpen has abandoned storytelling in order to present the crux of his problem. He is the narrator as pragmatic analyst: he is narrating as a way to decide what to do."

of chronology, of cause and effect, and why the temporal scheme of the narrative eschews expectations of reality, verisimilitude: paradoxical as it may sound, storytelling is not the *raison d´être* for Sutpen's act of narration.

The scene of storytelling between Quentin and his father also takes place under adverse conditions. The "twilight following sixty days without rain and forty-two without even dew" (71) not only keeps suffocating, but also makes reading difficult:

[…] Mr Compson, carrying the letter, emerged from the house, snapping on the porch light as he passed. "You will probably have to go inside to read it," Mr Compson said.

"Maybe I can read it here all right," Quentin said.

"Perhaps you are right," Mr Compson said. "Maybe even the light of day, let alone this –" he indicated the single globe stained and bug-fouled from the long summer and which even when clean gave off but little light – "which man had to invent to his need since, relieved of the onus of sweating to live, he is apparently reverting (or evolving) back into a nocturnal animal, would be too much for it, for them. […] Perhaps you are right. Perhaps any more light than this would be too much for it." (71)

The chiaroscuro of the summer twilight and its play of dark, light and the shades in between not only becomes a potent metaphor of race, but also introduces a major environmental feature: "He sat again, Quentin sitting again too, and took up the cigar from the veranda rail, the coal glowing again, the wistaria colored smoke drifting again unwinded across Quentin's face as Mr Compson raised his feet once more to the railing, the letter in his hand and the hand looking almost as dark as a negros against his linen leg" (71). The smell of wistaria pervades Jefferson enough to "color" smoke and the novel enough to become a constitutive feature of the narrative from the very beginning: "There was a wistaria vine blooming for the second time that summer […] There would be the dim coffin-smelling gloom sweet and oversweet with the twice-bloomed wistaria against the outer wall by the savage quiet September sun […]" (3-4).

Wistaria is the smell of a season and a time of day made more intensive and symbolic of the South by both seasonal and regional contrast: "It was a summer of wistaria. The twilight was full of it […] the odor, the scent, which five months later Mr Compson's letter would carry up from Mississippi and over the long iron New England snow and into Quentin's sitting-room at Harvard" (23). The "*pervading everywhere of wistaria* […] *as though of all springs yet to capitulate condensed into one spring, one summer* […] *that sweet conjunction of root bloom and urge and hour and weather*" (115) is for Quentin inextricably bound with other perceptions – the cigar smell, the drifting of fireflies, the specific shadowy world of the twilight – so much so that a letter from Mr. Compson, "the white oblong of envelope, the familiar blurred

mechanical *Jefferson Jan 10 1910 Miss* and then, opened, the *My dear son* in his father's sloped fine hand" (141), is able to evoke all this Southern appendage, "that dead summer twilight – the wistaria, the cigar-smell, the fireflies – attenuated up from Mississippi and into this strange room across this strange iron New England snow […] bringing with it that very September evening itself" (141-142).

Not only that, the wistaria is firmly associated with "Father" to the extent that when Quentin (con)fuses Shreve with Mr Compson, he is suddenly transported to the scene of storytelling between him and his father and to the smell of wistaria: "'Yes,' Quentin said. *He sounds just like Father* he thought, glancing (his face quiet, reposed, curiously almost sullen) for a moment at Shreve […] smelling (Quentin) the cigar and the wistaria, seeing the fireflies blowing and winking in the September dusk. *Just exactly like Father* […]" (147-148). Although the smell is mostly embedded in this single memory of one evening, the wistaria, in the end, stands for the South itself: "It began to take shape in its same curious, light, gravity-defying attitude – the once-folded sheet out of the wistaria Mississippi summer, the cigar smell, the random blowing of the fireflies" (301). It is symptomatic that the words that come right after this unspoken vision of Quentin´s are Shreve's exclamation "The South" (301).

This synecdochical nature of wistaria is underscored in the passage introducing the shift of the narrative from the South to New England. Similar to the opening of the whole novel and the introduction to the storytelling situation of Quentin and Miss Rosa, this opening also stresses the atmospheric conditions as relevant for the storytelling as it starts with noting snow and "hand red and raw with cold" (141). It is significant that the Southern environment is brought into that of New England by means of the letter, although it is "attenuated" (141). The continuous description of the North as "strange" in relation to the letter which lies "on a strange lamplit table in Cambridge" brought to "this strange room across this strange iron New England snow" [141]) is used to reverse the displacement of the Southern product, not only the letter, but Quentin himself, and of the South itself that are literally "out of place".

Smell, i.e. the composition of the air the narrators breathe could be a causal factor of storytelling merely evoking memories and setting a mood were it not for the suggestion that what makes Quentin a Southerner is the very air he breathes, which, in effect, means that it is the very air that makes up his mind, constitutes it: "It would be three hours before he would learn why she had sent for him because this part of it, this first part of it, Quentin already knew. It was a part of his twenty years' heritage of breathing the same air and hearing his father talk about the man; a part of the town's – Jefferson's – eighty years heritage of the same air which the man himself had breathed […]" (7). Breathing air means here what it means – living: what

makes one a Southerner is living in the place, and, vice versa, what makes others not Southerners is not living there. Trying to understand the difference between himself and Quentin, Shreve articulates it exactly in these terms:

> Because its something my people haven't got. Or if we have got it, it all happened long ago across the water and so now there aint anything to look at every day to remind us of it. We dont live among defeated grandfathers and freed slaves (or have I got it backward and was it your folks that are free and the niggers that lost?) and bullets in the dining room table and such, to be always reminding us to never forget. What is it? something you live and breathe in like air? (289)[605]

Quentin has been breathing this air his whole life and as his lungs are full of the air, his mind and body are full of the South: "Quentin had grown up with that; the mere names were interchangeable and almost myriad. His childhood was full of them; his very body was an empty hall echoing with sonorous defeated names; he was not a being, an entity, he was a commonwealth. He was a barracks filled with stubborn back-looking ghosts" (7). The most significant component of this air is the all-pervading smell of wistaria. All parts of the plant are toxic and the effects of ingestion include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, dizziness, confusion or speech problems.[606] Although inspiration is a different kind of intake, the implication here is that the mania of the South, the obsession with race is a delusion and toxic at the same time. Wistaria is a suggestive image, a literalized symbol of the delusional and sickening yearning for racial purity.

4.3. Embodying Extension

The starkest embodiment of the influence the environment exerts is Rosa. This might seem counterintuitive, given that one encounters her "in the eternal black which she had worn for forty-three years now, whether for sister, father, or nothusband […] sitting so bolt upright in the straight hard chair that was so tall for her that her legs hung straight and rigid as if she had iron shinbones and ankles" (3). She has been living in a "latticed" (3) house, shut out of the world, isolated from human contact, human touch, becoming a virtual cadaver. Yet, it is by the fact of being reft of bodily union, of connection through her mother's death at childbirth, her

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[605] Shreve's question can be taken as rhetorical since he has already stated this earlier in his interaction with Quentin in the affirmative: "But you were not listening, because you knew it all already, had learned, absorbed it already without the medium of speech somehow from having been born and living beside it, with it, as children will and do: so that what your father was saying did not tell you anything so much as it struck, word by word, the resonant strings of remembering […] No, you were not listening; you didn't have to […]" (172-173).
[606] Lewis S. Nelson, Richard D. Shih, Michael J. Balick, *Handbook of Poisonous and Injurious Plants* (New York: Springer, 2007), 299.

aunt's escape, her father's self-imposed solitary confinement, and Sutpen's proposal that she thinks of the body so much. She yearns for it and this yearning is what she has in common with Quentin whose incestuous feelings for his sister find such a powerful resonance in the story he tells in collaboration with Shreve.[607]

Rosa's painful awareness of human bodily existence is reflected in her ideas: she explicitly advocates an embodied and enactive phenomenology of human remembering. For her, and in her experience, it is the body itself that remembers, not the mind:

> *That is the substance of remembering – sense, sight, smell: the muscles with which we see and hear and feel – not mind, not thought: there is no such thing as memory: the brain recalls just what the muscles grope for: no more, no less: and its resultant sum is usually incorrect and false and worthy only of the name of dream. – See how the sleeping outflung hand, touching the bedside candle, remembers pain, springs back and free while mind and brain sleep on and only make of this adjacent heat some trashy myth of reality's escape: of that same sleeping hand, in sensuous marriage with some dulcet surface, is transformed by that same sleeping brain and mind into that same figment-stuff warped out of all experience. Ay, grief goes, fades; we know that – but ask the tear ducts if they have forgotten how to weep.* (115)

In Rosa's theory of memory, it is the sensory perception (sense, sight, smell) that encodes reality into memories, the body (muscles) that stores it, and mind comes at the point of retrieval. Mind is the reason for distortion of memory, for the "trashy myth", the "figment-stuff" and so, it is the body that sanctions veracity; the body is the authority on the preserved memory of the past. Not insignificantly, Rosa uses an erotic image for her tactile example of a "sleeping hand, in sensuous marriage with some dulcet surface" – a detail revealing her heightened awareness of sensory perception and yearning for touch. It is noteworthy that Rosa's whole narrative is an act of remembering, an act which recalls the past and lets it irrupt into the

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[607] Cf. Irwin: "[…] there is another, more obvious reason for Rosa's choice – the resemblance, and thus the natural affinity, between Rosa and Quentin. They are both virgins who have refused incest, Quentin with his sister, Rosa with her brother-in-law. They are both obsessed by their frustrated desire, and that frustration has turned desire to hatred." Irwin, *Doubling and Incest*, 75. Eric J. Sundquist speaks of Rosa's hyperdistillation of erotic memories in a kind of courtship with Quentin: "While she does not finally dominate the novel, Rosa's obsessive rehearsals for Quentin of Sutpen's failed dynasty, the murder of Bon, and her own tortured courtship by the 'ogre' generate the atmosphere of spent dreams and feverishly maintained innocence in and against which subsequent versions of the tragedy are played out. The novel's magnificent opening scene between Rosa and Quentin is itself a kind of courtship, a ritual immersion of Quentin into the gothic convulsions of Rosa's fading by hyperdistilled erotic memories. […] The 'shadow-realm of make-believe' in which her passion lives, the 'fairy-tale' she creates for herself and the young man she never sees, even in death, brings Rosa closer to incest than her later courtship by Sutpen will, and it brings her close to an act of miscegenation she does not recognize as such." Sundquist, *Faulkner*, 111-112.

present. It is her incantation which raises the dead, raises the ghost of Sutpen. True to her own theory, her account is at points "incorrect and false and worthy only of the name of dream" – it mythifies, it transforms:

> […] talking in that grim haggard amazed voice until at last listening would renege and hearing-sense self-confound and the long-dead object of her impotent yet indomitable frustration would appear, as though by outraged recapitulation evoked, quiet inattentive and harmless, out of the biding and dreamy and victorious dust. […] Out of quiet thunderclap he would abrupt (man-horse-demon) upon a scene peaceful and decorous as a schoolprize water color, faint sulphur-reek still in hair clothes and beard, with grouped behind him his band of wild niggers like beasts half tamed to walk upright like men, in attitudes wild and reposed, and manacled among them the French architect with his air grim, haggard, and tatter-ran. (3-4)

Rosa is a philosopher and a poet of the body. Her ideas are radical, going beyond an embodied theory of mind to an opposition between body and mind as two, often warring principles with the body having the upper hand. In her poetic description of her staircase *tête-à-tête* with Clytie, she opposes bodily phenomenology with the mind in the form of Gallagher's mental institutions – the racist social conventions of her time:

> *Then she touched me, and then I did stop dead. Possibly even then my body did not stop, since I seemed to be aware of it thrusting blindly still against the solid yet imponderable weight (she not owner: instrument; I still say that) of that will to bar me from the stairs; possibly the sound of the other voice, the single word spoken from the stair-head above us, had already broken and parted us before it (my body) had even paused. I do not know. I know only that my entire being seemed to run at blind full tilt into something monstrous and immobile, with a shocking impact too soon and too quick to be mere amazement and outrage at that black arresting and untimorous hand on my white woman's flesh. Because there is something in the touch of flesh with flesh which abrogates, cuts sharp and straight across the devious intricate channels of decorous ordering, which enemies as well as lovers know because it makes them both:– touch and touch of that which is the citadel of the central I-Am's privat☐own: not spirit, soul; th☐ liquorish and ungirdled mind is anyone's to take in any darkened hallway of this earthly tenement. But let flesh touch with flesh, and watch the fall of all the eggshell shibboleth of caste and color too.* (111-112)

Here, the social dimension or existence of the body makes its mark: the first sentence potently hints at the fact that the mere act of touching a white person by a black person resulted

in an act of killing in the South. The suggestion is reversed: unlike the descriptive "death" of the white body here, a transracial touch could amount to a death of a black body when the white ruling class took such things as a simple touch as an excuse for lynching black bodies. In Rosa's philosophy, in this or any encounter between the body and some "decorous ordering" of the mind, the body wins because it is the most basic way of experiencing the world. The body in her description is endowed with the most basic existence – animalistic: "it (my body)" moves (runs blindly, hitting an obstacle at speed) and is animated by instincts (amazement and outrage). There is no embodied mind, nor minded body here, only "flesh": mind and body are in opposition, conceptualized as separate.

Underlying Rosa's philosophy is her own experience of the direst bodily experience of life: survival. Without any means of her own, Rosa moves in with Judith and Clytie at Sutpen's Hundred and creates a bond that is encapsulated in her potent phrase "triumvirate mother-woman" (131). Although the body "abrogates" the mental institution of slavery in the previous passage, the separation of white and black still persists as Rosa cries "Take your hand off me, nigger!" (112) when Clytie touches her. In the following description of their existence together, the body transcends any divisions – not only racial, but those of gender and age as well:

> So we waited for him. We led the busy eventless lives of three nuns in a barren and poverty-stricken convent […] And amicably, not as two white women and a negress, not as three negroes or three whites, not even as three women, but merely as three creatures who still possessed the need to eat but took no pleasure in it, the need to sleep but from no joy in weariness or regeneration, and in whom sex was some forgotten atrophy like the rudimentary gills we call the tonsils or the still-opposable thumbs for old climbing. We kept the house, what part of it we lived in, used … we grew and tended and harvested with our own hands the food we ate, made and worked that garden just as we cooked and ate the food which came out of it: with no distinction among the three of us of age or color but just as to who could build this fire or stir this pot or weed this bed or carry this apron full of corn to the mill for meal with least cost to the general good in time of expense of other duties. It was as though we were one being, interchangeable and indiscriminate, which kept that garden growing, spun thread and wove the cloth we wore, hunted and found and rendered the meagre ditch-side herbs to protect and guarantee what spartan compromise we dared or had the time to make with illness […] (124-125)

The group cognition that develops among the three women is constituted by the dire conditions of their existence. Under such conditions any means of distinction, the "eggshell

shibboleths", fall off to ensure survival. It is no more than that: all that is done is done with "no pleasure", "no joy". Their existence boiled down to the bare survival of the body without any extra marks of race, gender or age, the three women's bodies are animalistic ("rudimentary gills", "the still-opposable thumbs"): they go through the motions without reflection. It is not only sex that is atrophied, but also life itself. It is clear from Rosa's description that the three women are quite different, so any union would otherwise be improbable, if not impossible (125-126). As other cognitive phenomena, the basis of this mental extension is purely bodily and enactive for Rosa – the mind is left out of the picture because it is superfluous for the union that ensures survival:

> *We were three strangers. I do not know what Clytie thought, what life she led which the food we raised and cooked in unison, the cloth we spun and wove together, nourished and sheltered. But I explained that because she and I were open, ay honorable, enemies. But I did not even know what Judith thought and felt. We slept in the same room, the three of us (this for more than to conserve the firewood which we had to carry in ourselves. We did it for safety.* (126)

It is ironic that Rosa, a poet and a thinker, expresses eloquently ideas about the foundational role of the body in its animalistic state and the superfluousness and possible alienation of abstract ideas. This is due to the way ideas have failed her and those around her – all of them atrophied in the name of some "shibboleth". Nevertheless, it is the union of the "*three weak yet indomitable women*" (127) in which she finds meaning and, thus, raises her survival above the mere animalistic existence:

> *I watched the miragy antics of men and women – my father, my sister, Thomas Sutpen, Judith, Henry, Charles Bon – called honor, principle, marriage, love, bereavement, death; the child who watching him was not a child but one of that triumvirate mother-woman which we three, Judith Clytie and I, made, which fed and clothed and warmed the static shell and so gave vent and scope to the fierce vain illusion and so said, ´At last my life is worth something, even though it only shields and guards the antic fury of an insane child.´* (131)

4.4. Resemblance Beyond Words: Scaffolding the Mind Through Speech

Although the immediate context, the natural environment as well as cultural heritage have their sway, it is language, the art of storytelling that is the narrator's main tool of connecting with its audience, of extending their mind to create a unit with the listeners. Throughout the novel, the

act of telling a story fulfils "[t]he role of spoken language itself as a kind of triggering cognitive technology."[608] This "technology" can be used merely for pragmatic purposes. As analysed above, in Sutpen's narration, spoken language fulfils the pragmatic role of revising his design. Rather than a story-telling, his oral account of his own life resembles a sort of bug report of a program, as one might say today, going through the lines of code looking for the one part that makes it glitch.

Rosa has her own pragmatic purpose for telling the story as well: she needs Quentin to accompany her to Sutpen's Hundred for one final visit.[609] Yet, Rosa's storytelling seems to be about something else as well. The fact that Quentin cannot pinpoint Rosa's motivation suggests a more profound reason for her narration. It is obvious that the story of the "demon" that Rosa tells Quentin is a verbalized version of what she has been turning over in her head for forty-three years closed in the tomb of her house. Although such a verbalization could be cathartic for her, the urge to tell is more universal; it is existential in fact. It is the same reason that Judith gives as an explanation of her letter to Quentin's grandmother – to make a mark in (collective) memory, to leave a trace of one's ephemeral presence:

> Because you make so little impression, you see. You get born and you try this and you don't know why only you keep on trying it […] and then all of a sudden its all over and all you have left is a block of stone with scratches on it provided there was someone to remember to have the marble scratched and set up or had time to, and it rains on it and the sun shines on it and after a while they don't even remember the name and what the scratches were trying to tell, and it doesn't matter. And so maybe if you could go to someone, the stranger the better, and give them something – a scrap of paper – something, anything, it not to mean anything in itself and them not even to read it or keep it, not even bother to throw it away or destroy it, at least it would be something just because it would have happened, be remembered even if only from passing from one hand to another, one mind to another, and it would be at least a scratch, something, something that might make a mark on something that *was* once for the reason that it can die someday, while the block of stone cant be *is* because it never can become *was* because it cant ever die or perish. (100-101)

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[608] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 69-70.

[609] Kuyk, *Sutpen's Design*, 81: "Rosa´s melodramatic narrative does no doubt fit her own frame of mind, but her narrative is more than mere self-expression. As a writer and, more exactly, as an oral storyteller she narrates the story so that it will fascinate and persuade her audience. That is, she uses the story to get Quentin to accompany her to Sutpen's Hundred."

This motivation to narrate is inherent to all storytellers but is especially dear to Rosa who has a keen sense of the fragility of bodily existence. Having known deprivation of various kinds, Rosa's desire to tell her story, a product of her mind is a perfect complement to her philosophy of body: since life is short and can have the form of bare survival, the mind can live on, can transcend the limits on one's body in the form of a story. In a Benjaminian fashion, Judith conditions the possibility of making a mark, the potential of immortality on the fact of passing: only in death can one transcend life. A tombstone will not do because it "cant be *is* because it never can become *was* because it cant ever die or perish" (101) and so Rosa tries to escape her tombstone while alive by telling her story to Quentin, by making a mark on his mind. Judith's explanation for her letter underscores the narrative situation of *Absalom, Absalom!* including in her theory even the essential circulation of stories "from one hand to another, one mind to another" (101).

Endowed with such a power on the one hand, language and storytelling are, on the other hand, undermined in most of the novel when it comes to their ability to extend from one mind to another. What the couplings of narrator and listener fail to achieve, with the exception of Quentin and Shreve, is the cognitive extension afforded by language between minds, the "spark […] that lights up the world"[610] as Erving Goffman put it. As Goffman observes, the problem of achieving "some happy marriage of speaking and hearing" (253) is the appropriate dynamic between the people involved in an encounter involving linguistic interaction: "These two tendencies, that of the speaker to scale down his expressions and that of the listeners to scale up their interests, each in the light of the others' capacities and demands, form the bridge that people build to one another, allowing them to meet for a moment of talk in a communion of reciprocally sustained involvement."[611] In *Absalom, Absalom!*, bridging the gap between minds through language fails for various reasons.

Although she is capable of extension due to her environment, Rosa fails to connect with Quentin through her narration. The linguistic engagement from her audience boils down to "Yessum" (5, 14) and "Nome" (13) in all of chapter 1. Quentin's mind wonders, trying to make sense of the story: "*It seems that this demon – his name was Sutpen – (Colonel Sutpen) – Colonel Sutpen. Who came out of nowhere and without warning upon the land with a band of strange niggers and built a plantation – (Tore violently a plantation, Miss Rosa Coldfield says) – tore violently*" (5). It also wonders about the reason for her telling: "Whatever her reason for choosing him, whether it was that or not, the getting to it, Quentin thought, was taking a long

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[610] Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 117.
[611] Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 116-117.

time" (8). This is a farcical instance of dramatic irony, coming at the beginning of a novel about telling that seems to have no end and from a narrator who takes the most time to "get to it", at least judging by the number of pages of the book.

Rosa sporadically tries to engage Quentin explicitly by addressing him. She tries to give an example of her theory of remembering by drawing his attention to their immediate surrounding: "*Do you mark how the wistaria, sun-impacted on this wall here, distils and penetrates this room as though (light-unimpeded) by secret and attritive progress from mote to mote of obscurity's myriad components? That is the substance of remembering – sense, sight smell* [...]" (115). At another point, she draws attention to her own narrative discourse: "*He was the light-blinded bat-like image of his own torment cast by the fierce demoniac lantern up from beneath the earths crust and hence in retrograde, reverse; from abysmal and chaotic dark to eternal and abysmal dark completing his descending (do you mark the gradation?) ellipsis* [...]" (140). The problem is Quentin who very often, as in the case of the previous passage and his address, "was not listening" (140). His mind regularly wanders and, being preoccupied with "something that is unconnected with what is being talked about at the time and even unconnected with the other person's present, at least in their capacity as fellow-participants"[612], Quentin becomes alienated from the storytelling.

There is a similar alienation between Quentin and his father. Except for the first sentence spoken by him, Quentin once responds "No, sir" (48) in the whole of chapter 3; otherwise, this is a monologue by Mr. Compson. The one-sidedness of the interaction between Quentin and his father is announced at the beginning of the second chapter in the designation of the day as "a day of listening" (23). Quentin merely passively receives; he is not really engaged. A typical interaction between him and his father during Mr. Compson's narration is a curt, dispassionate exchange whose sole function seems to be simply a confirmation of attention, of having received the acoustic information, and the equally formal routine affirmation of the presence of the other:

> "Then one afternoon she died peacefully of no particular ailment and was buried in her wedding gown."
>
> "Oh," Quentin said.
>
> "Yes. But there was one afternoon in the summer of 70 when one of these graves (there were only three here then) was actually watered by tears." (156-157)

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[612] Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 117.

This minimalistic interaction of "Oh's" and "Yeses" suggests going through the motions of a well-known story. After all, Quentin frequently complains "*I have heard too much, I have been told too much; I have had to listen to too much, too long*" (168). Incidentally, given how verbose Mr. Compson is, Quentin's constant remark on having to listen to too much for too long can prosaically mean just that his father talks too much, too long – this would be another reason for how disengaged Quentin is while listening to him. These sighs burdened with knowledge sometimes come along with the realization that the story – both in its specifics and as a synecdoche of all other similar stories that make up the South – has been ingrained in him to the point that he is able to fill in the details himself and that in the exact words he has heard them told in: "[…] and last of all, the other woman, Judith (*who, not bereaved, did not need to mourn* Quentin thought, thinking, *I have had to listen too long*) […]" (157). In this regard, Quentin becomes part of the problem, propagating the story further on.

Another sigh comes when he recognizes in Shreve's story not only the same ideas, but almost the same words used by his own father. Here is a passage spoken by Mr Compson followed by Quentin's recognition of it in Shreve's discourse:

> They lead beautiful lives – women. Lives not only divorced from, but irrevocably excommunicated from, all reality. That's why although their deaths, the instant of dissolution, are of no importance to them since they have a courage and fortitude in the face of pain and annihilation which would make the most spartan man resemble a puling boy, yet to them their funerals and graves, the little puny affirmations of spurious immortality set above their slumber, are of incalculable importance. (156)

> *Yes, to too much, too long. I didn't need to listen then but I had to hear it and now I am having to hear it all over again because he sounds just like Father: Beautiful lives – women do. In very breathing they draw meat and drink from some beautiful attenuation of unreality in which the shades and shapes of facts – of birth and bereavement, of suffering and bewilderment and despair – move with the substanceless decorum of lawn party charades, perfect in gesture and without significance or any ability to hurt.* (171)

Not only is there often a failure to connect through linguistic means between narrator and listener, but there are also suggestions that language and speech are inadequate means of communication and, thus, of extension. One reason for Quentin's inattention, for his constant "hearing without having to listen" (102) is the fact that he knows the story by other means. As already mentioned above, it is the very environment, the climate of the South that makes him know the story, as Shreve reminds him: "But you were not listening, because you knew it all already, had learned, absorbed it already without the medium of speech somehow from having

been born and living beside it, with it, as children will and do: so that what your father was saying did not tell you anything so much as it struck, word by word, the resonant strings of remembering […] No, you were not listening; you didn't have to […]" (172-173).

Often, the novel implies that as a means of communication, of extension, language serves as a mere stepping stone to some other means which surpasses it. One of the most common reasons for Quentin's alienation from the current unfolding of the spoken discourse is his visual imagination which suddenly takes over: "'[…] the one calm and undeviating, perhaps unresisting even, the fatalist to the last; the other remorseless with implacable and unalterable grief and despair—' (It seemed to Quentin that he could actually see them, facing one another at the gate" (105). The switching of linguistic mode into a visual one is not only due to the imagination of the listener, but also due to the artistry of the storyteller and is set up at the very beginning of the novel. Listening to Rosa conjure up vividly the image of Sutpen's arrival into Jefferson, her "voice not ceasing but vanishing into and then out of the long intervals like a stream, a trickle running from patch to patch of dried sand" (4), Quentin is able to witness the scene described in terms that make explicit reference to visual media as he "sees" Sutpen "abrupt (man-horse-demon) upon a scene peaceful and decorous as a schoolprize water colour" (4). Indeed, in the previous example, Quentin imagines Henry and Bon facing each other like statues: "They faced one another on the two gaunt horses, two men, young, not yet in the world, not yet breathed over long enough, to be old but with old eyes, with unkempt hair and faces gaunt and weathered as if cast by some spartan and even niggard hand from bronze […]" (105).

Visual imagination is not limited to Quentin. His grandfather also indulges in it when Sutpen tells him his story. This time, no visual art is referenced explicitly. However, following Peter Lurie's claim that "Faulkner was aware in this period, not only of photographic means of producing images (their slow developing process converting negatives obtained on a chemically treated paper or plate), but their production by a particular commercial manufacturer was evident before he wrote *Absalom*"[613], one can claim that the passage could be understood in terms of the photographic medium with the flash of the muskets serving as a stand in for the flash of the photographic powder or bulb: "[…] the girl just emerging for a second of the telling, in a single word almost, so that Grandfather said it was like he had just seen her too for a second by the flash of one of the muskets – a bent face, a single cheek, a chin for an instant beyond a curtain of fallen hair, a white slender arm raised, a delicate hand clutching a ramrod, and that was all." (201). The description of her appearance reads as if carefully positioned for a portrait.

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[613] Peter Lurie, "Faulkner's Literary Historiography: Color, Photography, and the Accessible Past," *Philological Quarterly* 90, no. 2&3 (2012): 242.

The relevance of photography is given weight by a passage in which Quentin imagines Sutpen's regiment as the American Civil War was the first war that was documented by photography in a significant manner: "It seemed to Quentin that he could actually see them: the ragged and starving troops without shoes, the gaunt powder-blackened faces looking backward over tattered shoulders, the glaring eyes in which burned some indomitable desperation of undefeat watching that dark interdict ocean across which a grim light-less solitary ship fled […]" (154). Cast in black and dark tones the image partakes in what Peter Lurie describes as "a kind of literary historiography, one defined by its relationship to an earlier black-and-white photography and to the 1930s documentary impulse […] a 'black-and-white' prose style."[614] This dichromatic style is informed by the changing perspective on the use of colour in photography "particularly around the time of its first appearance", the 1930s when "color photography (and film) was considered *merely* illustrative and, by extension, commercial"[615] giving black-and-white photography the aura of authenticity and thus making it the medium of historical documentation.

The picture of visual media is completed by Shreve in one fell swoop which aestheticizes and commodifies the whole of South: "Jesus, the South is fine, isn't it. It's better than the theatre, isn't it. It's better than Ben Hur, isn't it. No wonder you have to come away now and then, isn't it" (176). Generalizing from his idea of the South based on Quentin and the story of Sutpen, Shreve makes a spectacle of the region by comparing it – and letting it come out on the top – to the extremely popular novel by Lew Wallace which had been turned into a successful stage production and a film by the time the two boys share the story with a second movie version made before Faulkner wrote the novel.[616] Shreve's undue spectacularization of the South comes from his constant unbelief in the events of the story told and the exoticism of its setting and characters.[617]

Out of proportion as it may be, Shreve's inclusion of the popular art forms of the theatre and the film is important. Particularly movies represent an especially important historical backdrop to the novel. As a burgeoning phenomenon, the medium affected Faulkner's style already in *As I Lay Dying* (see the previous chapter). Regarding *Absalom, Absalom!*, the passages where storytelling gives way to visual imagination might be read as Faulkner's observation or foreshadowing of the changing times, of the waning of literature as a dominant

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[614] Lurie, "Faulkner's Literary Historiography," 230-231.
[615] Lurie, "Faulkner's Literary Historiography," 239.
[616] Joseph R. Urgo and Noel Polk, *Reading Faulkner:* Absalom, Absalom! (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2010), 110.
[617] Cf. Levins, "Four Narrative Perspectives," 45.

art form and entertainment and waxing of film as a popular mass medium: as McLuhan phrases it, "in the 1920s the American way of life was exported to the entire world in cans. The world eagerly lined up to buy canned dreams. The film not only accompanied the first great consumer age, but was also incentive, advertisement and, in itself, a major commodity."[618]

Speaking about the Rosa and addressing the influence of Hollywood on Faulkner in the 1930s, Lurie observes the same tendency in the context of the film medium: Rosa "reproduces in her language something of the 'filmic effect' I have attributed to the cinema – the capacity to captivate or enthrall viewers confronted with a sensuous spectacle. […] the 'notlanguage' Quentin attributes to her in the novel's opening […] becomes, then, a useful way to consider how Rosa's chapter works differently than ordinary language, functioning extraverbally or even visually."[619] Whatever the visual media replacing language and storytelling, they all have one thing in common in Faulkner's view. Just like oral narratives substitute the reality they so desperately try to recover in *Absalom, Absalom!*, visuality gains more authenticity than the history it imagines: "[…] he could see it; he might even have been there. Then he thought *No. If I had been there I could not have seen it this plain*" (155).

While the advent of visual imagination in the novel designates storytelling and language as inferior means of engagement, *Absalom, Absalom!* also posits speech as an impediment to communication and extension, and it imagines unions beyond words. In the standoff between Rosa and Clytie, there comes a moment in which Rosa describes them "not as two faces but as the two abstract contradictions which we actually were, neither of our voices raised, as though we spoke to one another free of the limitations and restrictions of speech and hearing" (111). Shortly after this comes Clytie's touch which is, indeed, a potent means of communication without words which tears down the racial opposites, the "abstract contradictions" that they still in that moment remain. In between those two moments, however, is another curious one. Right after enjoying the freedom from speech, Clytie instructs Rosa not the proceed further: "'Dont you go up there, Rosa.' That was how she said it: that quiet, that still, and again it was as though it had not been she who spoke but the house itself that said the words – the house which he had built, which some suppuration of himself had created about him […]" (111). The house indeed speaks, the house of Sutpen that is: it communicates beyond words eliding the racial difference that divides Clytie and Rosa in their speechless moment.

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[618] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 255.

[619] Peter Lurie, "'Some Trashy Myth of Reality's Escape': Romance, History, and Film Viewing in *Absalom, Absalom!*" *American Literature* 73, no. 3 (September 2001): 573. More on film and *Absalom, Absalom!* see below.

Members of the Sutpen family enjoy a strange communion for which language is not a tool, a means of communication but an obstacle. Mr Compson observes the remarkable, the uncanny similarity between Judith and her father, Thomas Sutpen:

> They didn't talk, tell one another anything, you see – Sutpen, what he had learned about Bon; Judith, that she knew where Bon and Henry now were. They did not need to talk. They were too much alike. They were as two people become now and then, who seem to know one another so well or are so much alike that the power, the need, to communicate by speech atrophies from disuse and, comprehending without need of the medium of ear or intellect, they no longer understand one another's actual words. (96-97)

The same telepathy between Judith and Sutpen is observed by Rosa who compares it to her moment of silent communication with Clytie: "[…] *four sentences of simple direct words behind beneath above which I felt that same rapport of communal blood which I had sensed that day while Clytie held me from the stairs: ´Henry´s not —?´ ´No. He´s not here.´ – ´Ah. And —?´ ´Yes. Henry killed him.´ and then burst into tears*." (128). This analogy between Clytie, Judith and Sutpen is no coincidence. The narrative hides in plain sight the central problem of Sutpen's design and the crux (in all its senses) of the South: the fiction of race. Long before it is revealed that Sutpen had children with his slaves, Rosa, albeit unwittingly, reveals this in a most explicit way. Reporting on the scene of Sutpen fighting his slaves, she concludes the first chapter of the novel with a double revelation – that Judith witnessed the fight and that Clytie is Sutpen's daughter by a slave: "But I was not there. I was not there to see the two Sutpen faces this time – once on Judith and once on the negro girl beside her – looking down through the square entrance to the loft" (22).

This is a consistent pattern of identifying Sutpen's illegitimate offspring in the novel: by way of observed similarity a relation is established which is later explicitly "revealed" to have always existed.[620] Thus, Mr. Compson draws a comparison between Bon's and Sutpen's genesis: "He is the curious one to me. He came into that isolated puritan country household almost like Sutpen himself came into Jefferson: apparently complete, without background or past or childhood […]" (74). It is revealed much later that the perceived absence of a past, the sudden springing out of nowhere means an arrival from Haiti. Even more ostensibly, Mr. Compson puts Bon in a genetic relationship with Sutpen: "Yes, shadowy: a myth, a phantom:

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[620] Sundquist observes that "it is the strategy of *Absalom, Absalom!* to intimate but suppress its critical information until the very end, and even then to reveal it only in the dramatic self-reflexive mask of tacit recognition". Sundquist, *Faulkner*, 114.

something which they engendered and created whole themselves; some effluvium of Sutpen blood and character, as though as a man he did not exist at all" (82).

Blood and character are the connective tissue between the acknowledged and unacknowledged members of Sutpen's family. The text implies that black and white are not related only by physical appearance, but by a mental one as well. Charles Etienne Saint-Valery Bon resembles his grandfather as well: "[…] who had not resented his black blood so much as he had denied the white, and this with a curious and outrageous exaggeration in which was inherent its own irrevocability, almost exactly as the demon himself might have done it" (168). This is a sanguine spin on the embodied mind which becomes an appropriate critique of the fiction of race. The blood that in the social system of the South makes one being a master and another being a slave is used subversively in *Absalom, Absalom!* as the element which unites, which eliminates all kinds of differences and allows communion beyond words. Black and white are indistinguishable, because a Sutpen is a Sutpen no matter whether black or white.

The racial fiction of blood is substituted by the familial fact of blood. The "rapport of blood" is the means of communion among the Sutpen family, a means that extends the mind to other minds across time and space. Thus, Henry does not wonder that his father knows information to which he was not privy: "*He does not even think Surely Judith didn't write him about that letter or It was Clytie who sent him word somehow that Charles has written her. He thinks neither of these. To him it is logical and natural that their father should know of his and Bon´s decision: that rapport of blood which should bring Bon to decide to write, himself to agree to it and their father to know of it at the same identical instant, after a period of four years, out of all time*" (282). It is specifically Sutpen's "blood and character" that can create this rapport, this extended cognition which transcends any difference:

> So it must have been Henry who seduced Judith, not Bon: seduced her along with himself from that distance between Oxford and Sutpen's Hundred, between herself and the man whom she had not even seen yet, as though by means of that telepathy with which as children they seemed at times to anticipate one another's actions as two birds leave a limb at the same instant; that rapport not like the conventional delusion of that between twins but rather such as might exist between two people who, regardless of sex or age or heritage of race or tongue, had been marooned at birth on a desert island: the island here Sutpen's H d d; th solit d, th shadow of that fath with whom ot only the town but their mothers family as well had merely assumed armistice rather than accepting and assimilating. (78-79)

4.5. A Marriage of Minds: Shreve and Quentin

Even though the Sutpens can communicate without words, it is in Quentin and Shreve, in their coupling that the novel's idea of the extended mind reaches its apogee, its most complex and forceful articulation. What *Absalom, Absalom!* accomplishes, among other things, is a "'three-dimensional' model of consciousness,"[621] as Eric Casero calls it. The three dimensions, aspects of consciousness that Faulkner succeeds in depicting are the following: (1) a temporal dimension which traces the activity of consciousness in real time; (2) a social dimension which explores "the ways in which multiple consciousnesses interact with and determine each other"; (3) a historical dimension which captures how "characters' consciousnesses interact with each other in the social realm of real time, as well as across history".[622] What makes Faulkner's novelistic exploration of consciousness unique among other works is "the degree to which it develops these, particularly the historical dimension."[623] While all these dimensions play an important role throughout the novel, it is with Quentin and Shreve that they take centre stage in their most developed form.

The extension of minds between Quentin and Shreve is an emergent phenomenon that transcends minds, bodies, time and space. The reason is that Shreve and Quentin enjoy all the constitutive features of extension in the novel with the extra ingredient of love (see below) which is often missing in one form or another from the previous couplings. As already mentioned above, the narrative shift to Quentin and Shreve mirrors the setting of the stage for Rosa and Quentin in its stress on the environment and in the connection of the environment to storytelling (141). Not only is it cold, but we also immediately see the impact of the environment on the characters in Shreve's "hand red and raw with cold" (141). Such a (re)introduction to the scenes of storytelling between Quentin and Shreve is repeated at the beginning of every chapter until the end of the novel. Given such a prominent position, environment is not a mere "setting", but is set as a determining, even ruling factor for narrating and the mind-body union as a whole depicting "the two of them, whether they knew it or not, in the cold room (it was quite cold now) dedicated to that best of ratiocination" (225). What is more, and what again stages the environment – some kind of dire circumstances more specifically – as constitutive feature of mental functioning is the fact that the fluctuation of temperature, the changes in the climate condition for Quentin and Shreve correlate with the extension of their minds through(out) the process of their storytelling.

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[621] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 87.
[622] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 87.
[623] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 87.

Chapter VII begins with Quentin deducing temperature by paying attention to the body of his roommate: "There was no snow on Shreve's arm now, no sleeve on his arm at all now: only the smooth cupid-fleshed forearm and hand coming back into the lamp and taking a pipe from the empty coffee can where he kept them, filling it and lighting it. So it is zero outside, Quentin thought; soon he will raise the window and do deep-breathing in it, clench-fisted and naked to the waist, in the warm and rosy orifice above the iron quad" (176). In keeping with his obsession with time in *The Sound and the Fury*, Quentin traces not only the declining temperature, but also the long day´s journey into night: "and now the moment, the thought, was an hour past" (176). Besides a timekeeper, Quentin becomes a human thermometer which notes not only lower and lower numbers, but also the impact of the climate on his environment:

> […] although it was only eleven oclock the room was beginning to cool toward that point where about midnight there would be only enough heat in the radiators to keep the pipes from freezing, though (he would not perform his deep-breathing in the open window tonight at all) he had yet to go to the bedroom and return first with his bathrobe on and next with his overcoat on top of the bathrobe and Quentin's overcoat on his arm. (205-206)

> It was cold in the room now. The heat was almost gone out of the radiators: the cold iron fluting stern signal and admonition for sleeping, the little death, the renewal. It had been some time now since the chimes had rung eleven. "All right," Shreve said. He was hugging himself into the bathrobe now as he had formerly hugged himself inside his pink naked almost hairless skin. (220)

Although stated in the discourse of the impersonal narrator, the focalization is evidently through Quentin's perspective established earlier as the one concerned with time and temperature. It makes sense that Quentin the Southerner used to a much warmer climate would notice the cold and trace its onslaught in such a detail:

> It was quite cold in the room now; the chimes would ring for one any time now; the chill had a compounded, a gathered quality, as though preparing for the dead moment before dawn. […] He lay still and rigid on his back with the cold New England night on his face and the blood running warm in his rigid body and limbs, breathing hard but slow […] Now the chimes began, ringing for one oclock. Shreve ceased, as if he were waiting for them to cease or perhaps were even listening to them. Quentin lay still too, as if he were listening too, though he was not; he just heard them without listening as he heard Shreve without listening or answering, until they ceased, died away into the icy air delicate and faint and musical as struck glass. (298-299)

It is in chapter VIII that Quentin and Shreve achieve the "marriage of speaking and hearing", and it is here that the temperature, the coldness becomes too much for them. Even Shreve the Canadian, although more adjusted to such a climate, finally dons some attire. The dire circumstances of the New England climate are juxtaposed with the extension of Quentin and Shreve's mind in the opening of the chapter:

> There would be no deep breathing tonight. The window would remain closed above the frozen and empty quad beyond which the windows in the opposite wall were, with two or three exceptions, already dark; soon the chimes would ring for midnight, the notes melodious and tranquil, faint and clear as glass in the fierce (it had quit snowing) still air. […] Shreve stood beside the table, facing Quentin again though not seated now. In the overcoat buttoned awry over the bathrobe he looked huge and shapeless like a disheveled bear as he stared at Quentin (the Southerner, whose blood ran quick to cool, more supple to compensate for violent changes of temperature perhaps, perhaps merely nearer the surface) who sat hunched in his chair, his hands thrust into his pockets as if he were trying to hug himself warm between his arms, looking somehow fragile and even wan in the lamplight, the rosy glow which now had nothing of warmth, coziness, in it, while both their breathing vaporised faintly in the cold room where there was now not two of them but four, the two who breathed not individuals now yet something both more and less than twins […] (235-236).

The direness of the environment is underscored by the continual likening of the room where Quentin and Shreve are to a tomb. Paralleling the latticed tomb of a house that Rosa first tells Quentin about Thomas Sutpen, even though hot and dusty, the coldness of New England like death has touched the two men in the prime of their youth and it is through this deprivation of body heat that they achieve a marriage of minds:

> First, two of them, then four; now two again. The room was indeed tomblike: a quality stale and static and moribund beyond any mere vivid and living cold. Yet they remained in it, though not thirty feet away was bed and warmth. Quentin had not even put on his overcoat, which lay on the floor where it had fallen from the arm of the chair where Shreve had put it down. They did not retreat from the cold. They both bore it as though in deliberate flagellant exaltation of physical misery transmogrified into the spirits travail […] the two the four the two facing one another in the tomblike room: Shreve, the Canadian, the child of blizzards and of cold in a bathrobe with an overcoat above it, the collar turned up about his ears; Quentin, the Southerner, the morose and delicate offspring of rain and steamy heat in the thin suitable clothing which he had brought from

Mississippi, his overcoat (as thin and vain for what it was as the suit) lying on the floor where he had not even bothered to raise it" (275-276).

At the end of the chapter, Shreve suggests to "get out of this refrigerator and go to bed" (287). The beginning of chapter IX finds both in bed with Quentin's body slowly warming. As the lowering temperature brought the two together, constituted the extension of their minds, the comfort of warmth also brings with it a retreat of the selves into individual confines, no longer "the two the four the two facing one another", but again Quentin and Shreve lying in beds. Thus, the fluctuation of bodily temperature is an environmental process which exerts its influence on the extension of the mind(s):

> At first, in bed in the dark, it seemed colder than ever, as if there had been some puny quality of faint heat in the single light bulb before Shreve turned it off and that now the iron and impregnable dark had become on with the iron and icelike bedclothing lying upon the flesh slacked and thin-clad for sleeping. Then the darkness seemed to breathe, to flow back; the window which Shreve had opened became visible against the faintly unearthly glow of the outer snow as, forced by the wight of the darkness, the blood surged and ran warmer, warmer. (288)

Quentin and Shreve find narrative, or linguistic extension only temporarily. As the temperature fluctuates, so does the extension through language between the two young men. While the narrative relationship between Quentin and Shreve before Chapter VIII is more competitive than cooperative, it is not the kind of struggle that Irwin envisions based on his psychoanalytical approach. Given the process of extension that dominates the novel and especially its last narrative pairing, it is out of character to see Quentin and Shreve's relationship in such stark psychoanalytical terms as Quentin using Shreve as a proxy to "take revenge against his father, against time" resulting in "a struggle between them for control of the narration" passing on to Shreve "the affront of sonship, the affront of dependency."[624] While Matthews tones down Irwin's vision of mortal struggle by suggesting that "the antagonism of several hands trying to impose their own patterns on the rug also produces moments of tense but tender union"[625], it is my view that those moments of union, albeit scarce and temporary, are the ultimate goal of the narrative activity in *Absalom, Absalom!*, not a mere by-product.[626]

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[624] Irwin, *Doubling and Incest*, 120.
[625] Matthews, *Play,* 142.
[626] Matthews tones down the perceived struggle between Quentin and Shreve even more later in his analysis, seeing it rather as a form of participation: "The tension between Quentin and Shreve is not an outright struggle, however, since most of the occasions on which Quentin or Shreve pleads for the other to stop talking, or wards off the other's interruption, are moments of creative dissension. It is not so much that either wants to talk the other into extinction,

Notwithstanding the perspective one takes on this issue, both struggle and cooperation imply not a static, but a fluid and changing relationship between the teller and hearer roles. Therefore, however one might see the dynamic of Quentin and Shreve's storytelling, it is to completely misjudge their coupling to assign each of them stable roles, as Reed does saying that "[t]he chief functional contrast is between Quentin the Teller and Shreve the Hearer."[627] On the contrary, Shreve becomes much more than a passive "hearer" and in his narrative marriage to Quentin, it is impossible to assign roles, and ultimately identity, on an individual basis. Such an individuation goes against the nature of the scene(s) of storytelling in *Absalom, Absalom!* where the ultimate goal is to surpass the isolated ego in a creative, productive and meaningful extension with an-other.

The fluctuations of the coupling between Quentin and Shreve are possible to trace through their linguistic interaction. The first thing to notice is the unfamiliarity of the South to Shreve and New England at large, and, complementarily, the strangeness of Quentin in the North: "[…] and then Shreve, 'You mean she was no kin to you, no kin to you at all, that there was actually one Southern Bayard or Guinevere who was no kin to you? Then what did she die for?' and that not Shreve's first time, nobody's first time in Cambridge since September: *Tell about the South. Whats it like there. What do they do there. Why do they live there. Why do they live at all* […]" (142). This disconnected triangulation of the teller, the listener, and the tale is indicated first implicitly by showing Shreve breaking the code of conduct appropriate in the Southern context. This rupture bears on the linguistic interaction between Quentin and Shreve:

> […] and he {Quentin} soon needing, required, to say "No, neither aunt cousin nor uncle Rosa. Miss Rosa. Miss Rosa Coldfield, an old lady that died young of outrage in 1866 one summer" […] (then Shreve again, "Wait. Wait. You mean that this old gal, this Aunt Rosa —"
>
> "Miss Rosa," Quentin said.
>
> "All right all right.—that this old dame, this Aunt Rosa—"
>
> "Miss Rosa, I tell you."
>
> "All right all right all right.—that this old—this Aunt R—Allright all right all right all right." (182-184)

Quentin is the one with the privileged status of knowledge and although this is not the first time he and Shreve go through the motions of the story ("not Shreve's first time, nobody's

but that each wants to perform, to create, to specify for the other, to speak in the common voice of both." Matthews, *Play*, 149.

[627] Reed, *Faulkner's Narrative*, 168.

first time in Cambridge"), their relationship starts asymmetrically: here, "Quentin functions for Shreve as guide [...] as initiator [...] as collective community conscience."[628] Shreve is aware of the asymmetry between him and Quentin as suggested by the seemingly insignificant detail of his correction of Quentin about the year when West Virginia was founded. Even though the technicality of West Virginia's name at the time of Sutpen's birth has no bearing whatsoever in the larger narrative that engulfs it, its presence is not superfluous. One function Shreve's correction plays is rhetorical, pragmatic. As Wanda Raiford observes, it coaxes the reader into the role of an avid listener of the storyteller: "This passage is an example, among others in the novel, of Faulkner's use of a complex formal mechanism that, by placing an annoying questioner and irrelevant question between the reader and the unfolding tale, aligns the readers' sympathies simultaneously with the teller who would tell and against all interruptions (our own and those inside the text) that delay revelations and distract from the story."[629]

The second function bears directly on the narrative coupling of the two roommates: Quentin and Shreve switch roles here. Previously, Quentin corrected Shreve about the misnomer he used in referring to Miss Rosa ("this old dame, this Aunt Rosa"), i.e. he corrected him about Southern decorum. Shreve corrects Quentin about facts, about history and the function is to get even: to establish a symmetry in the communication, in the relationship of teller and listener, listener and teller. The success of this attempt at establishing symmetry is signalled by Quentin responding in the same way Shreve did to Quentin's correction – he is impatient with being corrected and interrupted, and he signals it in word for word the same way as Shreve:

> "Because he was born in West Virginia, in the mountains where–" ("Not in West Virginia," Shreve said. "–What?" Quentin said. "Not in West Virginia," Shreve said. "Because if he was twenty-five years old in Mississippi in 1833, he was born in 1808. And there wasn't any West Virginia in 1808 because –" "All right," Quentin said. "– West Virginia wasn't admitted–" "All right all right," Quentin said. "–into the United States until–" "All right all right all right," Quentin said. (176)

> One can imagine that the "All right all right all right" is not only mirror to Shreve's previous response, but also Quentin's recognition of the attempt to get even. What characterizes this relationship between the Southerner and the Canadian is a narrative tug of war that is

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[628] Reed, *Faulkner's Narrative*, 168.
[629] Wanda Raiford, "Fantasy and Haiti's Erasure in William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*" *South: A Scholarly Journal* 49, no. 1 (Fall 2016): 110.

distinguished by repeated interruptions. On his part, Shreve cannot keep his disbelief over the story to himself, or at least quiet in order not to interrupt the teller:

"'And that was the one Luster was talking about now,' Shreve said. […]

'Yes,' Quentin said.

'And that he lived in that cabin behind the haunted house for twenty-six years […] and there was?'

'Yes.'

'Wait then,' Shreve said. 'For God's sake wait.')" (174-175)

Expressing his disbelief loud and at will, Shreve is guilty of "over-involvement", as Goffman terms it, in the story from his position as a listener: his excitement "threatens the bounds regarding affect that have been established for him in the interaction" lacking the "necessary measure of self-control over his feelings and actions."[630] If Shreve is guilty, then Quentin is guiltier. For one, he is guilty of the same conversation infraction – over-involvement – but from his position as a teller: "[…] he just had to go –' ('Maybe he had a girl,' Shreve said. 'or maybe he just wanted a girl. You said the demon and the niggers didn't have but two.' Quentin did not answer this either; again he might not have heard, talking in that curious repressed calm voice as though to the table before him or the book upon it or the letter upon the book or his hands lying on either side of the book.) '–and so he went.'" (177).

Quentin's detachment from the here and now of the storytelling continues throughout the chapter while it is always characterized in the same way:

Quentin did not answer. He sat quite still, facing the table, his hands lying on either side of the open text book on which the letter rested: the rectangle of paper folded across the middle and now open, three quarters open, whose bulk had raised half itself by the leverage of the old crease in weightless and paradoxical levitation, lying at such an angle that he could not possibly have read it, deciphered it, even without this added distortion. Yet he seemed to be looking at it, or as near as Shreve could tell, he was, his face lowered a little, brooding, almost sullen. (176-177)[631]

Quentin is transfixed by the letter from his father that is spread out on the table and that seems to be trying to take flight of its own volition "as if it had learned half the secret of levitation" (193). When Quentin talks, he does not "even raise his voice – that voice with its

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[630] Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 122-123.
[631] Quentin keeps "talking apparently (if to anything) to the letter lying on the open book on the table between his hands" (205) in an "attitude of brooding bemusement upon the open letter which lay on the open textbook, his hands lying on the table before him on either side of the book and the letter" (192).

tense suffused restrained quality" (222). He does not pay attention to Shreve, his audience, because he himself is audience in a different narrative situation: he is a listener to his father's voice literally put on the table in the form of the letter which brings news and also the story, or a part of the story. The letter conjures up for Quentin the South and his father: "that dead summer twilight – the wistaria, the cigar-smell, the fireflies – attenuated up from Mississippi and into this strange room" (141). Half transported to the South, with the changed quality of his voice and his disregard for his immediate surroundings, Quentin functions in two different narrative situations at once and merges the role of the hearer and teller in himself. Quentin's alienation from the communicative situation with Shreve through his immersion in the story and in the vicarious communicative situation with his father finally escalates at the end of chapter VII in Shreve's confusion when the story Quentin obsessively recounts does not add up so that Shreve must cry in desperation for Quentin to explain:

"Wait," Shreve said; "wait. You mean that he had got the son at last that he wanted, yet still he—" […]

"Wait," Shreve said; "for Christ´s sake wait. You mean that he—" […]

"Wait," Shreve said. "You mean that he got the son he wanted, after all that trouble, and then turned right around and—" […]

"*Will you wait?*" Shreve said. "—that with the son he went to all that trouble to get lying right there behind him in the cabin, he would have to taunt the grandfather into killing first him and then the child too?"

"– What?" Quentin said. "It wasn't a son. It was a girl."

"Oh," Shreve said. "—Come on. Let's get out of this damn icebox and go to bed." (230-234).

Over-involvement is just one form of alienation from the conversation that Goffman counts in his list. He defines alienation as a situation in which "[t]he individual may neglect the prescribed focus of attention and give his main concern to something that is unconnected with what is being talked about at the time and even unconnected with the other person's present, at least in their capacity as fellow-participants."[632] Quentin is also guilty of alienation through "other-consciousness" in which "the individual may become distracted by another participant as an object of attention."[633] This is manifested through Quentin's close observation of Miss Rosa, his father, and Shreve (or, indeed, the letter on the table in the dorm room): "[…] glancing (his face quiet, reposed, curiously almost sullen) for a moment at Shreve leaning forward into

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[632] Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 117.
[633] Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 120.

the lamp, his naked torso pink-gleaming and baby-smooth, cherubic, almost hairless, the twin moons of his spectacles glinting against his moonlike rubicund face" (147). Quentin is also guilty of alienation through "interaction-consciousness" wherein he becomes "consciously concerned to an improper degree with the way in which the interaction, qua interaction, is proceeding."[634] In this regard, Quentin constantly ponders over two associated aspects of the storytelling enterprise in the novel: the fact that he has heard all this before and that Shreve's discourse reminds him of his own father's discourse.

> *He sounds just like Father* he thought […] *Just exactly like Father if Father had known as much about it the night before I went out there as he did the day after I came back …* (147-148)
>
> […] thinking *Yes. I have heard too much, I have been told too much; I have had to listen to too much, too long* thinking *Yes, almost exactly like Father* […] (168)
>
> […] thinking (Quentin) *Yes. I didn't need to ask who invented that, put that one up* thinking *Yes, to too much, too long. I didn't need to listen then but I had to hear it and now I am having to hear it all over again because he sounds just like Father: Beautiful lives – women do.* (171)

This line of Quentin's thinking culminates in his existential musing on genesis, originality and transmission which are a mix of biological and ideological/cultural nature:

> "Dont say it´s just me that sounds like your old man," Shreve said. "But go on. Sutpen´s children. Go on."
>
> "Yes," Quentin said. "The two children" thinking *Yes. Maybe we are both Father. Maybe nothing ever happens once and is finished. Maybe happen is never once but like ripples maybe on water after the pebble sinks, the ripples moving on, spreading, the pool attached by a narrow umbilical water-cord to the next pool which the first pool feeds, has fed, did feed, let this second pool contain a different temperature of water, a different molecularity of having seen, felt, remembered, reflect in a different tone the infinite unchanging sky, it doesn't matter: that pebbles watery echo whose fall it did not even see moves across its surface too at the original ripple-space, to the old ineradicable rhythm* thinking *Yes, we are both Father. Or maybe Father and I are both Shreve, maybe it took Father and me both to make Shreve or Shreve and me both to make Father or maybe Thomas Sutpen to make all of us.* (210)

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[634] Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 119.

The strings of this passage resonate with strikes made throughout the novel. The storytelling is only an "echo" of the events and is based on a mere echo: as Rosa, the only participant in the events of the tale, says, she "heard an echo, not the shot". Her story is based on ripples, it lacks the solidity of pebbles. This is actually true of all the narrators telling the story. The biological origin of the "umbilical water-cord" from the beginning of the passage is transformed into a mixed biological and cultural origin for Quentin raised by his father in the South. The cultural strain is traced to the original pebble that is Thomas Sutpen hitting and undulating the calm waters of Yoknapatawpha. The image of the interconnected pools of water with different physical properties yet being stirred by the ripples in the same way stands, in general, for the transmission of culture from one person to another and, in particular, for the coupling of teller and listener on which the narrative structure of *Absalom, Absalom!* is founded. In the end, the ripples gain more reality than the pebble since they are the only thing that remains, that endures and they spread across the pool no matter what temperature, no matter what molecularity of the water: the story needs telling, no matter the teller or tellers – it transcends them, it demands telling.

In chapter VIII, the story takes over, it overtakes the tellers. Quentin and Shreve are and are not themselves, as their minds become amalgamated and they get transported into their own story:

> […] in the cold room where there was now not two of them but four, the two who breathed not individuals now yet something both more and less than twins, the heart and blood of youth (Shreve was nineteen, a few months younger than Quentin […] strong enough and willing enough for two, for two thousand, for all. Not two of them in a New England college sitting-room but one in a Mississippi library sixty years ago, with holly and mistletoe in vases on the mantel or thrust behind […] not two of them there and then either but four of them riding the two horses through the iron darkness and that not mattering either: what faces and what names they called themselves and were called by so long as the blood coursed – the blood, the immortal brief recent intransient blood which could hold honor above slothy unregret and love above fat and easy shame. (236-237)

The opening of the chapter contains all the important ingredients of extension in the novel. The dire circumstances in the form of the chilling coldness of New England reach a critical mass – Shreve puts on a coat and Quentin's blood runs cold (235). Although they are not family and do not have shared blood like the Sutpens in genetic terms, there is a suggestion

that people can be related in different ways: here, through "the heart and blood of youth"[635]. A condition that also obtains and that has so far been rife with strife is extension through language. No longer broken with interruptions, disbelief, misunderstandings, miscommunication and mismatched attention, language serves as a connective tissue between the minds of Quentin and Shreve:

> They stared – glared – at one another, their voices (it was Shreve speaking, though save for the slight difference which the intervening degrees of latitude had inculcated in them (differences not in tone or pitch but of turns of phrase and usage of words), it might have been either of them and was in a sense both: both thinking as one, the voice which happened to be speaking the thought only the thinking become audible, vocal; the two of them creating between them, out of the rag-tag and bob-ends of old tales and talking, people who perhaps had never existed at all anywhere, who, shadows, were shadows not of flesh and blood which had lived and died but shadows in turn of what were (to one of them at least, to Shreve) shades too) quiet as the visible murmur of their vaporising breath. The chimes now began to ring for midnight, melodious slow and faint beyond the closed, the snow-sealed, window. (243)

The difference between Quentin and Shreve is suggested only to be immediately eradicated. The difference that is overcome is that of "degrees of latitude", an environmental difference that is appropriately overcome by another environmental feature, Mississippi: "[…] both young, both born within the same year: the one in Alberta, the other in Mississippi; born half a continent apart yet joined, connected after a fashion in a sort of geographical transubstantiation by that Continental Trough, that River which runs not only through the spiritual lives of the beings within its scope, but is very Environment itself which laughs at degrees of latitude and temperature, though some of these beings, like Shreve, have never seen it […]" (208). It is not only in the immediate form of dire circumstances that environment inscribes itself on the mind and while "the very air he breathed" is the distinctive mark for Quentin as a Southerner, it is Mississippi, the "Environment" with capital E, the umbilical cord "that totally dissolves the invisible geographical boundary separating the Canadian from the Southerner's world"[636].

What is left of the difference between Quentin and Shreve is the mere physical parameters of voice, of "the thinking become audible, vocal", but the thinking itself is shared

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[635] Cf. Levins, "Four Narrative Perspectives," 42.
[636] Levins, "Four Narrative Perspectives," 42.

or spread over both of them.[637] The phrase perfectly encapsulates the notion of language as a scaffolding for the mind, an extension into the environment: "Language, thus construed, is not a mirror of our inner states but a complement to them. It serves as a tool whose role is to extend cognition in ways that on-board devices cannot."[638] The linguistic means of extension is signalled by the remarked upon implicit understanding that Quentin and Shreve share about pronominal references:

> […] and no pleasure in the fine figure he –" neither of them said "Bon" "– cut in the fine pants that fit his leg […] (243)
>
> "And him –" (Neither of them said "Bon") "– there watching her […]" (245)
>
> "[…] and he —" (neither of them said "Bon". Never at any time did there seem to be any confusion between them as to whom Shreve meant by "he") "— listening courteous and quiet […]" (249)
>
> "[…] one part of him said My brow my skull my jaw my hands and the other said Wait. Wait. You cant know yet. You cannot know yet whether what you see is what you are looking at or what you are believing. Wait. Wait. – The letter which he —" it was not Bon he meant now, yet again Quentin seemed to comprehend without difficulty or effort whom he meant "— wrote maybe as soon as he finished that last entry in the record […]" (251)

It is symptomatic that the last ingredient missing in all the other couplings in the novel is announced along with the phrase that encapsulates the extension of minds between Quentin and Shreve, the phrase that expresses the ideal of a storytelling scene, of the relationship between a teller and a listener:

> "And now," Shreve said, "we´re going to talk about love." But he didn't need to say that either, any more than he had been thinking about anything else; all that had gone before just so much that had to be overpassed and none else present to overpass it but them, as someone always has to rake the leaves up before you can have the bonfire. That was why it did not matter to either of them which one did the talking, since it was not the talking alone which did it, performed and accomplished the overpassing, but some happy marriage of speaking and hearing wherein each before the demand, the requirement, forgave condoned and forgot the faulting of the other – faultings both in

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[637] Cf. Rimmon-Kenan, *Glance*, 49: "[…] identification of the voice is immaterial, because it is only the vocal realization of thoughts shared by the two narrators. And the thoughts are common to both for two reasons. First, Quentin and Shreve have come to represent a universal quality beyond their personal existence […] Second, listening is no less creative than telling; the narratee thus becomes another narrator […]."
[638] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 39.

the creating of this shade whom they discussed (rather, existed in) and in the hearing and sifting and discarding the false and conserving what seemed true, or fit the preconceived – in order to overpass to love, where there might be paradox and inconsistency but nothing fault nor false. (253)

It is no overstatement that love, the constitutive factor that distinguishes Quentin and Shreve from all the other couples, is necessary for this marriage. Love has been the topic for the two students since the beginning of the chapter. The coupling of tellers and listeners in the novel is asymmetric: a teller (active participant) narrates a story to a listener (passive participant). What Faulkner tries to achieve with Quentin and Shreve – what they try to achieve – is a symmetric coupling, "a marriage of hearing and speaking"[639]. If such a symmetry, if a true marriage is achieved, then hearing and speaking no longer reside within individuals: hearing and speaking are not embodied in isolated individuals, but move to the space of interaction, to the space of "in between" where social cognition emerges. As the word marriage suggests, there is a union of speaking and hearing which is larger than the two individual members of the coupling: no longer a pair of one teller and one listener, one active and one passive participant in a storytelling scene. Marriage of the two roles assigns agency to both and to both each other's role in a constant shifting of the couple dynamic which resides in both and in neither at the same time. As Matthews observes about *Absalom, Absalom!* in general, there is no one-directional transfer of a finished product, a commodity: "The author does not 'have' a story that he 'gives' to the auditor or reader; rather, marriage suggests the necessity of exchange. The teller tells her story as the reader hears his own."[640] For Quentin and Shreve, one has to stipulate that they are tellers and hearers at once.

The passage successfully captures this autonomy and emergence of a social interaction in which both participants stand on equal footing and both yield to the situation in a true Goffmanian spirit. "The demand, the requirement" which is more than "the talking alone" is the story that demands telling, that will not be not told and that transcends the tellers. By inhabiting the story they tell/hear – "this shade whom they discussed (rather, existed in)" –, Quentin and Shreve annihilate the distance, the difference that keeps the previous tellers as well as narrative couples from truly extending their minds through the act of narrating. This

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[639] One has to disregard the historically relevant reality of marriage in this metaphor and especially the only marriage presented in the novel – that of Thomas Sutpen and Ellen Coldfield. Sundquist speaks of the novel as a "book filled with shadows blurring into visions, with unloving marriage and passion consummated in death". Sundquist, *Faulkner*, 14-15.

[640] Matthews, *Play*, 151.

metalepsis, this ontological lapse from reality into fiction is the surrendering, or, rather, aligning of social interactants to the interaction that gives rise to a true social exchange:

> Even though normal social encounters, for instance conversations, may only last a few minutes, our point is that during that period they may organize themselves according to the two avenues of influence just described: the agents sustain the encounter, and the encounter itself influences the agents and invests them with the role of *interactors*. The interaction process emerges as an entity when social encounters acquire this operationally closed organization. It constitutes a level of analysis not reducible, in general, to individual behaviours. This perspective bypasses the circularity that arises from pre-conceiving individuals as ready-made interactors. Individuals co-emerge as interactors with the interaction. This brings us to the further requirement for calling an interaction properly *social*. Not only must the process itself enjoy a temporary form of autonomy, but the autonomy of the individuals as interactors must also not be broken (even though the interaction may enhance or diminish the scope of individual autonomy). If this were not so, if the autonomy of one of the interactors were destroyed, the process would reduce to the cognitive engagement of the remaining agent with his non-social world. The 'other' would simply become a tool, an object, or a problem for his individual cognition […][641]

The autonomy of both interactants is sustained by Quentin and Shreve both enjoying the status of a subject in the interaction, not a mere object, a passive hearer: as Reed puts it, "Quentin and Shreve have taken over the all-important function of becoming in the book."[642] Faulkner underscores this becoming, this social dimension of the mind and by having his youthful couple fuse not only in an interaction across the space of one's skin and the distance of a dorm room in cold New England, but also across time and ontological barriers. The submitting to the social nature of telling goes hand in hand with an embodied metaleptic break of ontological boundaries: Quentin-Henry and Shreve-Bon are, like the creatures of medieval imagination, composites of the known transmogrified into a marvellous collage. The assemblage of bodily parts, the fusion of identities here underscores the embodied nature of the extension and interaction of minds:

> So that now it was not two but four of them riding the two horses through the dark over the frozen December ruts of that Christmas eve: four of them and then just two – Charles-Shreve and Quentin-Henry […] So it was four of them who rode the two horses

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[641] De Jaegher and Di Paolo, "Participatory Sense-Making," 492.
[642] Reed, *Faulkner's Narrative*, 167.

through that night […] the two of them in the dark and the cold standing at the guard rail […] So it was four of them still who got off the boat in New Orleans […] Four of them there, in that room in New Orleans in 1860, just as in a sense there were four of them here in this tomblike room in Massachusetts in 1910. (267-268)

In inhabiting creatures of their own creation, Quentin and Shreve adopt a specific role of the author to the authored product. Irwin sees in it Faulkner's own stance which "is a kind of doubling in which the author's self is reconstituted within the realm of language as the Other, a narcissistic mirroring of the self to which the author's reaction is at once a fascinated self-love and an equally fascinated self-hatred."[643] This ambivalent affect marks also Quentin's anything but final answer, the insistent "I dont hate it", to Shreve's final question "Why do you hate the South?" (303), thus crystalizing the fact that Quentin authors (a version of) the South for the Harvard students, for the readers and for himself in a vicious circle in which the South first authored him, "the Quentin Compson who was still too young to deserve yet to be a ghost but nevertheless having to be one for all that, since he was born and bred in the deep South" (4).

Pace Irwin, the typically postmodern meeting of the author with the character is powered by another logic in the novel. It is not a narcissistic self-affirmation, whether in love or hate, trying to impose itself on another in a process which results in, said together with Matthews, "what we might call the paternal, phallic authority of a text's meaning."[644] *Absalom, Absalom!* repeatedly subverts this power structure, opposes "Sutpen's rigidly phallic and dynastic language with a playful language that disseminates meaning"[645] and it does so by setting up narrative couples, "the marriages of speaking and hearing [which] issue in contending interpretations whose legitimacy or illegitimacy cannot finally be judged"[646]. Quentin and Shreve's identification, their extension with Henry and Bon results from their submission to the story, to the process of narrating; they give up individualized identity in the service of the transcendent social interaction: as authors, they "give away self-presence to their stories. […] And they absent themselves in order to be more fully present"[647].

The idea of an extended mind in concert with the notion of Quentin and Shreve primarily, but the rest of the narrators as well serving as media for the story to be told through accommodates some of the "problematic" aspects of the narrative. A feature of not only

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[643] Irwin, *Doubling and Incest*, 159.
[644] Matthews, *Play*, 152.
[645] Matthews, *Play*, 119.
[646] Matthews, *Play*, 152.
[647] Matthews, *Play*, 159.

Absalom, Absalom! that is thrown into a different light is the marked lack of stylistic differentiation among the various narrators who "present their interpretations in one overall sound pattern of complex sentence structure and sustained rhetoric"[648]. As Matthews puts it, "the tellings are not set off by wholly individualized voices. Tones, emphases, topics, and manners may differ, but there is an essential sameness to the baroque prolixity, the nightmarish breathlessness, and the Latinate polysyllabism of the novel."[649] He notes that this "striking formal feature of the novel" extends to the "ostensibly impersonal narrator's voice"[650] and actually makes the connection between the monotone style of the narrations and the extended, social nature of the scenes of storytelling: "The effect produced by these interpenetrations of voice is of a variety of partnerships contracted on the common ground of Sutpen's story. That is, the hearing and speaking partners of each performance are seized by the intimacies of telling. Like Shegog's voice in *The Sound and the Fury*, the speaking instrument immolates, and teller and auditor disappear into the 'text' itself."[651]

It is not just that the narrative couples disappear into the story they co-produce. The story has a certain insistence of its own that is evident from the beginning of the novel, which manifests most strongly trough Rosa who summons the young Quentin Compson in order to summon the ghosts of the past as if by incantation "talking in that grim haggard amazed voice until at last listening would renege and hearing-sense self-confound and the long-dead object of her impotent yet indomitable frustration would appear, as though by outraged recapitulation evoked, quiet inattentive and harmless, out of the biding and dreamy and victorious dust" (3-4). This applies vice versa at the same time, as the cause and effect are locked in a self-consuming circle like the mythical Ouroboros[652]; or, rather, a self-generating circle as the story needs teller and audience to be perpetuated while the audience and the teller need the story to extend, i.e. to share experience: all need the others in the instance of telling to become, to be becoming. The uniform style of the novel is a manifestation of the story imposing itself on the tellers and audiences getting its voice doubly: once through the narrative couples and once through the impersonal narrator, an anthropomorphic expression of the story. Faulkner turns literal the enactive metaphor of social interaction taking over the interactants. Such a view

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[648] Levins, "Four Narrative Perspectives," 36.
[649] Matthews, *Play*, 121.
[650] Matthews, *Play*, 121.
[651] Matthews, *Play*, 121.
[652] This circularity of cause and effect is not alien to *Absalom, Absalom!* As Mr Compson conjectures, the reason for Miss Rosa choosing Quentin to tell her story to is a temporal version of such a vicious circle: "She may believe that if it hadn't been for your grandfathers friendship, Sutpen could never have got a foothold here, and that if he had not got that foothold, he could not have married Ellen. So maybe she considers you partly responsible through heredity for what happened to her and her family through him" (8).

explains the non-attributable, sourceless passages of the novel and the impersonal narrator as irruptions of the story into narrating, as the story assuming agency.

The story is the story of the South and it bespeaks the social nature not only of language or culture, but also of identity itself: it "is the voice of the South, of all the ghosts in the air of the region and in the blood of its inhabitants. Such an engulfment of the personal voice by the collective undermines the very notion of self as a unique being"[653]. Weinstein remarks on this cultural perspective of the narrative voice noting "the knowingness of a narrative voice that doesn't so much inform us of what is at stake here as intimate its possession of a space of knowledge beyond that of the characters"[654]. What distinguishes the impersonal narrator from the character narrators is "the cumulative perspective afforded by time. […] The sentence that we think of as 'Faulknerian' – a sentence whose supreme arena is this novel – is suffused with the resonant authority of time long endured and at least partially mastered."[655] Weinstein notes that the rhetoric of the voice is "calculated […] to overwhelm"[656] and even though the story imposes itself, it does not engulf. The various narrators still get to have their say; the resulting narrative is a mixture of the impersonal story that needs to be told and the personal narratives that mold it. At the same time, while it is a story of the South (in more than one sense), the story has wider cultural implications.

4.6. The North and South on Speaking Terms: Love between Men

The strangeness of the pairing of Quentin and Shreve has often been remarked upon: why would a Canadian who has never been in the US South show such an interest in it. What is more, why would he (if not of all people then at least of all the narrators) enjoy such a creative insight and, in effect, extended cognition with Quentin, a Southerner. Edouard Glissant captures this critics' discomfort with Faulkner's choice of Shreve as Quentin's narrative sparing partner when he calls him "one of Yoknapatawpha's most intimate strangers."[657] Explaining away this oxymoron, Glissant draws out a reason for the authorial choice of Shreve from the genealogy included in *Absalom, Absalom!*: "[…] his name is Shrevlin MacCannon. So he is probably of Scottish origin. We also learn that he spent all the war of 1914-18 at the front, as a surgical captain. Scotland and the Great War: these are two major references for Faulkner."[658] However,

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[653] Rimmon-Kenan, *Glance*, 50-51.
[654] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 138.
[655] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 138-139.
[656] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 139.
[657] Edouard Glissant, *Faulkner, Mississippi*, trans. Barbara Lewis and Thomas C. Spear (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 239.
[658] Glissant, *Faulkner*, 239.

based on the workings of the extended mind, which is the workings of *Absalom, Absalom!*, such a biographical predisposition is not necessary for the successful coupling between Quentin and Shreve: extension arises in the moment, is enacted in and formed by a specific context.

The marriage of speaking and hearing which includes Shreve the Canadian – both a stranger and a foreigner – hinges on two key features. One of them is the intimate relationship between the two young students. As Clark and Chalmers observe in their original article on the extension of mind, it is possible that mind is extended between people in, as they put it, "an unusually interdependent couple".[659] What distinguishes such interdependency is "a high degree of trust, reliance, and accessibility" while "the major burden of the coupling between agents is carried by language."[660] Mundane examples that the authors list include "[f]or example, the waiter at my favorite restaurant […] one's beliefs might be embodied in one's secretary, one's accountant, or one's collaborator."[661] Teed Rockwell voices his concern about "the possibility that people who have strong sympathetic attachments to each other (family, friends, etc.) could be said in some sense to feel the same emotion, rather than be aware of each other's different emotions" saying that it is "counterintuitive and weird"; nevertheless, he is quick to add that "there is no denying that there are serious problems with the current paradigm of isolated rational egos that has emerged from our Cartesian presuppositions"[662] – a paradigm Faulkner undermines throughout *Absalom, Absalom!*.

Quentin and Shreve are Clark and Chalmers´s unusually interdependent couple: "[…] the two of them who four months ago had never laid eyes on one another yet who since had slept in the same room and eaten side by side of the same food and used the same books from which to prepare to recite in the same freshman courses" (208). Yet, it is more than their close quarters and study interests that make them a couple fit for marriage. Matthews links the imagery of sexual intercourse in the novel with partnership in telling: "The imagery of marriage and sexual intercourse appears more explicitly in *Absalom* to explain the quality of their creative, loving partnership in telling. Their attempt to make a story initiates them into a world of mature, imaginative creativity; gaining one´s first narrative experience seems to be like gaining ones first sexual experience."[663] What this imagery in relation to narrative coupling points to is the second thing their "marriage" hinges on: the love they feel for each other which constitutes the extension of mind between them.

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[659] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 38.
[660] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 38-39.
[661] Clark and Chalmers, "Extended Mind," 39.
[662] Rockwell, "Extended Cognition," 756n2.
[663] Matthews, *Play*, 150.

Shreve´s announcement "And now we´re going to talk about love" heralds a new epistemology in the novel. Hanne De Jaegher advances the idea of "engaged epistemology" in which loving is a form of knowing. Promoting the enactive view of cognition and of social interaction, De Jaegher considers a social interaction truly social only when participatory sense-making occurs, which "happens when agents participate in each other's sense-making. This, they do when the precarious processes of not just their individual sense-making, but also of the interaction process, which is also autonomous and thus precarious, interact with each other […]. This makes it possible to deeply affect one another […] Intersubjectivity is thus understood as the interplay between interactive and individual autonomies, vulnerabilities, and sense-makings."[664] Quentin and Shreve evince features of a loving relationship in the shifting narrative dynamic that shapes (between) them and structures their interaction:

Each participant in the loving relationship attempts to maintain their identity, their ipseity, in the face of their coming together. Coming together pulls on their identities, prods them, attempts to modify them, does modulate them. Loving is: not growing into one, nor growing separate—all while having no choice but to follow and navigate between precisely these opposing tendencies. These tendencies—towards symbiosis and towards separation—play out continually in loving relationships. To love is to navigate the various tensions between the tendencies and directions of one's own becoming, the other's, and that of the relation.

It is in this sense that understanding human knowing in analogy with loving deepens the notions of sense-making and participatory sense-making. On the background of the enactive logic, in which cognition—what flows between sense-maker and world—is imbued with meaning because of the logic of living self-organization, loving adds this to understanding human knowing: first, that lovers—knowers—are existentially implicated in their relation, and second, that an existential dialectic plays out between the individuals and their relation. To understand knowing as loving means to see the concrete existential involvement on the part of the individuals, and the relational dynamics generated by this involvement at work in the dialectic of being *and* becoming together.[665]

Not only do Shreve and Quentin talk about love, but love talks through them. Moreover, they talk about love with love: the feeling extends not only between the narrators, participants in a social interaction, but also between the narrators and their story, participants and the content

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[664] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 9-10.
[665] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 15.

of the interaction: "Every sense-maker is implicated in what they make sense of, because it matters to them—they *care* about it."[666] This telescoping of love is significant and is the distinguishing feature of the pairing of the two young men in opposition to all the other pairings of the novel. They tell *about*, *with* and *in* love: love seeps from the tellers to their characters, hence the hybrid forms of "Quentin-Henry, Shreve-Bon". It is thus symptomatic that the narrative couple which stands in the starkest opposition to Quentin and Shreve, that of Thomas Sutpen and Quentin's Grandfather lacks any kind of love. Sutpen's story fails to connect; his telling is self-involved with Grandfather being merely present to it as a function, a passive audience. How poignant then that Grandfather remarks that Sutpen's story "was no tale about women, and certainly not about love" (200).

If loving is knowing, then, conversely, lack of loving or lack of feeling is ignorance. This explains Sutpen's failure to use his narrative as a means of extension to achieve his cognitive goal: Sutpen is not able to see, to find the flaw in his design. As De Jaegher notes, "[t]he more objective knowing becomes, the more it cuts relationships with its 'object' of knowing. In loving, those who love influence each other."[667] Sutpen distances himself not only from his audience, but also from his tale: he objectifies his life story, narrating it as if it was not about him. For Sutpen, knowing is a one-way street, but "it is not that simple. Even in the most supposedly abstract cases, the known does reflect back to us and on us. Quantum physicists know this, feminists know this, ethnographers know this. […] it is clear that we cannot fully disentangle knower and known. Certainly this is the case for humans."[668] Therefore, Quentin and Shreve's extension of one another and of the characters of their tale is a manifestation of this epistemology of love. Rather, to acknowledge its processual nature, it should be called epistemology of loving which, in the end, stands at the beginning of knowing:

> There are no fixed essences on this approach, also in the case of the un-known. There is not so much an unknown, as a to-be-known. The unknown is not fixed. […] There is something of loving that is more-than-knowing: loving, precisely, allows us to interact with more than what we know. It is true that we can love more than we know, we can love what we do not know yet, and this can in fact invite us to know. Perhaps, then, loving is a motivation for knowing? It certainly can be. But that is not the only

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[666] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 16.
[667] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 17.
[668] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 17.

connection between loving and knowing. We do not *need* to know, in order to love. There is mystery in loving.[669]

The 4e cognitive approaches to mind stress the intertwining of cognition and emotion, and so does Faulkner. The cooperative storytelling of Quentin and Shreve displays the enactive view of living organisms' interaction with the world in which "sense-making is an inherently active concept. Organisms do not passively receive information from their environments, which they then translate into internal representations whose significant value is to be added later. They actively participate in the generation of meaning in what matters to them; they enact a world. Sense-making is a relational and affect-laden process grounded in biological organization. […] Hence it does not promote a fissure between affect and cognition."[670] In the case of the two youths telling a story of another couple of youths in love with each other, this relationship between affect and cognition is shown in the inseparability of the act of loving and of knowing. Moreover, the constructions and reconstruction of the story are shown as inherent to the process of sense-making: fabrication is part and parcel of storytelling.

The distribution of activity between Quentin and Shreve in telling the story of Henry and Bon is a reflection of their open-minded participation in the social interaction in which they co-emerge as interactants. Shreve the Canadian, thus, gets involved in the story of the South through his love for Quentin, by their common blood of youth, through the severity of chilling New England which brings them together, and all that in the spirit of play through the means of language. Yet, the particularity of Shreve is significant and has larger implications for the novel. Cleanth Brooks considers it "a stroke of genius on Faulkner's part" to include the mentality of "certain literary critics who have written on Faulkner" in the novel as "a way of facing criticism from that quarter and putting it into its proper perspective": "One of the most important devices used in the novel is the placing of Shreve in it as a kind of sounding board and mouthpiece. By doing so, Faulkner has in effect acknowledged the attitude of the modern, 'liberal,' twentieth-century reader, who is basically rational, skeptical, without any special concern for history, and pretty well emancipated from the ties of family, race, or section."[671]

Shreve's role as the embodiment of a reader is more general and transcends a necessary ideological slant: as Parker puts it, Shreve "serves within the text to model the reading experience that the text invites us to have. He is both the model reader and the model for the

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[669] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 17-18.
[670] De Jaegher and Di Paolo, "Participatory Sense-Making," 488.
[671] Cleanth Brooks, "History and the Sense of the Tragic," in *William Faulkner's* Absalom, Absalom!: *A Casebook*, ed. Fred Hobson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 35.

reader."[672] This is not surprising since *Absalom, Absalom!* as a whole is a metafictional text in that it puts the workings of fiction on display. One prominent feature of that is the very narrative structure underlying my thesis here: the scenes of storytelling that couple tellers with hearers in the service of fiction-making. There are many aspects of fiction put on display in the novel, one of them being what I have referred to above as the metaleptic break between "reality" and fiction – in other words, Quentin and Shreve's identification with Henry and Bon. Faulkner is staging a literal version of the conceptual metaphor of "being transported" that expresses a universal experience of a story, be it fictional or not. This metaphor is explored at length by Richard J. Gerrig in *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*. Suffice it to give his breakdown of the metaphor here which highlights the structure of the experience undergone so intensely by Shreve and Quentin:

1. Someone ("the traveler") is transported

2. by some means of transportation

3. as a result of performing certain actions.

4. The traveler goes some distance from his or her world of origin

5. which makes some aspects of the world of origin inaccessible.

6. The traveler returns to the world of origin, somewhat changed by the journey.[673]

Besides seeing "Shreve´s encounter with the Sutpen story [as] an initiation into the process by which any reader creates the fiction, and creates himself in the fiction"[674], Matthews explains the Canadian´s involvement in the fiction of the South in terms of empathy and a sense of belonging. Drawing on Terrence Doody, Matthews highlights Shreve´s desire "to provide Bon with what he lacks: a father, mother, childhood, and motivation […] These are obvious attractions to Shreve, since he too seeks patriation in an adopted new land."[675] I want to suggest a different role for Shreve that also finds its root along the axis "the South"-New England-Canada. What is insinuated in Shreve and Quentin's dialogue, in their cooperative storytelling is the process of the postbellum coming together of the North and the South that Nina Silber explores in her study *The Romance of Reunion*. Specifically, the national reconciliation is tied in with the homoerotic relationship between Quentin and Shreve.

In her study, Silber describes the journey to a symbolic and ideological national reunion from the end of the Civil War until *fin de siècle*. An essential part of the reunion process was a

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[672] Parker, *Narrative Form*, 128.
[673] Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 10-11.
[674] Matthews, *Play*, 145.
[675] Matthews, *Play*, 144.

gendered figuration of the power relations between the North and the South in which "the southern female had become the tempestuous and romantic belle, the object of the northern man´s desires, and, ultimately, the feminine partner in a symbolic marital alliance which became the principal representation of sectional reunion."[676] "In the symbolic and iconographic representations of reconciliation, gender served as a central metaphor,"[677] Silber explains: the union of the Southern belle and a Yankee "offered the northern man a symbolic vehicle for reasserting authority, for recapturing the sense of manly accomplishment which the Union soldier or the independent businessman had once known. He was once again victorious, not only over the South, but also over womankind."[678] It was the image of marriage between man/North and woman/South which "stood at the foundation of the late-nineteenth-century culture of conciliation and became a symbol which defined and justified the northern view of the power relations in the reunified nation."[679]

Marriage is also the central image of extension, or union between Quentin and Shreve: "[…] some happy marriage of speaking and hearing wherein each before the demand, the requirement, forgave condoned and forgot the faulting of the other" (253). Although this marriage is overtly a mental, a narrative one, it bespeaks the homoerotic desire between the two students. The gendered rapprochement of the North and South receives a particular slant in *Absalom, Absalom!* in the way Quentin the Southerner and Shreve the northerner become intimate through their storytelling:

> They stared at one another – glared rather – their quiet regular breathing vaporising faintly and steadily in the now tomblike air. There was something curious in the way they looked at one another, curious and quiet and profoundly intent, not at all as two young men might look at each other but almost as a youth and a very young girl might out of virginity itself – a sort of hushed and naked searching, each look burdened with youths immemorial obsession not with times dragging weight which the old live with but with its fluidity: the bright heels of all the lost moments of fifteen and sixteen. (240)

While it is the northerner who is figured as female, so the gender roles seem to be reversed in this romance, the description actually participates in continual hinting at the only real love relationship that the novel represents, a homoerotic relationship. As Norman W. Jones

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[676] Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of Carolina Press, 1993), 6.
[677] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 6.
[678] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 10.
[679] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 6-7.

points out, "[t]elling history becomes a mode of sexual expression for Quentin and Shreve."[680] Jones also brings to light the way in which it is not only the description of the two students, but also the dynamic of their storytelling which participates in portraying their desire: "the rhythm of their storytelling also gets shaped by sexualized back-and-forth negotiations of pacing and intensity […] The storytelling is punctuated with exchanges […] in which Shreve retells the climactic build-up in a panting allegro and then begs Quentin not to finish it yet but rather to slow down again and thereby maintain the story's apparently pleasurable tension."[681]

The other homoerotic couple in the novel is Henry and Bon, the two characters that Quentin and Shreve identify with to the point of merging their identities with them amorphously: "First, two of them, then four; now two again. […] two, four, now two again, […] the two the four the two still talking […] the two the four the two facing one another" (275-276). [682] One of the reasons is that the their relationships are reflections of each other. Using Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick´s notion of the triangulation of desire between men through a female, Matthew R. Vaughn underscores the erotic dimension of storytelling: "Quentin, whose subjection to the Southern code echoes Henry's, must triangulate his desire for Shreve, not through an actual woman, but through their cooperative production of a narrative of thwarted homosexual identity. […] the story itself becomes the 'beautiful and tragic' feminine object through which these Harvard roommates explore their repressed desires."[683] In this reading, the rise and fall of the extension of the mind between Quentin and Shreve is inextricably bound not only with the fluctuation of temperature, but also with the fulfilment of the homoerotic desire between them: "The implication of Quentin's 'orgasmic convulsions' at the beginning of chapter nine is that he and Shreve have consummated their desire by triangulating it through their joint narrative production."[684]

Yet, the identification of Quentin and Shreve with the characters of their story is not the egotistical incorporation of the other that Irwin sees in it: "[…] the most striking example of the way in which Quentin's narrative act becomes a reincorporation of the lives of the people in that narrative is to be found in Quentin and Shreve's identification with Henry and Bon.

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[680] Norman W. Jones, "Coming Out through History's Hidden Love Letter in *Absalom, Absalom!*," *American Literature* 76, no. 2 (June 2004): 345.
[681] Jones, "Coming Out," 346.
[682] Jones interprets the clarity of reference to Bon by using the vague he in terms of their desire: "The two young men become so fixated on Bon that they don't need to specify that 'he' means Bon, that Bon is their focus, according to the narrator's repeated interjection (245, 249). […] Quentin and Shreve have no need to specify that 'he' means Bon because they are both, like Henry, erotically fixated on Bon." Jones, "Coming Out," 348-349.
[683] Matthew R. Vaughn "'Other Souths': The Expression of Gay Identity in *Absalom, Absalom!*," *Mississippi Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 525-526.
[684] Vaughn, "Other Souths," 526-527.

Indeed, that identification becomes so complete that Quentin and Shreve supply the missing information in the story with the authority of participants and not simply narrators."[685] In the expression of love for each other and the extension of mind between them, the identification is an attempt of the ego to reach beyond its limits, an attempt of the mind to extend.

Interestingly, my reading of Quentin as extending out finds resonance in Jones' reading of homosexuality in *Absalom, Absalom!* as he argues that gay identity is portrayed "not as Quentin's identifying himself with a psychological or otherwise ontological conception of sexuality as fundamental to his being and character but, rather, as his coming to identify with other people—especially from the past—whose desires have met with ethical challenges similar to those he faces": for Jones, the novel "thus implicitly defines gay identity in ethical terms, focusing on the ethical challenges posed by the long cultural history of sexism, heterosexism, and racism in the West."[686] In this reading, pace Irwin, Quentin as "his own house divided, his own Civil War" struggles with the taboo of homosexual desire, while "Faulkner does not portray this struggle as the threat of reaching too far into his personal psychological history; instead, the meaning of Quentin's desire seems largely defined by the threat of reaching too far outward to a kind of metaphorically orgasmic loss of self, to a union with another man as a gay couple, a couple defined by its identification with other similar couples in history."[687]

Such a subversion of the heterosexual image of the national reunion stresses the reality of power relations of the time while allowing to apply similar triangulation of desire to the reconciliation process. As Silber says, her "conclusions apply even more specifically to middle- and upper-class northern men."[688] It was these men who towards the end of the 19th century suffered from "a 'masculinity' crisis in America. Feeling increasingly alienated from economic and social productivity, American men at the turn of the century searched relentlessly for images and activities that might restore their depleted reserves of power and virility."[689] The image of manly ideal was provided in the figure of the Southerner who turned out to be "an extremely pliable and useful model in this age of the masculinity crisis. He was especially useful at a time when American men searched for masculine characteristics but were not entirely certain as to what, precisely, they were searching for."[690] In the service of the imperial goals of the United States, especially in the propaganda surrounding the Spanish-American War, "[t]he

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[685] Irwin, *Doubling and Incest*, 76.
[686] Jones, "Coming Out," 341-342.
[687] Jones, "Coming Out," 352.
[688] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 11.
[689] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 167.
[690] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 176.

men of the North and the South, […] epitomized the spirit of masculine, virile patriotism, the ideology that could finally bridge the bloody chasm of the Civil War."[691] Thus, enamored with a masculine ideal more than with the Southern belle – in the eyes of Northerners, a feminine ideal that represented marital and family bliss, unlike Northern women who "in many cases, had violated all sense of moral and gender propriety"[692] – Northern men invested Southerners with their homosocial desires using Southern women as a conduit in this national love triangle.

There are other parallels to the reconciliation process in the novel. The figure of Thomas Sutpen also becomes significant through his geographical origin. Sutpen is born in "West Virginia mountains" (307) as the "Chronology" section of *Absalom, Absalom!* puts it and his move to the lowlands is cast as his transition from innocence to experience in matters of race and class. Talking about the *fin de siècle*, Silber describes how "northerners had 'discovered' the white people of the southern mountains" who "became northern culture's cause célébre": "More than the rest of the poor white population, the mountaineers revealed the South's racial purity and Anglo-Saxon heritage and could promote the economic progress of the entire region. And, as the purest and most patriotic of all the South's Anglo-Saxons, they formed a crucial link in the reconciliation chain."[693] Designating Sutpen's main problem, the flaw in his design, as "innocence" (178) is in keeping with the notion of the Appalachians at the turn of the century: "Primitive peoples like those of Appalachia, were seen to possess a childlike intensity and simplicity […] [they] offered a graphic, and appealing, depiction of the childhood stage of the Anglo-Saxon race, exuding the innocence and racial vigor of a youthful white America."[694]

Even the central event in *Absalom, Absalom!*, the one that, at least in terms of the story, sets everything in motion, Sutpen's being refused at the door of the mansion and his plunge into experience through the recognition of race and caste, conforms to the Northern picture of "the southern mountaineers" as "a people defined by their distance from African Americans […] In many ways, then, the southern mountain folk captured the imagination of northern observers precisely because of their ignorance of black people."[695] The fact of the main character being an Appalachian points to the possibility that the story, told mostly by Southerners (in terms of the number of narrators) is aimed at Northern audiences by conforming to their ideas of the nation´s nether regions. Sutpen's story of climbing the social ladder gets supplanted by Henry and Bon's story of love in a world ridden by racial hate constituting a move from the story of

[691] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 196.
[692] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 118.
[693] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 143.
[694] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 145.
[695] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 146-147.

pecuniary domination to that of matters of the heart, a story which was wholeheartedly embraced by northern culture: "By turning away from public and pecuniary affairs, by looking toward the emotions and the concerns of the heart, middle-class northern men and women believed that one got closer to true feelings and sentiments."[696]

On this note, Peter Lurie provides an instructive comparison of the novel with contemporary movie production. He points out that early film "relied on stock characters and simplified, melodramatic plot lines that lent themselves to ready, mass consumption and reification. The screen and its artificial settings became the site of a collective, national projection of the Southern 'idea.'"[697] The film industry jumped on the bandwagon of the reconciliation process and produced melodramatic images of the South. Speaking of the filmic dimension of *Absalom, Absalom!*, he observes that the story which Rosa, and Quentin and Shreve narrate – one should say co-produce – promotes the early cinema´s picture of the US South in its melodramatic tone: "Rosa, Shreve (as we will see), and Quentin, though to a lesser degree, epitomize in their relationship to the South an attitude prevalent in the United States during the modern period: a willingness to be entranced by a romantic vision of Southern history. […] This nostalgia had in fact emerged earlier, in attitudes that sought a heroic, noble memory of the Civil War on which to project, paradoxically, an image of national unity."[698] The collaborative storytelling of the two Harvard students produces a story in keeping with the movie production of their and Faulkner's time:

> Quentin and Shreve participate in a production of narrative and a reproduction of a romantic myth, processes which find a structural and ideological paradigm in the cinema. […] As the determinant generic mode of early film, melodramatic narrative, imagery, and structures of thought appear as the boys' final "answer" to the conflicts of the Sutpen narrative. […] All of their earlier efforts to understand Sutpen, and thereby a period of Southern history, collapse at their narrative´s end into a tragic image of failed romance. […] Shreve and Quentin's version of Southern history evinces a Victorian and melodramatic preoccupation with family and an attitude that personalizes and domesticates history, thus denying its broader outlines.[699]

Yet the version of the South they produce is not as uncritical as it might seem. Hidden in plain sight are hints to the undercurrents of the official version of history. As Jones puts it,

[696] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 47.
[697] Lurie, "Some Trashy Myth," 572.
[698] Lurie, "Some Trashy Myth," 578.
[699] Lurie, "Some Trashy Myth," 586.

"*Absalom* insists on exposing the secrets that official histories want most to conceal. […] History in *Absalom* is haunted by what it denies—haunted not by its legends but by its lacunae, symbolized here by the precarious possibility of a gay romance that is suggestively racialized."[700] I am wary of Jones's view of homosexuality which risks denigrating its significance and making it into a mere token: for him, homosexuality represents "the haunted, obscuring relationship between the individual and Western culture's long history of systemic oppressions. Faulkner views gay desire not as a phenomenon to be analyzed in itself (psychologically or otherwise) but as one point of entry—a fissure—in these mythic sociocultural constructs."[701] On the other hand, I agree that "the specter of interracial gay romance haunts *Absalom* more fundamentally than any of its other ghosts"[702].

Vaughn, in his turn, sees homosexuality as debased by Quentin himself: "Quentin is unwilling to openly characterize Bon as a homosexual or to create an alternative narrative in which Henry murders Bon in a fit of homosexual panic. Mixed racial heritage and the threat of miscegenation are made to stand in for gay desire […]."[703] While homosexuality falls outside the conceivable social norms of the heteronormative white South, miscegenation finds its legal basis and justification as a reason for murder. Quentin thus "provides the story with a less personally significant narrative motivation for the destruction of his shadow self, his 'unacceptable' gay identity. […] the creation of a black Charles Bon in this context is appropriate in that it makes a connection between two representative figures of the repressed South: the black male and the homosexual male."[704]

Homosexuality and blackness are compounded to rip the melodramatic story of the South at the seams. At the same time, Bon´s blackness in connection with his origins in Haiti are another element conforming to the late 19th century imagination and narratives of the nation's union around white Anglo-Saxon identity. Silber informs that representations of African Americans "increasingly called up comparisons with the 'primitive' people of 'backward' countries around the world"[705] which was part of a trend in which "northern whites began to cast African Americans outside the boundaries of their Anglo-Saxon nation, they likewise became convinced that a certain mystery surrounded black people and everything

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[700] Jones, "Coming Out," 351 and 362.
[701] Jones, "Coming Out," 357.
[702] Jones, "Coming Out," 355.
[703] Vaughn, "Other Souths," 527.
[704] Vaughn, "Other Souths," 524.
[705] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 136.

about their race, something that was foreign and ultimately unknowable except to a few southern whites."[706]

This melodramatic yet fraught (moving) picture of the South that Quentin and Shreve co-produce represents the story-level of the romance of reunion that is complemented on the level of discourse. It is here that the geography of the novel comes into play as the novel stages a meeting of North and South. Quentin the Southerner becomes intimate with Shreve the Canadian and that on the grounds of Harvard University, i.e. a hallowed ground of New England, the North. Hosam Aboul-Ela elucidates the political and socioeconomic significance of the novel's geography, "one of characters moving from the provinces toward the core", in which "the Canadian and the Southerner have responded to their dependency situations by attending an elite Northern U.S. university"[707]. He maintains that "Canada's peripheral status best explains Shreve's position in the novel" and that the spatial politics of the novel, i.e. Quentin's and Shreve's "connections to distinct spaces within the semiperiphery provides one explanation for why they find Sutpen's maniacal attack on peripheralization fascinating, in spite of their mutually exclusive regional backgrounds"[708]. Even so, Aboul-Ela concedes that "in any case, Shreve's placement should call our attention back to narrative, since he serves mainly as a facilitator of the narration"[709] according with my claim about the enactive nature of the connection between the two young men.

It is partly due to Shreve being a foreigner that the coupling is successful. Had Quentin's narrative partner been a Northerner, less of a "stranger" since more familiar with or aware of the South, the burden of historical experience would have weighted them down, potentially precluding an extension of mind between two previously warring minds(ets): surpassing the land of the Yankees, going further North to Canada to enlist a narrative partner for Quentin, Faulkner sets up the pair for a narrative success. One can also speculate that putting Shreve´s prophecy about the racially mixed future of humankind is more palatable from the mouth of a Canadian than from the mouth of a Yankee: "I think that in time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the western hemisphere. Of course it wont quite be in our time and of course as they spread toward the poles they will bleach out again like the rabbits and the birds do, so they wont show up so sharp against the snow. But it will still be Jim Bond; and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings" (302).

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[706] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 140-141.
[707] Hosam Aboul-Ela, *Other South: Faulkner, Coloniality, and the Mariátegui Tradition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), 143.
[708] Aboul-Ela, *Other South*, 143-144.
[709] Aboul-Ela, *Other South*, 144.

Such a pronouncement has the potential to rekindle exactly the conflict that is being put to rest here and it shows when Shreve follows this statement with his question to Quentin: "Now I want you to tell me just one thing more. Why do you hate the South?" (303). Following, the last words of the novel, is Quentin's ambiguous answer: "'I dont hate it,' Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; 'I dont hate it,' he said. *I dont hate it* he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark: *I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!*" (303). The overt meaning of the words expressing Quentin's attitude towards his homeland is undermined by the insistence of the tone and the repetition. In these final words, the problems of race and sexuality seep through just like through the melodramatic image of the South presented in the novel. One can combine Jones' and Vaughn's analyses of homosexuality in *Absalom, Absalom!* to show the compound toll the two issues take on the effort of national reunion. Jones interprets Quentin's insistent denial as his attempt to avoid acknowledgment of "his homoerotic desire— which is why Quentin responds with such a panicked and panting denial."[710] If this is so, then Vaughn's idea that Quentin substitutes the issue of sexuality with the less threatening issue of race shows that Quentin's final panic is directly caused by Shreve's vision of the future: since Quentin codes homosexuality as miscegenation, he decodes Shreve's reference to the mixing of races in terms of homoerotic intimacy.

The personal and cultural story of male homoerotic and homosocial desire is matched by what Minrose C. Gwin calls "a community of male telling": what dominates the novel is "men's shared narratives of mastery, handed down by men to men […] saying and resaying the story back and forth to one another"[711]. While there is a stylistic commonality to the narrative voices in the novel, Gwin observes also an ideological one: "Mr. Compson's presence is everywhere. […] We may, in fact, think of Quentin's father's talk as an ongoing narrative act that runs under the whole last section of the book, sometimes emerging to speak in its own voice but mostly speaking through other male voices."[712] Since they are "male subjects constituted by a cultural order that privileges men, they engage in a common discourse, in a form of 'man talk' that enables Sutpen's voice to emerge loud and clear to speak white patriarchy's narrative of mastery; in this sense they reify patriarchy's authority at the same time they construct their own."[713] Gwin's "man talk" is the perfect expression of the triangulation of male desire present in *Absalom, Absalom!*:

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[710] Jones, "Coming Out," 341.
[711] Minrose C. Gwin, "The Silencing of Rosa Coldfield," in *William Faulkner's* Absalom, Absalom!: *A Casebook*, ed. Fred Hobson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 175.
[712] Gwin, "Silencing of Rosa Coldfield," 175.
[713] Gwin, "Silencing of Rosa Coldfield," 175-176.

Despite their judgments on the blatancy of Sutpen's phallic order, Grandfather Compson, Mr. Compson, Quentin, and Shreve all seem to articulate the "cultural belief" of white patriarchy – belief which legitimizes itself by placing certain others (women, blacks) outside the symbolic order and thus diffusing their potential to disrupt that order while at the same time positing the female body, however raced or classed, as a commodity of exchange. In the mutuality of these male conversations, Faulkner indeed teaches us about the ongoing quality of the grand narrative of white patriarchy—how it passes itself along; how, like Mr. Compson's voice and gaze, it can be always moving under the surface of how certain men talk to one another, and particularly of how they join together in a symbolic order which configures woman as Other; how the exclusion of the feminine actually becomes the necessary element for the masculine to order itself and its interactions.[714]

The story which insists on being told and which in the form of the impersonal narrator "by spontaneous combustion […] blaze[s] out of *was* into an incandescent *is*"[715] is a story of the South, just of the white heteronormative middle- and upper-class South. However, it is only partially true that *Absalom, Absalom!* contains a "a cultural narrative of power, which is gendered, raced, and classed, legitimizes itself as a process of listening to and recounting stories which do not tell about or do not listen to the culture's own voices of difference."[716] As is clear from my previous argumentation, this official voice is undermined by an unofficial in terms of gender, sex and race. This is present in Rosa's purely female extension and bond with Judith and Clytie and in the strong homoerotic and homosocial element which is the obverse of patriarchy.

It is, therefore, primarily the attempt at and the success of extending one's mind, one's self with an-other that challenges the dominant narrative of patriarchy. In setting up narrative pairs that "consent to differ and hesitate, making the climaxes of sense all the more convincing"[717], in dramatizing "the perpetual open-endedness of the fiction-making process"[718] and in stressing that "[t]ruth is a matter of invention, not inquiry"[719], *Absalom, Absalom!* "challenges more traditional views of what we might call the paternal, phallic authority of a

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[714] Gwin, "Silencing of Rosa Coldfield," 176.
[715] Kuyk, *Sutpen's Design*, 43.
[716] Gwin, "Silencing of Rosa Coldfield," 176-177. Gwin situates the "ruptures within white patriarchy" in "Rosa's talking, Quentin's hearing, and the tension between their two narratives". Gwin, "Silencing of Rosa Coldfield," 182-183.
[717] Matthews, *Play*, 151.
[718] Matthews, *Play*, 161.
[719] Matthews, *Play*, 160.

text's meaning."[720] This is evident in the novel's conclusion which ends by not ending, by refusing to be conclusive: in the words of John T. Matthews, the end "deliberately disfigures the expected achievement of authoritative meaning"[721].

The connective tissue between the story and the discourse of the reunion narrative of *Absalom, Absalom!* is love. The immersion of Quentin and Shreve into their story points to two things. Firstly, the story of Henry and Bon serves as a cognitive tool through which the two students achieve the extension of mind – they extend through the act of storytelling. Secondly, this invasion of the past by the present serves to highlight the fact that it is the present that creates the past. If past haunts the present in the South, then, equally, the present actively raises the ghosts of the past. There is a recursive loop between the two temporal planes which determines what the future for a character is. Since there is no way to verify the account that is presented by the narrating duo, it is impossible to say whether the love between Henry and Bon serves as a way in for Quentin and Shreve or is created by them as a product mirroring its creators. What remains evident is the operation of the parallel that constitutively participates in the extension of minds between the Southerner and the Canadian. In the collaborative narration of Quentin and Shreve the personal relationship is intertwined with the national appeasement as the homoerotic desire between the two youths is reflected in the homosocial male romance of reunion between two regions of the nation, the polar opposites of the North and the South. The essential union that takes place in Faulkner's masterpiece is the extension of minds through narrative means that voices the epistemology of love, of loving in which even the object is turned subject, story and discourse melt into one another, and "the two the four the two" become one.

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[720] Matthews, *Play*, 152.
[721] Matthews, *Play*, 161.

5. Reading Faulkner's Minds: Method to/in/and Madness

5.1. Faulkner's Intelligent Narratives

A century after his first forays into literature, William Faulkner remains widely read and studied. Matthews imputes this endurance of the US South's most prominent writer to his chronicling of the fundamental changes that modernity exerted upon society and the enduring effects of those changes till this day:

> Faulkner's enduring relevance has something to do with the way those shocks of modernization continue to be felt in the disruptions of traditional agrarian ways of life; in the century-long emergence of the global city; in reinventions of the local or regional; in the revolutionary effects of new technologies; in the ascendance of market commerce and speculative finance over the making of things; in the challenges to tyrannical political states and varieties of elite rule over minorities, including reactionary ones based on fictions of racial, ethnic, gender, regional, or religious inferiority; in the long-lasting disablements caused by European colonialism and imperialism both to victims and to perpetrators; in the blind assault on the natural world for human gain.[722]

To this already long list, I would add that one of the reasons is Faulkner's portrayal and challenge of the human mind´s functioning in its engagement with the physical and social worlds. Faulkner performs with idiosyncratic intensity what Kay Young calls "the novel's more fully integrated because embodied and emotionally stimulating 'mind work' – mind work that prompts us to better know our own minds. […] the novel narrates the integrated mind and writes experience into being."[723] Faulkner knowingly, although without theoretical formulations, provides "*an aesthetic map to and experience of the nature of the mind-brain*"[724] by foregrounding the nature of the novel as a medium which "writes about the nature of mind, narrates it at work, and stimulates us to know deepened experiences of consciousness in its touching of our own integrated minds."[725] This project is reflected not only in the *what* his narratives are concerned with, but also in the *how* his narratives formulate the concept of the human mind.

The complexity of the problems Faulkner's works tackle is matched by the complexity of form these aesthetic engagements take. Matthews complements the above list of topics with

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[722] John T. Matthews, "Introduction," in *The New Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner*, ed. John T. Matthews (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1.

[723] Kay Young, *Imagining Minds: The Neuro-Aesthetics of Austen, Eliot, and Hardy* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 4.

[724] Kay Young, *Imagining Minds*, 9. Italics in the original.

[725] Kay Young, *Imagining Minds*, 4.

the observation that the essential feature of the continuing appeal of Faulkner's writing "are the depth and subtlety of its portrayal of humans interacting with circumstance, and its transcendent realization of form and style. […] Faulkner persists because he is a *valuably* difficult writer, one who looms over succeeding generations because he wrestles so strenuously with what we recognize as still-urgent social and aesthetic problems."[726] In terms of the mind, Faulkner delineates human meaning-making embedded in its environment and situated in a feedback loop with culture and the matrix of human relations. This portrayal is conveyed in narratives that stage processes of human cognition in their very form.

Recently, Matthews has suggested an anti-heteronormative way of framing the aesthetic form's correspondence to the social problems it imagines. One of the reasons why time is out of joint in Faulkner's narrative is not only because it is haunted by the traumatic past of the characters, the South and the USA at large, but also "by a less noticed effort to grasp, in that past, alternative futures, some now foreclosed, others still biding their time."[727] The untimeliness of Faulkner's fiction as "an effect of the non-coincidence of chronological and political temporalities" is connected to queer politics as "a commitment to imagining novel forms of dissident desire, pleasure, and affiliation"[728]. Faulkner's counternarratives of heteronormative temporality "enable a vision of alternative ways of being, of 'queerly placid' indifference to the demands of productive futurity, homogeneous linear time, heedless rush; and a preference for the richness of now, for deferral and slow drag."[729] This utopian project bears directly on the unfolding of narrative that "indulges asynchronous presents that have little interest in forcing plots to issue […] are content to occupy the now, not getting ahead of themselves"[730]. The particulars of Faulkner's narrative form, the violations of "the regularities of chronology, plot, mimesis, direct and indirect discourse, and syntax" are isomorphic to his "extravagant imagining of untimely affective, social, economic, and political forms"[731]

A different figuration of form and content in Faulkner's narrative has been suggested by Hosam Aboul-Ela for whom "Faulkner is more strongly connected to the ideology of structure found in the work of the Global Southern novelists" than to that of Euro-American modernism, "but a both/and rather than an either/or conclusion might accommodate the argument I am making for Faulkner's unique place among other modernists, based on the

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[726] Matthews, "Introduction," 3.

[727] John T. Matthews, "Faulkner's Untimely Fiction," in *A History of the Literature of the U.S. South*, ed. Harilaos Stecopoulos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 297.

[728] Matthews, "Faulkner's Untimely Fiction," 297.

[729] Matthews, "Faulkner's Untimely Fiction," 301.

[730] Matthews, "Faulkner's Untimely Fiction," 301.

[731] Matthews, "Faulkner's Untimely Fiction," 312.

attitude toward history reflected in his fiction."[732] Starting from the presumption that the US South represents a specific kind of colonialism, Aboul-Ela argues "for emphases on the commonality of *Souths*, rather than on commonality within the Americas. Whereas the Americas emphasis highlights geography (in the traditional sense of the term), the Souths emphasis puts in relief the political economy of geography."[733] Consequently, he moves "the comparative and postcolonial reading of Faulkner outside of the Americas and into other Souths" in which "the relationship between the novels' forms and their material conditions comes into sharper focus"[734]

The temporal and other formal disjointedness of narrative in this reading stems from the conception of history and the power relations between the colonizer and the colonized. The perceived mythical temporality of Faulkner's narrative "prefigures postcolonial narrative, rather than harkening back to a narrowly conceived high modernist moment" as it "reflects history's unwillingness to advance, evolve, or progress in a Hegelian sense."[735] As Aboul-Ela puts it explicitly, the "narrative structure, with its insistence on the nonlinear […] begins to make a historiographical claim"[736], that is, "the colonial economy plays a determinative role in the form of the narrative" which "advances a powerful argument against the presumption of Western imperialism that history equals progress."[737] Consequently, Faulkner's works respond to social reality by manifesting what Aboul-Ela characterizes as poetics of peripheralization:

> The resulting narrative is fragmented, jumbling time by presenting counterintuitive beginnings and endings and multiple flashbacks, flashforwards, and jump cuts. It uses multiple perspectives to emphasize the multiplicity of histories and realities and eschews the unified subject in favor of split narrative foci. Space is emphasized as another means of subverting the unity of a monolithic temporal line of history, and the geohistorical inequalities that determine the true nature of relationships between spaces play a heightened role. Political history and political economy infiltrate the narrative through glancing but repeated references that often play determinative roles at the margins.[738]

Using the mind as a framing topic for the idiosyncrasies of Faulkner's narrative, I suggest that transversally to the above politically inflected explanations the complexity of these narratives reflects the complexity of the human mind. More specifically, Faulkner writes what

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[732] Aboul-Ela, *Other South*, 140.
[733] Aboul-Ela, *Other South*, 131.
[734] Aboul-Ela, *Other South*, 133.
[735] Aboul-Ela, *Other South*, 18.
[736] Aboul-Ela, *Other South*, 8.
[737] Aboul-Ela, *Other South*, 141.
[738] Aboul-Ela, *Other South*, 136.

David Herman calls "intelligent" narratives. Observing the variety of uses of narrative in a variety of contexts, Herman states that "narrative functions as a powerful and basic tool for thinking"[739] which suggests that "its prevalence as a means for cognition stems from its essential flexibility, its adaptability vis-à-vis the most diverse objects, situations, and events."[740] Consequently, Herman hypothesizes that stories provide "*domain-general* tools for thinking" which not only "bear importantly on matters of social cognition", but also "can be construed as extending into other knowledge domains"[741]. He identifies five problem-solving activities for which narrative as a cognitive tool is essential: "The problem-solving activities at issue include 'chunking' experience into workable segments, imputing causal relations between events, managing problems with the 'typification' of phenomena, sequencing behaviors, and distributing intelligence across groups."[742]

All these problem-solving activities are universal, represented across narratives to a greater or lesser degree. I want to focus on the last one, distributing intelligence across groups, as it is the aspect of narrative that reflects Faulkner's conception of the human mind in that it "at once reflects and reinforces the supra-individual nature of intelligence – i.e., the inextricable interconnection between *trying to make sense of* and *being within* an environment that extends beyond the self."[743] This function of narrative reflects the extended and social nature of the mind recognized by Faulkner and second wave cognitive approaches to the mind. In agreement to the Goffmanian approach assumed here, Herman points out that focusing on narrative as a socio-cognitive tool for distributing intelligence "one thereby shifts from the individual mind to the narrative situation as the primary unit of analysis": "If thinking can be characterized in terms of a functional gestalt in which tools, tasks, and users are less basic than the larger whole in which they jointly participate, in the case of stories, too, tellers, tales, and interpreters of tellings are less basic than the transpersonal narrative situation which they collectively constitute."[744]

Faulkner's narratives supercharge this aspect to create highly "intelligent" narratives. Faulkner's conception of mind as distributed and extended is inherent in the structure of his novels and his narrative techniques. The aesthetics of Faulkner's narrative reflect the workings of human cognition in the same way in which the postcolonial poetics reflect the socioeconomic

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[739] Herman, "Stories as a Tool," 163.
[740] Herman, "How Stories Make us Smarter," 135.
[741] Herman, "Stories as a Tool," 165.
[742] Herman, "How Stories Make us Smarter," 135.
[743] Herman, "How Stories Make us Smarter," 141.
[744] Herman, "How Stories Make us Smarter," 152-153.

reality and imperialist notion of history, and the untimeliness of his fiction reflects the queer resistance to heteronormative temporality. The "intelligence" of the narrative finds its expression mainly in representing characters' mental functioning, non-linear chronology and multiple timelines, embedding of narrative levels, and multiperspectivity. All these elements participate in creating a "smart" whole larger than the sum of its parts: "Each part of the system is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for the intelligence it generates. The gestalt itself is the sufficient condition for the intelligence afforded. Hence, the larger the array of components contained within and coordinated by the system, the wider its distributional reach—i.e., the 'smarter' the system is."[745]

Faulkner's narratives are marked by a high degree of multiperspectivity: as Marcus Hartner observes, "[t]he most prototypical cases of multiperspectivity can be found in repeated, successive renderings of one and the same event from different character's points of view."[746] There is never a single consciousness in Faulkner's major novels, but several of them and these narrating consciousnesses form groups. Faulkner's narrating collectives are not mere juxtapositions of various individual perspectives on the world – they participate, they are strategically used by Faulkner to create a whole larger than the sum of the individual parts. This is achieved by participation on the level of discourse: the stories and the worlds of the novels come to life as the individual narrators cooperate in narrating these stories. What Matthews observes about *As I Lay Dying* is also true for *Absalom, Absalom!* or *The Sound and the Fury*: "Faulkner takes these modern monadic individuals and manages to incorporate them around their central lack, putting them into communication with one another and folding them into a single narrative that they execute as a united entity."[747]

What changes is the kind of lack around which the individual characters concentrate. *The Sound and the Fury* consists of four parts narrated by four different narrators concerned with matters that are the same, similar and different, circling around an absent center that is Caddie, the sister of the three narrating brothers. Other Faulkner works, though not containing any obvious lack at their center, also create narrative groups (re)presenting and, at the same time, producing cultural norms through their telling, that are employed in producing a "single" story. While *Light in August* tells in a voice of community – a group of people closely tied by

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[745] David Herman, "Regrounding Narratology: The Study of Narratively Organized Systems for Thinking," in *What is Narratology?: Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of Theory*, ed. Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 310.

[746] Marcus Hartner, "Narrative Theory Meets Blending: Multiperspectivity Reconsidered," *REAL* 24 (December 2008): 182.

[747] Matthews, *As I Lay Dying*, 168.

matters material as well as abstract – spoken by its members, Faulkner's "unnatural" anthropomorphic collective voice of Jefferson in "A Rose for Emily" can be seen as an extreme example of a narrative group, one in which the members surrender their individuality in the name of a collective cognitive task. All these narratives are, in a sense, concerned with narrating the same story – the story of Yoknapatawpha, i.e. "the South".

United, nevertheless, does not mean homogeneous: sometimes, the only unity that binds the various perspectives is provided by the covers of the book. As Hartner observes, multiperspectivity "characteristically foregrounds some form of 'tension' or 'dissonance' that emerges from the clash of the staged perspectives."[748] This can simply mean producing differing accounts of the same event. For example, *As I Lay Dying* employs 15 narrators who in turns communicate a continuing story providing overlapping perspectives. Even though defying sometimes each other's perspectives, this plastic (palimpsestic or cubistic) narrative is produced through collaboration. What should be noted is Herman's observation that "changes in perspective-taking are not merely incremental or additive, with one vantage-point giving way to another in sequence, but rather synergistically interrelated, constituting elements of a larger, narratively organized system for thinking."[749] The constant shifting of perspective cumulatively creates "a latticework of perceptual positions, a network of viewpoints, with emergent cognitive properties that cannot be reduced to those associated with any one position or node. The properties instead arise from the interaction between particular standpoints as the reading experience unfolds."[750]

Staging various consciousnesses, this structure affords the possibility to give versions of events highlighting the subjective experientiality of "objective" happenings. A notable example is the river crossing scene narrated subsequently by Darl, Vardaman and Vernon Tull. Darl is crossing the river with Cash and Jewel and the body of their dead mother affording an "insider" perspective of the event highlighting the experience of it: "*I felt the current take us and I knew we were on the ford by that reason, since it was only by means of that slipping contact that we could tell that we were in motion at all. What had once been a flat surface was now a succession of troughs and hillocks lifting and falling about us, shoving at us, teasing at us with light lazy touches in the vain instants of solidity underfoot*" (85). Darl's section ends with him jumping off the wagon to try to catch his mother's body which has slipped into the roaring river. Vardaman's and Tull's sections both pick up from that very moment. Vardaman

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[748] Hartner, "Narrative Theory," 182.
[749] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 311.
[750] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 311.

affords the child's perspective of the events injecting the scene with his plight to come to terms with his mother's death. Consequently, he watches Darl's attempt to save Addie's body. Tull, an adult and not a member of the Bundren family, provides a more coherent account of a bystander than Vardaman, while being preoccupied with watching Cash and Jewel trying to save the wagon and the animals from drowning.

Faulkner achieves giving both the involving point of view of characters caught up in the drama, directly in the action, and thus with a perspective limited to their immediate surroundings, and the point of view of a bystander, a witness who has a grasp of the whole scene and is able to provide the "zoomed-out" version of the events. The scene also provides an example of another function of the multiperspectivity regarding the representation of the mind: it embodies the mind and minds the body. Vardaman watching the drama, narrates/thinks that he is "hollering running and hollering and Dewey Dell hollering at me Vardaman you vardaman you vardaman […] and I passed Vernon and he wouldn't get in the water and help Darl" (87). When Tull takes over the narration, he notes that "then that boy passed me, running and hollering at Darl and the gal trying to catch him" (88). Vardaman's interior monologue marked by the hurtling ungrammatical syntax and bad spelling is complemented by Vernon's perception of the boy's body in motion and sound. Instead of portraying minds as disembodied voices, the cadence of the constant shifting of the perspective reminds the reader that minds are bodies and that bodies have minds at every turn. André Bleikasten has captured this when speaking about the solidity of characters in the novel: "The 'I' of the interior monologue tends to dissolve in the movement which carries it along; it suggests a presence rather than a person. But as soon as, through someone else's eyes, this 'I' becomes a 'he,' the character assumes shape and substance and is invested with a character's attributes and prerogatives."[751]

Absalom, Absalom! is a case of cooperative storytelling in which (hi)stories are made and unmade with each narrative turn and within it. The multiperspectivity of the novel is apparent from the conflicting stories that result from the various tellings. "Essentially all talk and no action," as Parker puts it, *Absalom, Absalom!* "may simply be regarded as a narrative about narrative".[752] Brooks suggests that the "incessant narrating of *Absalom, Absalom!* seems to bring us perilously close to the brink of narrative without motive"[753]. The motive seems to be missing because, as I have argued, the story is a means around which pairs of characters as well as the community at large organizes through acts of storytelling. The story itself is not

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[751] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 66.
[752] Parker, *Narrative Form*, 112. Cf. Brooks, "Incredulous Narration," 263.
[753] Brooks, "Incredulous Narration," 252-253.

irrelevant as its content is instrumental in expressing the values of the culture of which it is a product and a producer at the same time. The acts of narrating stage the processes of cultural dissemination. The multiperspectivity is essential in the portrayal: as Matthews observes, "Faulkner's magnificent achievement in *Absalom* arises from his recognition that the only way to tell the story of the South is to tell it as the story of many stories."[754]

The narrative encounters and extensions between the couples highlight the various ways in which individuals relate to culture at large in an enactive fashion: the different relations to the culture of the South are expressed in the forms or genres the stories assume as well as the details of the stories themselves. Thus, the multiperspective composition points out that the pragmatic nature of "social reality is always a matter of telling the story that will best serve you and yours, that history is always a matter of relating the past according to present interests, that life itself is a Sisyphean struggle to impose your own design on reality"[755]. Further and more importantly, it reveals the cultural foundation of the mind and the intersubjective nature of consciousness. Multiperspectivity as a narrative technique directly and most appropriately reflects intersubjectivity defined "[i]n the simplest terms […] as *the sharing of experiential content* (*e.g., feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and linguistic meanings*) *among a plurality of subjects*."[756]

This is true for *As I Lay Dying* with its presentation of characters as both subjects and objects of consciousness of others. What *Absalom, Absalom!* highlights is "the central concept of a human psychology", as Bruner states, "*meaning* and the processes and transactions involved in the construction of meanings."[757] It does so by showcasing the specifically human way of constructing meaning, i.e., in cooperation. In his treatise on human cooperation, Michael Tomasello states simply that "[h]umans putting their heads together in shared cooperative activities are thus the originators of human culture."[758] Despite its element of agon, the "jostling of contrary stories also invites us to reckon with every individual's bid for self-creation, within whatever community that person recognizes as his or her own"[759], the scenes of storytelling in which narrative is produced in a more or less cooperative endeavor between a narrator and a listener or two narrating listeners encapsulate that "the species-unique structure of human

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[754] Matthews, *William Faulkner*, 175.
[755] Matthews, *William Faulkner*, 175.
[756] Zlatev, "Intersubjectivity," 1. Emphasis in the original.
[757] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 33.
[758] Michael Tomasello, *Why We Cooperate* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2009), 100. Jordan Zlatev et al. hold the "bold contentions that the human mind is quintessentially a shared mind and that intersubjectivity is at the heart of what makes us human." Zlatev, "Intersubjectivity," 2.
[759] Matthews, *William Faulkner*, 176.

collaborative activities is that of a joint goal with individual roles, coordinated by joint attention and individual perspectives."[760] Presenting struggles within cooperation, *Absalom, Absalom!* stages the fact, as formulated by Bruner, that "[t]o be in a viable culture is to be bound in a set of connecting stories, connecting even though the stories may not represent a consensus."[761]

The multiperspective structure in Faulkner's narratives concerned with the human mind becomes an expression of the enactivist idea of participatory sense-making which contains the spirit of agon in itself purporting "a full engagement" to be "an ongoing, never-finished balancing between over- and underdetermination" while "[w]hat the right amount of ongoing, changing, determining is, will be determined situation by situation, and will be different in different moments."[762] In recognizing the intersubjectivity of the mind, multiperspectivity becomes a reflection of the very self which in the words of George Butte is both "a body, an experience of that body and its gestures, an intentionality grounded in that body—*and* a mirroring of other bodies, gestures, experiences, and discourses."[763] *As I Lay Dying* with its instantiation of intensive mindreading portrays intersubjectivity as "the web of partially interpenetrating consciousnesses that exists wherever perceiving subjects, that is, human beings, collect. […] This web is too intricate to be the product of only private or mutual delusion. Regardless of whether the gestures exchanged are verbal, the web is evidence of genuine, if imperfect, knowledge of other selves."[764]

Absalom, Absalom! signals this inter-subjectivity at the very beginning when Quentin is described as this web itself: "[…] his very body was an empty hall echoing with sonorous defeated names; he was not a being, an entity, he was a commonwealth. He was a barracks filled with stubborn back-looking ghosts […]" (7). Relevant for *Absalom, Absalom!* is also the political implication of this conception of subjectivity since, as Butte points out, "[c]laims to represent *inter*subjectivities are […] invariably project implications for rapprochement (or its absence) between self and other, between different others, and for community within narrative, with its inevitable analogies to community outside of texts."[765] In imagining intersubjective encounters between individuals, *Absalom, Absalom!* strives for creating a community of narrators, producers of culture around cultural products inherited from the past in a narrative move that contests Irwin´s argument for the self-enclosed ego as the ruling concept of

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[760] Tomasello, *Why We Cooperate*, 74.
[761] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 96.
[762] De Jaegher, "Loving and Knowing," 13.
[763] George Butte, *I Know that You Know that I Know: Narrating Subjects from* Moll Flanders *to* Marnie (Columbia: The Ohio State University Press, 2004), 5.
[764] Butte, *I Know that You Know*, 28.
[765] Butte, *I Know that You Know*, 16.

subjectivity in the novel[766]. This view is challenged by the "cacophony of voices"[767], as Parker puts it, the fact that it is often impossible to separate the voices, to say which individual is speaking. This pooling of voices bespeaks the intersubjective network out of which "individual" subjectivity emerges.

The novel compounds this structure by embedding the web of consciousnesses in the flow of history. Thus, as Casero observes, Faulkner "depicts consciousness as a historically and socially determined *system* of events and processes, not as the production of an individual mind or a set of individual minds"[768] with history becoming more prominent than in *As I Lay Dying*. Casero spells out the causal historical chain which leads to the present consciousness in "a continual flow of contents through history, which here extends backwards in time"[769]:

> We can see here that the chains of events and shifts in consciousness that form the core of *Absalom, Absalom!* extend to multiple historical levels: Sutpen's childhood social setting directly determines the condition of his consciousness, which forms his design, which determines his interactions with others in the novel, including Rosa, whose consciousness is made bitter and resentful and broken, causing her to disseminate the narrative of Sutpen which, as far as the novel seems to imply, runs as an undercurrent of human consciousness throughout human history. The historical transfer of conscious contents throughout history and throughout the social networks of *Absalom, Absalom!* forms the three-dimensional "field" of the novel's consciousness out of which the narrative of Sutpen develops and emerges.[770]

In describing Quentin as a "commonwealth" and his enculturation as simply "breathing the same air" like his predecessors, the novel offers potent metaphors of its "'three-dimensional' model of consciousness, which collapses individual, social, and historical dimensions of character consciousness into an expansive simultaneity."[771] The historical axis of the mind results in narrative embedding which "increases the distributional reach of stories used as a tool for thinking, with framed tales enhancing the overall intelligence of the system or gestalt to which they contribute."[772] As Weinstein observes, "[c]haracter in *Absalom* lives openly in someone else's talk; there is no illusion here of unmediated identity, of identity as enclosed essence. A different narrator, a different issue (miscegenation, say, rather than incest) produces

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[766] Irwin, *Doubling and Incest*, 59.
[767] Parker, *Narrative Form*, 123.
[768] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 87.
[769] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 91.
[770] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 96.
[771] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 96.
[772] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 327.

a different identity."[773] The narrative of the novel is thus quintessential in the creation of intersubjectivity as the "subject is stories, embodied and exchanged"[774].

It is significant that the very reason for narrative in *Absalom, Absalom!* is mindreading. Theory of mind as "the default interpretation of behavior reflects a character's state of mind"[775]: the novel is rife with stories because so much of the behavior presented in it lacks the appropriately explanatory states of mind. Why does Rosa Coldfield call for Quentin Compson to listen to her tell a story he is already familiar with? Why does Henry kill Bon after such a long time, at the moment they reach the gate of Sutpen's Hundred after the war they have survived ended? What are the reasons for the sudden irruption of Thomas Sutpen upon the town of Jefferson, his secretive behavior, and his flaunting of the mores of the community? These are some of the novel's examples of what Bruner defines as breaches of canonicity in which folk psychology, mindreading is invested: folk psychology "summarizes not simply how things are but (often implicitly) how they should be. When things 'are as they should be,' the narratives of folk psychology are unnecessary."[776]

In other words, under "normal" conditions, behavior is self-explanatory – it conforms to expectations, to standard interpretations: "Folk psychology is invested in canonicality. It focuses upon the expectable and/or the usual in the human condition. It endows these with legitimacy or authority."[777] But things are not as they should be in the house of Sutpen: like ripples without a pebble, behavior is only aftereffects without a cause. Drawing on frames of reference, on cultural models that are available to them, the various narrators activate "[t]*he function of the story [which] is to find an intentional state that mitigates or at least makes comprehensible a deviation from a canonical cultural pattern.*"[778] Consequently, to explain the murder of Charles Bon at the hands of his friend, he becomes first a brother and then black. As such, he poses a double threat in the culture of the US South: Henry is faced with a dilemma whether to prevent Bon from committing incest, mixing of the same blood by marrying Henry's sister Judith or from miscegenation, mixing of different blood – contamination of the purity of the Southern belle by a black male. The narratives and narrations of *Absalom, Absalom!*

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[773] Philip M. Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject: A Cosmos No One Owns* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 97.
[774] Butte, *I Know that You Know*, 7.
[775] Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 4.
[776] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 39-40.
[777] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 47.
[778] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 49-50. Italics in the original.

proliferate as "interpretive procedures for rendering departures from" standard social norms "meaningful in terms of established patterns of belief."[779]

Faulkner's narratives dramatize "one of the central problem-solving activities bound up with intelligent behavior, that is, gaining knowledge about nonproximate situations and events, including knowledge about events that occurred in the past and knowledge of one's own or another's mind."[780] What Faulkner's intricate compositions suggest is that "knowledge of this sort, rather than preceding and underwriting acts of narration or co-narration […] instead derives from the larger gestalt formed by (interactions among) all of the components within such narrative systems", and, therefore, "[t]he gestalt at issue can be thought of as an emergent whole; it arises from the interplay of multiple participants (and in some cases, different incarnations of the same participant) occupying more than one diegetic level over the course of the story's telling."[781] There is an added layer to this complex tool for thinking since readers "participate in the formation of the gestalt; their interpretations are components of the intelligent system enabled by the narrative."[782] As a result, the presentation of cognition as "propagated spatially as well as temporally" leads to a "richly differentiated structure" which is "both the record of and an instrument for socially distributed cognition."[783]

As I Lay Dying lacks the remarkable temporal richness of *Absalom, Absalom!* with one notable exception. Telling of the journey the Bundrens undertake to bury their deceased wife and mother, the narrative as it unfolds through the consciousnesses of various characters stays predominantly in the narrative present: what is presented is a predominantly chronological account of events with some overlaps and alterations resulting from the multiperspectivity. The temporal "flatness" is underscored with the irregular employment of present tense narration: the various consciousnesses mostly register and react to the present conditions with occasional memories occurring. Whereas temporal disjointedness features heavily in *Absalom, Absalom!*, a fact highlighted not least by the inclusion at the end of the novel of "Chronology" and "Genealogy" sections whose "plotlessness", as Parker points out, "reinforces the text's implicit message that the observer must discern the causal pattern"[784], for *As I Lay Dying*, the time is now.

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[779] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 47.
[780] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 308.
[781] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 308.
[782] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 308.
[783] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 308.
[784] Parker, *Narrative Form*, 120.

In the context of such an "unproblematic" temporality, Addie's section has often been called a postmortem narrative: Addie speaks in the ultimate out of turn fashion, after she has died.[785] The problem with this assumption is that there is no evidence, no clue that suggests this, whereas reaching this conclusion actually ignores two related aspects of the narrative of the novel. Firstly, considering her section as out of place is based on the conflation of the story with its telling. Addie's consciousness is given voice after her death occurs in the story but deducing that it is her corpse that is telling means to identify the discourse level of narrative with the story level. Ultimately, thus, one is identifying a spatial layout of the composition with a chronological layout of the story.[786] One argument might be the consistency with which the rest of the narrative matches the discourse with the temporality of the story; however, that is not true. Firstly, in the cubist narrative of *As I Lay Dying*, there are temporal overlaps of the various segments that defy a seamless flow of time: one narrator can tell of events that have been already reported by some other narrator, so that there is a flashback before the time catches up with the previous narrative.

Secondly, and more importantly, the two sections immediately encompassing Addie's section, those of Cora Tull and Whitfield defy the temporal coherence of story and discourse as well. Considering Addie's narration posthumous ultimately ignores these two sections. In the sequence of events constituting the odyssey of the Bundrens, Cora's section suddenly interrupts the narrative progress and returns back in time to when Addie was still alive to report on an exchange they had with each other. Addie's section gives a short account of her life with Anse and reveals her affair with Whitfield and the fact that Jewel is their child out of wedlock. Whitfield's section is preoccupied with his moral struggle upon receiving the news of Addie's impending death. As he travels to the Bundren house to perform his clerical duties and give Addie her last rites, he learns that he is too late as Addie has died in the meantime. His section ends with him reaching the Bundren house after her death.

On its own, Addie's section represents Gérard Genette's achrony, "an event we must ultimately take to be dateless and ageless […] deprived of every temporal connection"[787]. As it stands, there is nothing in the section to place it temporally: all we know is that it is spoken after the birth of all her children. Taken together with Cora's and Whitfield's sections, this stall

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[785] See for example Ross, "Voice in Narrative Texts," 303; Hale, "*As I Lay Dying's* Heterogeneous Discourse," 13; Matthews, "*As I Lay Dying* in the Machine Age," 76.

[786] See Gérard Genette's identification of and comments on this error in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 85.

[787] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 84.

in the narrative of the Bundrens' journey, constitutes an "achronic structure" which Genette defines as a succession of events that "has no connection to the temporal order of the events composing it, or only a partially coincidental connection."[788] There is a tentative chronology that can be posited. Enclosed between a conversation with Cora and Whitfield's journey to give Addie absolution, it is possible to see her section as a deathbed confession or review of her life. Instead of being posthumous narrative, Addie's section can be conceived of as her last thoughts.

The succession of events in the achronic structure depends on something else than on chronology. Concerned as the sections are with sin and salvation, and referring to each other explicitly and implicitly, they are best described as a triptych, especially the medieval religious form of panel painting. United thematically and referring to each other, the three panels are hinged together in the usual form of two smaller panels, Cora's and Whitfield's sections of equal length, enclosing the bigger panel, Addie's longer section. The devout Cora, kneeling and praying, measuring everything in terms of the afterlife, puts heaven above Earth. Addie who inherited her father's outlook on life – "the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time" (98) – and who values deeds over words which "are no good […] words dont ever fit even what they are trying to say at" (99), intimate with the plight of a woman bearing five children, she knows that the only life is what you make of it here on Earth. Whitfield, "the instrument ordained by God" (101), wrestling with his sin, "with Satan" (103) upon learning about Addie's impending death opens the possibility of hell which lurks behind his personal nightly vigil. Nested in the chronological progress of the Bundren's is Faulkner's version of Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Interrupting the narrative present of the novel just after the river crossing when Addie's body grotesquely slipped from the wagon and into the river to be caught by Darl, the triptych pauses the story to present three individual minds and their struggles with morality, i.e., the cultural norms coding morality in terms of the supernatural, to offer three interpretive frames for the events immediately preceding it and for life at large.

Compared to this one remarkable lapse from the present in *As I Lay Dying*, *Absalom, Absalom!* dives into history and piles one timeline onto another. John F. Padgett has recently analyzed the temporal structure of the novel in great detail, which leads him to the conviction that "William Faulkner did with narrative time what Leon Battista Alberti did with visual space and what Albert Einstein did with physical space-time"[789], making him "a more important

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[788] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 85.
[789] John F. Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories into History: Narrative Networks in Multiple Times," *American Journal of Sociology* 124, no. 2 (September 2018): 467.

theorist of time and causality than philosophers and sociologists recognize."[790] For Padgett, Faulkner's achievement inheres in "a deeply insightful experiment in how to assemble heterogeneous subjective memories into multivocal collective history."[791] He distinguishes six times in the novel "in which Faulkner told the 'same' history" and which for him "were six truths, all of which are equally valid"[792]: "Namely (1) the phenomenological time of experience, (2) the episodic time of points of view, (3) the narrative time of subplots, (4) the epistemological time of Quentin's and the reader's investigations, and (5) the intertextual time of projection from narrative to another. The most obvious, (6) metric dates, Faulkner did not use much but was perfectly aware of."[793]

The relation of the temporal structure to the matters of the mind is twofold. Firstly, as Padgett observes, Faulkner's presentation of multiple times and memories "is remarkably consistent with contemporary neuroscience research on memory in the brain" which has discovered that "there are multiple memory systems in the brain, which operate in parallel […] The brain, in other words, processes numerous conceptions of time concurrently, through overlapping neural circuits (i.e., multiple networks) within itself"[794]. Secondly, Faulkner's narrative replicates and by that constructs social structure which "is a set of trajectories and movements through space-time. That is, it is synonymous with 'history.'"[795] Since space-time which at the human scale "is the set of cognitive categories and dimensions through which people perceive their own movement and interaction" does not pre-exist but "emerges out of interaction among the objects and energies that move within it, like in Einstein's general relativity theory", multivocality is "generic to the emergence of 'culture' itself."[796] The narrative structure of *Absalom, Absalom!* implies that social space-time, i.e., "collective narrative time emerges from experiential streams of consciousness through iterated conversations among observers and narrators, both living and dead."[797] This, in effect, makes point of view and multiperspectivity "the foundation of cognition" since "[h]umans cannot apprehend genetic or historical flow in all of their complexity."[798]

The conversational co-constitution of history suits particularly well the suggestion of reunion between the two previously warring regions of the nation through the cooperative

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[790] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 409.
[791] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 408.
[792] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 466-467.
[793] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 466.
[794] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 430-431.
[795] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 407.
[796] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 407.
[797] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 409-410.
[798] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 423.

storytelling between Quentin and Shreve. Inventing the past is in one sense giving justification to the present – it furnishes the state of the "social structure" with a series of chrono-logical steps that make it unavoidable and natural. As Herman observes, "historical cognition amounts to a stratified complex of stories networked together to link the present with the past—or, more precisely, to integrate the present moment into a constellation of more or less proximate past moments."[799] In order to bring alignment within the social structure therefore requires coming to terms with history which "subsumes all important participants' perspectives, not into consensus, but into alignment—at least enough that conversation becomes possible."[800] Through narrative time which, as Padgett remarks, functions as "a synchronization device"[801] the problem of coming to terms with the past "can be solved not by talking with the living, but by talking with the dead. Faulkner's thought-transfer idea is that people in the present can deeply empathize with people in the past, using cognitive skills not so different from readers identifying with characters in a novel."[802] Raising the ghosts of the past in *Absalom, Absalom!* is a means to achieving historical cognition, i.e., the extension of mind across space and time.

Faulkner's narrator groups constitute cognitive systems of two and more narrators that jointly perform the cognitive act of narrating a story, the "same" story. Importantly, if one or more of these narrators (some part of this cognitive system) were removed the story itself would change. In terms of the extended mind, if we remove part of the distributed cognitive system, "the system's behavioural competence will drop"[803]. This is partly stating the obvious: changing narratorial discourse entails changes not only in the narrated story, but also in the features of the narrative structure. However, as Herman observes about multiplicity of narrators, "the stratification of the storyworld into levels produces a narrative gestalt smarter than the sum of its parts."[804] Thus, the change in Faulkner's narrator groups would have qualitative implications, not only quantitative ones. Without Cora's eyes brimming with heavenly sights and without Whitfield gazing in horror at the gates of hell, Addie's section could potentially be seen as postmortem narrative. Given the interconnectedness and complexity of the narrative situation of *Absalom, Absalom!*, removing any of the narrators would result in a significant drop in the systems competence, although its general performance of historical cognition would

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[799] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 328.
[800] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 460.
[801] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 460.
[802] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 423.
[803] Clark and Chalmers, "The Extended Mind," 29.
[804] David Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 324.

remain in force. Quality is key – the reshaping of the emergent gestalt would depend on the particular change in the narrative constellation.

As is true especially for *Absalom, Absalom!*, "[t]his gestalt, structuring the problem-solving activities of readers as well as of the narrator and character-narrators, functions as a system for generating historical intelligence (i.e., knowledge about the past) in particular."[805] There is then a specific relevance for Faulkner's works interested in the past, its creation, preservation and its hold on the present in conceiving of the narrative constellations of his novels in this sense. His works highlight the general function of narrative which "bridges self and other, creating a network of relations between storytellers, the participants whose experiences they recount, and the larger environment embedding those experiences, including the setting afforded by the activity of storytelling itself."[806] Faulkner's narratives are intelligent ultimately because they present the human mind as evolutionarily developed, culturally determined and determining, and narratively configured: by staging the mind in action and process, his complex structures are powerful tools that "help organize thinking about thinking."[807]

5.2. Mind, Body, Culture and Madness

Faulkner's narrative forms are commensurate to his depiction of the mind, not as a lump of mass entombed within the skull isolated from the body and the world at large, but as a shapeshifting entity that is fundamentally embodied, distributed, social, shaped by culture as well as biology. Faulkner favors staging the experientiality of qualia which comes through most intensely besides the presentation of consciousness itself in the layering of perspectives and their interplay; as Weinstein observes, "Faulkner is a supremely perspectival novelist – or a 'repercussive' one"[808]. The meetings of Faulkner's minds underline the understanding of "cognitive processes as amalgamation of the neural, bodily, and environmental"[809] and, therefore, the mind not as a "thing" in place, but a process in action situated in a particular context. In Faulkner's work, mental phenomena "do not stop at the boundaries of the brain, but extend out into the activity we perform in the world, activity that is both bodily and incorporates wider environmental performances."[810]

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[805] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 325.
[806] Herman, "Stories as a Tool," 184.
[807] Herman, "Regrounding Narratology," 318.
[808] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 4.
[809] Rowlands, *The New Science*, 84.
[810] Rowlands, *The New Science*, 196.

Faulkner powerfully illustrates that individuality is a phenomenon that is recognizable only against the background of intersubjectivity; in other words, that "[a]n individual in human society is never isolated."[811] Through multiperspectivity, the various extensions occurring among the characters and narrators, and the specific constitutions of mental functioning, Faulkner points out that collective consciousness "may be present at any level: from family, community or society to a deeper configuration comprising 'culture' as a whole, in the abstract."[812] His works bear witness to the fact that embodied mind, or as Thompson says "the affective mind isn't in the head", but mostly represents "a prototypical *self–other event*."[813] The dynamics of individual and the intersubjective in Faulkner's works has been expressed eloquently by Glissant who remarks that consciousness in Yoknapatawpha is "[l]ike a tumultuous Mississippi, it runs all through the county. […] Thought rides from one person to another, the way the loas (the divinities in the voodoo religion) ride those they have chosen to possess. But here, in the county, possession is contagious. The individual is singular in his or her stubbornness and multiple in relation to others."[814]

Between these two poles, between mergers establishing various constellations of distributed mind and "strokes of consciousness"[815], Glissant's term for the self-expressions of individuality in the flux of collective consciousness, there are moments of friction. While Faulkner clearly sees the mind as an event that transcends the individual, he does not portray such mental being in the world as unproblematic. The embodied mind in *As I Lay Dying* is complemented by a counter-images of a disembodied mind, of voices floating loose in the air suggesting a mind-body dualism. The fraught dynamics between extension of the mind and the self-enclosed ego comes forth in the madness, in the disintegration of the self of the two main protagonists of the novels analyzed here: Darl Bundren and Quentin Compson.

Weinstein claims that "Faulkner's supreme novels" among which he includes both *As I Lay Dying* and *Absalom, Absalom!*, "are those in which the project of subjective coherence is under maximal stress."[816] The stress is exerted by culture and its inherent ideology at which the self is presumably at odds: "In the early Faulkner's Modernist experiments, this process of socially produced self-shaping is not only foregrounded and fraught with pain […] Faulkner in the late 1920s and early 1930s registers the acculturation of the subject as an assault. His texts

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[811] Barnard, Alan. "When Individuals Do Not Stop at the Skin," 260.
[812] Barnard, Alan. "When Individuals Do Not Stop at the Skin," 257.
[813] Thompson, "Empathy and Consciousness," 4.
[814] Glissant, *Faulkner, Mississippi*, 176.
[815] Glissant, *Faulkner, Mississippi*, 176.
[816] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 2.

speak of and enact the trauma of alienation."[817] I agree with Weinstein on the disquieting effect Faulkner's works have on the reader: "As we read we 'live' that entry as an internalized cacophony of bodies and voices suffering the impress of alien scripts."[818]

However, the rhetoric of becoming as a violent assault on the individual seems to stem from considering the relationship of the individual with culture in terms of alienation, i.e., not taking into account the other pole of intersubjective being. Some of the extensions in *Absalom, Absalom!* suggest the possibility of not only intersubjectivity, but interbeing through empathy brought about by environmental conditions in the case of, as Rosa puts it, "that triumvirate mother-woman which we three, Judith Clytie and I, made" (131), and in the case of "some happy marriage of speaking and hearing" (253) between Quentin and Shreve brought about in addition by contextual intimacy and interaction processes suggesting that selves "can only be revealed in a transaction between a teller and a told"[819]. Faulkner thus points a way to "the development of non-egocentric or self-transcendent modes of consciousness."[820]

Faulkner's work suggest a conceptual, rather than an essential self which, as Bruner defines it, "can be seen as a product of the situations in which it operates, the 'swarms of its participations',"[821] a view that has gained dominance even within the cognitive sciences "with hardly a shot fired."[822] The variety of being in the world that Faulkner depicts suggests a subjectivity that "stands both as a guardian of permanence and as a barometer responding to the local cultural weather"[823], a self which "is defined *both* by the individual *and* by the culture in which he or she participates [and] the *practices* in which 'the meaning of Self' are achieved and put to use."[824]

Instead of being a choice between mutually exclusive essential notions of a self, Faulkner figures the subject as a stratified concept akin to Gallagher's "pattern theory of self [which] argues that a self is constituted as a pattern or dynamical *Gestalt* comprised of a sufficient number of characteristic factors, including embodied, experiential, affective, behavioral, intersubjective, psychological/cognitive, reflective, narrative, extended and normative factors"[825] proceeding from "biological, ecological and interoceptive factors" all the way to "cultural and normative practices, involving physical and mental health, gender, race,

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[817] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 152.
[818] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 152. See also Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 3.
[819] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 125.
[820] Thompson, "Empathy and Consciousness," 23.
[821] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 110.
[822] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 101.
[823] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 109.
[824] Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 116.
[825] Gallagher, "Decentering the Brain," 13.

and economic status, that define our way of living."[826] In accordance with this theory, the various features that Faulkner suggests constitute the (re)formations of the mind point to the key feature of the dynamical gestalt that the self is in which "a change in one element, above a certain threshold, will lead, via dynamical interactions, to changes in others."[827]

This does not mean that Weinstein is wrong in saying that "these novels creatively expose as unworkable the larger culture's ideological designs."[828] Nevertheless, it is to say that if "Faulkner's brilliantly unruly early texts pass on to us (into us) the visceral assault of culture upon the subject"[829], this is because tensions pulling the self apart are inherent in the culture these texts reflect and are directly related to the exigencies of the extension of one's mind, i.e. one's self. While the mind's transcendence of the neuronal substrate is evolutionarily encoded in the body through the myriad affordances it lends itself to, this extension has never been seen unproblematically, if at all. The conceptual permeability of the body as the mind's extension is ever haunted by the fundamentality of the material body's boundary. From Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to recent high concept science fiction TV series such as *Altered Carbon* or *Westworld*, where bodies (called "skins" in *Altered Carbon*) are frequently discarded and swapped, any disruption of the skin, the all-important boundary between "me" and the world ("not-me"), has been encoded in culture as the horror of mutilation. In the Christian tradition, the violation of the body amounts to sacrilege: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body" (Cor. 6:19).

Even though Clark observes that the "cyborg is a potent cultural icon of the late twentieth century [which] conjures images of human-machine hybrids and the physical merging of flesh and electronic circuitry"[830] and is a potential future of the human extension, it is not representative of the cognitive distribution the human mind is capable of. Yet there is potential for conflict and tension when it comes to embodied extension: for if Clark claims that we are natural-born cyborgs, that "[p]lasticity and multiplicity are our true constants, and new technologies merely dramatize our oldest puzzles"[831], at the same time "we are natural Cartesians – dualistic thinking comes naturally to us"[832], as Paul Bloom observes. As a result,

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[826] Gallagher, "Decentering the Brain," 14.
[827] Gallagher, "Decentering the Brain," 13.
[828] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 3.
[829] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 3.
[830] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 5.
[831] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 8.
[832] Paul Bloom, *Descartes' Baby: How the Science of Child Development Explains What Makes Us Human* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), xii.

"[w]e have two distinct ways of seeing the world: as containing bodies and as containing souls."[833] This dualistic epistemology underlies our understanding of a plethora of phenomena, including art:

> This is how we see ourselves and others. Our bodies are described as our possessions. We talk about "my body," "my arm," "my heart," and, most revealingly, "my brain." […] Our intuitive dualism grounds our understanding of personal identity. We recognize that a person's body will age; it might grow or shrink, lose a limb, undergo plastic surgery – but in an important sense, the person remains the same. We will punish an old man for crimes he committed as a young man and will reward an 18-year-old with a fortune that was left to her as a baby. And we can understand fictional worlds in which a prince turns into a frog and then back into a prince again, or a vampire transforms to a bat. We can understand the passage in *The Odyssey* where the companions of Odysseus are magically transformed so that they "had the head, and voice, and bristles, and body of swine; but their mind remained unchanged as before. So they were penned there, weeping."[834]

There is a tension between our embodied ontology – as Bloom himself points out, "we do not *occupy* our bodies; we *are* our bodies"[835] – and our dualistic epistemology that is part of the human culture at large. In his last section in *As I Lay Dying*, Darl suddenly refers to himself in the third person after he has been taken to the mental institution in Jackson: "Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on the train, laughing, down the long car laughing, the heads turning like the heads of owls when he passed. […] Darl is our brother, our brother Darl. Our brother Darl in a cage in Jackson where, his grimed hands lying light in the quiet interstices, looking out he foams" (146). His madness is manifested discursively as shown by Bent Rosenbaum and Harly Sonne: "The production of text in schizophrenia is characterized by *failure of deixis*. […] A negative representation of reality is characterized by a breakdown of the distinction between the registers and concurrent failure of the basic I/You/Here/Now system of the enunciation."[836]

Failure of deixis is also the distinguishing feature of the marriage of hearing and speaking between Quentin Compson and Shreve McCannon. The failure, or suspension of deixis is inherent in the historical extension of consciousness "[s]o that now it was not two but four of them riding the two horses through the dark over the frozen December ruts of that

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[833] Bloom, *Descartes' Baby*, xii.
[834] Bloom, *Descartes' Baby*, 195.
[835] Bloom, *Descartes' Baby*, 202. Italics in the original.
[836] Bent Rosenbaum and Harly Sonne, *The Language of Psychosis* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 45.

Christmas eve: four of them and then just two – Charles-Shreve and Quentin-Henry" (267). The language of psychosis is only reported, implied in *Absalom, Absalom!* and there is no explicit suggestion of Quentin's madness, but in *The Sound and the Fury* in which Quentin commits suicide, the "deictic projection […] has run wild" in Quentin's text, as Ineke Bockting has shown drawing on Rosenbaum and Sonne: "Indeed, we can recognize that Quentin's viewpoint shifts are largely unanchored, missing both lexical anchors – the pronouns that are supposed to remain anchored to the deictic center – and graphological ones – the comma, the colon, and the quotation marks."[837] These anchors are recognizably missing in *Absalom, Absalom!* as well where it is difficult to sometimes pinpoint who is speaking and whether the discourse presents speech or is actually unspoken thought.

In terms of the language of psychosis, the extreme extension of mind between Quentin and Shreve can be recast as a psychotic episode. The metalepsis "uprooting the boundary between the world of the telling and that of the told" by means of which Quentin and Shreve empathize and identify/extend with Henry and Bon, characters in their story is symbolic of their creative imagination on the one hand while, on the other hand it suggests the "effacing [of] the line of demarcation between fiction and reality"[838] characteristic of the schizophrenic person who "can no longer distinguish between the objects of reality and the objects of the fantasy, that is, distinguished between what is *perceived* in reality and *hallucinated* in fantasy."[839] The inter-subjective hybrids Charles-Shreve, Quentin-Henry and also Quentin-Shreve "since it did not matter (and possibly neither of them conscious of the distinction) which one had been doing the talking" (267) bespeak the instability of the body identity as "speaker's own body can then merge with any other body. […] The fragmentation of the imaginary body is synonymous with an effective destruction of the deictic dynamics of the text"[840]:

> It did not matter to them (Quentin and Shreve) anyway, who could without moving, as free now of flesh […] and with no tedious transition from hearth and garden (granted the garden) to saddle, be already clattering over the frozen ruts of that December night and that Christmas dawn […] not two of them there and then either but four of them riding the two horses through the iron darkness and that not mattering either: what faces

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[837] Ineke Bockting, "The Importance of Deixis and Attributive Style for the study of Theory of Mind: The Example of William Faulkner's Disturbed Characters," in *Theory of Mind and Literature*, ed. Paula Leverage, Howard Mancing, Richard Schweickert and Jennifer Marston William (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2010), 178-179.

[838] John Pier, "Metalepsis," in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan (New York: Routledge, 2008), 303.

[839] Rosenbaum and Sonne, *Language of Psychosis,* 46.

[840] Rosenbaum and Sonne, *Language of Psychosis,* 77.

and what names they called themselves and were called by so long as the blood coursed – the blood, the immortal brief recent intransient blood which could hold honor above slothy unregret and love above fat and easy shame. (236-237).

The unmooring of identity which shifts and merges is accompanied by a corresponding unmooring of space and time:

He ceased again. It was just as well, since he had no listener. Perhaps he was aware of it. Then suddenly he had no talker either, though possibly he was not aware of this. Because now neither of them was there. They were both in Carolina and the time was forty-six years ago, and it was not even four now but compounded still further, since now both of them were Henry Sutpen and both of them were Bon, compounded each of both yet either neither, smelling the very smoke which had blown and faded away forty-six years ago […] (280).

Arthur L. Scott has commented that Quentin and Shreve "are practically in a state of trance – which helps explain the absence of the temporal factor. The objective physical time of immediate experience and the subjective psychological time of mediate conception become coextensive in this long scene."[841]

As Rosenbaum and Sonne observe, the "schizophrenic text is marked by instability of the instances in the enunciation, and as a consequence temporality, spatiality, and elements relating to the persons appear to be replaceable: time, place, persons, and objects referred to in speech are subject to constant substitutions"[842]. The term "schizophrenic text" can be extended as an expression of the general aesthetic of *Absalom, Absalom!* which transfigures the intersubjective nature of mind and culture into narrative form[843]:

In states of schizophrenia, the place of speech appears unstable and diffuse, corresponding to an experience of the body as fragmented, nondelimitable, and partial. As a result of these changes, the otherwise relatively firm boundary between internal and external, between self and surroundings, has gradually become penetrable. Here and Now tend toward the infinite; local matters merge with global; and the speaker takes on the disguises of the multitude of figures made available by the discourses that come to hand. From now on fantasy governs speech.[844]

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[841] Arthur L. Scott, "The Myriad Perspectives of *Absalom, Absalom!*," *American Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (Autumn 1954): 218.

[842] Rosenbaum and Sonne, *Language of Psychosis,* 104.

[843] For a gendered version of the madness present in *Absalom, Absalom!* in the form of "hysterical text" see Gwin, "Silencing of Rosa Coldfield".

[844] Rosenbaum and Sonne, *Language of Psychosis,* 105.

Conceiving the meeting of minds between Quentin and Shreve as psychotic episode has an interesting implication: in the episode, Shreve might be only a figment of Quentin's imagination. As Rosenbaum and Sonne describe it, "[p]rojection is one of the primary mechanisms in the formation of delusions. […] In projection the fantasmatic elements are experienced as if they were only external, 'coming from outside,' in short, *something* – things, people, relations, events – […] form a kind of mirror for the existence of the subject."[845] As a result, "[a]ny physically present conversation partner seems alternately to recede from, and reenter into, the semantic space that the speech establishes."[846]

The two youths achieve a "simple union of minds"[847] despite being polar opposites, "Shreve, the Canadian, the child of blizzards and of cold […] Quentin, the Southerner, the morose and delicate offspring of rain and steamy heat" (276). The two approach the story of Sutpen, the story of the South differently: in Levins's terms the "final re-creation of Thomas Sutpen is a composite product of two narrators, whose different backgrounds effect two extreme degrees of emotional involvement in the reconstruction of the legend."[848] Quentin, the Southerner is deeply emotionally invested in the story, whereas Shreve, the Canadian approaches it from a less emotional, more rational perspective producing a version which "is not a product of the Southerner's emotional involvement in 'tradition,' for it is the interpretation of a narrator ignorant of the meaning, and thus the significance, of such a vague word."[849] Faulkner himself has expressed the narrative corrective that Shreve provides Quentin: "Shreve was the commentator [who] held the thing to something of reality. If Quentin had been let alone to tell it, it would have become completely unreal. It had to have a solvent to keep it real, keep it believable, creditable, otherwise it would have vanished into smoke and fury."[850]

Even though Irwin does not go as far as to suggest that Shreve is Quentin's double, in casting Shreve as a projection providing "conversational impact as alter-ego on the structuring of Quentin's own sounding-board memory"[851] I might seem to come close to his psychoanalytic reading of doubling in *Absalom, Absalom!*. However, I refuse to locate "the origin of doubling in narcissism"[852] like Irwin. On the contrary, the possibility of Shreve's insubstantiality as well as the reason for Quentin's madness in general stem from his act of, his (pre)disposition to

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[845] Rosenbaum and Sonne, *Language of Psychosis,* 95-96.
[846] Rosenbaum and Sonne, *Language of Psychosis,* 105.
[847] Scott, "Myriad Perspectives," 218.
[848] Levins, "Four Narrative Perspectives," 41.
[849] Levins, "Four Narrative Perspectives," 41.
[850] Faulkner, "Remarks on *Absalom, Absalom!*," 285.
[851] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 450.
[852] Irwin, *Doubling and Incest*, 33.

extension: Shreve serves as a tool of extension of Quentin's mind. There are two precedents in the novel for this view. Firstly, it is Sutpen's extension via narrative to analyze his design with Grandfather Compson as only a token audience. Secondly, Quentin's (pre)disposition to extension is at the very beginning of the novel described as commonwealth, as repository for the many voices of the South: "Quentin is a memory box, a porous container of others' throwaway discourse."[853] Shreve as a figment of imagination does not only instantiate a function, he fleshes out an embodied audience necessary for the achievement of a particular cognitive task – talking through the South in order to understand it: "The Quentin Compson of *Absalom* is not quite the same as the earlier Quentin: his concern is social rather than personal and his role is identified for the most part with a central quest in the novel – the quest to discover the truth about the rise and fall of his South."[854]

In this light, the description of the similarity of the voices of the two young men suggests that it is only one voice speaking since "though save for the slight difference which the intervening degrees of latitude had inculcated in them (differences not in tone or pitch but of turns of phrase and usage of words), it might have been either of them and was in a sense both: both thinking as one, the voice which happened to be speaking the thought only the thinking become audible, vocal" (243). Although the idiom might differ between Quentin and Shreve, the physical parameters of the voice are indistinguishable suggesting one source of the audible thought. While this might seem to contradict the extension to construct a dialogic cognitive system, Bakhtin's observation about the dialogic nature of the soliloquy applies to the potentially imaginary dialogue with the projection, delusion of Shreve:

> At the heart of the genre lies the discovery of the *inner man* – "one's own self," accessible not to passive self-observation but only through an *active dialogic approach to one's own self,* destroying that naive wholeness of one's notions about the self that lies at the heart of the lyric, epic, and tragic image of man. A dialogic approach to oneself breaks down the outer shell of the self's image, that shell which exists for other people, determining the external assessment of a person (in the eyes of others) and dimming the purity of self-consciousness.[855]

Intersubjectivity underlies the splitting of the self between Quentin and Shreve. Mishara reports psychological research "which suggest that people who feel lonely or lack social

[853] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 85.
[854] Melvin Backman, "Sutpen and the South: A Study of *Absalom, Absalom!*," *PMLA* 80, no. 5 (December 1965): 596.
[855] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 120.

connection tend to attribute human characteristics to nonhuman objects" and research which suggests that "individuals isolated for long periods (for example, mountaineers, explorers, sailors, and castaways) report a variant of the doppelganger experience"[856]. Crucially, the reason for these imaginary constructions is "the structure of self as intersubjective"[857]: "In summary, the structure of the self is vulnerable to doubling. This doubling occurs during anomalous states of consciousness […] The reduction of social connection leads to the construction of imaginary other(s)."[858]

It is when the subject is deprived of its natural state of intersubjectivity, its immersion in the network of human relationships that brings about "a change of consciousness that has its neurobiological correlates in increased cortical excitability of a social network (activated during states of sensory deprivation, social deprivation, or sleep deprivation)."[859] This, indeed, is Quentin's situation: he is deprived socially as a lone Southerner in a "strange room" with a "strange lamplit table" in "strange iron New England", a curiosity in the land of the Yankees where everyone others him by demanding to tell of the strange South; he is deprived sensorily missing his environment saturated with the smell of wistaria, the cigar smell, the heat of the Mississippi summer and "the random blowing of the fireflies" (301) – instead, he just lies in his room "staring at the window without even blinking, breathing and the chill heady pure snowgleamed darkness" (301); finally, he is deprived of sleep being awake past midnight.

Lack of intersubjectivity, "[l]oneliness and other forms of social deprivation may induce the social networks in the brain (that is, those brain networks subserving social cognition) to become more active on their own, resulting in doppelganger experiences or hallucinations"[860] and, thus, points to the possibility of Shreve acquiring that hallucinatory, that "shadowy paradoxical"[861] quality that the mind of a young lone suicide-to-have-been Southerner pondering the meaning of his native land, the weight of tradition and the father figure in a story with personal significance for his incestuous infatuation dreams up on a cold New England night. The relation to others, the extension of mind underlines the commonality of Quentin's and Darl's madness: as extreme cases of extending their mind beyond their skin, the two protagonists become mad because they lack any solidity in themselves.

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[856] Mishara, "Literary Neuroscience," 111.
[857] Mishara, "Literary Neuroscience," 117.
[858] Mishara, "Literary Neuroscience," 117.
[859] Mishara, "Literary Neuroscience," 117.
[860] Mishara, "Literary Neuroscience," 111.
[861] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, ed. David Minter (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994) 108.

Quentin, breathing "the same air" (7) which has persisted despite the war and the Reconstruction, he is himself by being others. His lungs full of the stale air, his mind full of the "interchangeable and almost myriad" (7) stories, he is (full of) the South. Weinstein describes Quentin's emptied nature: "Quentin appears as a moment-by-moment involuntary recorder of other's voices, a sentient receptacle wounded by the shards of their utterances: the site on which the cacophony of the larger culture registers."[862] Therefore, as he points out, Quentin is "[u]nable to consolidate what he has absorbed, unable to shape his own thoughts into the coherence of a temporal project, he is a figure in motley."[863] Quentin possesses no identity because he is everyone else.

The same is true for Darl. Darl is a super mindreader endowed with telepathy and ability to penetrate other characters' consciousnesses. His supernatural ability is a fictional version of the everyday processes of understanding people taken to the extreme. It is extreme also because reading others' minds all the time leaves Darl with little of his own identity: as Cleanth Brooks puts it, "the dedicated observer, the habitual spectator, for that, as we have seen, is all that Darl is."[864] Darl is filled with others, his "moments of self-analysis or even self-reference are minimal in comparison to his description of others."[865] Both Darl and Quentin are characterized by notable emptiness when it comes to their experientiality: their minds are stages on which the plays of their communities are performed.

Just like Quentin, Darl becomes a "commonwealth", even though through means different than Quentin. Rather than having plural identity hoisted upon him by the environment and culture he lives in, Darl becomes "ego-less" through his acts of mindreading: as Bockting points out, "deictic projection must always remain anchored, otherwise chaos will occur. That is to say, for Theory of Mind to be successful, one must be able to perform deictic projection while at the same time holding steady one's own deictic center. This anchoring function is essential."[866] Darl, nevertheless, is "so attuned to the behavior of others that he can narrate their experience in place of his own"[867] and chaos does occur manifested exactly by deictic failure as Darl speaks of himself as "our brother Darl" (146).

Bockting states that "Faulkner's novels form a gold mine for showing what happens if deictic projection is disturbed, that is, if it is either absent or unanchored."[868] What Darl's and

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862 Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 85.
863 Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 85.
864 Brooks, "Odyssey," 256.
865 Hale, "*As I Lay Dying*," 16.
866 Bockting, "The Importance of Deixis," 178.
867 Hale, "*As I Lay Dying*," 17.
868 Bockting, "The Importance of Deixis," 178.

Quentin's cases share is the crucial proposition that deictic failure and, thus, the emergence of schizophrenia occur when the individual is deprived of its intersubjective context. Darl's schizophrenia manifests only after he has been taken away to the mental asylum, after he has been isolated "in a cage in Jackson" (146): Darl turns mad the moment he is uprooted from the intersubjective network of relationships[869]. The social dimension of Darl's madness is highlighted through Cash's attempts to come to terms with Darl's institutionalization: "Sometimes I aint so sho who's got ere a right to say when a man is crazy and when he aint. Sometimes I think it aint none of us pure crazy and aint none of us pure sane until the balance of us talks him that-a-way. Its like it aint so much what a fellow does, but it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him when he does it" (134). Cash clearly formulates that madness is a matter of social convention.

Through Quentin's and Darl's madness, Faulkner advocates the "most radical meaning" of intersubjectivity which posits that "intersubjectivity is truly a process of cocreativity, where *relationship* is ontologically primary. All individuated subjects co-emerge, or co-arise, as a result of a holistic 'field' of relationships. The being of anyone subject is thoroughly dependent on the being of all other subjects, with which it is in relationship."[870] Schizophrenia reveals the cultural foundation of the subject by stripping it of individuated identity. As Liah Greenfeld puts it in her magisterial *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, in schizophrenic thought disorder "it is no longer the individual, but culture, which does the thinking; similarly, in the abnormalities of schizophrenic language, it is no longer the individual, but the language, which speaks."[871] In a process Greenfeld refers to as "autonomization of language", due to the loss of self, "the schizophrenic in fact becomes a mouthpiece and sensor for the creative multidimensional powers of language itself."[872] It is with this recognition of the unmooring of language and the emptying of the self to let in the heteroglossia of culture that I say with Gwin that "[w]e cannot say madness; madness instead says us"[873].

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[869] Cf. Ziegler, "*As I Lay Dying*," 94.

[870] De Quincey, "Intersubjectivity," 139.

[871] Liah Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness: The Impact of Culture on Human Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 168. Greenfeld's ideas about nature, culture, mind and identity accord with those expressed here – she herself formulates her "central argument, viz.: that the mind and diseases of the mind are cultural phenomena, that the mind cannot be understood in isolation from culture, that, because the two are one and the same process on different levels, the mind transcends the individual by whose brain it is supported, and that, therefore, the focus on the individual alone (as in traditional philosophy of the mind, psychology, and psychiatry) or on the brain alone (as in neurobiology and philosophy of the mind in recent years) narrows the attention to but a small and not the most important element of the mind." Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 30.

[872] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 168.

[873] Gwin, "The Silencing of Rosa Coldfield," 151.

Autonomization of language brings with it also the use of neologisms and "new, unusual, and strikingly vivid metaphoric word combinations"[874]. Faulkner himself connected madness with "good poetry"[875]. Since "poetic" language is "one of the more prominent though relatively rare characteristic schizophrenic abnormalities"[876], it provides an explanation of the problem of voice in *As I Lay Dying*. Even though especially relevant for Darl, the poet and schizophrenic, the ability of simple farmers from the 1920s US South to think in literary metaphors is explainable as a manifestation of schizophrenia. Cash wonders that madness, or at least the potential for it is inherent to everyone: "It's like there was a fellow in every man that's done a-past the sanity or the insanity, that watches the sane and the insane doings of that man with the same horror and the same astonishment" (137).

The autonomization of language schizophrenics experience is distinguished by the lack of will, they "feel that they do not control the meanings (thoughts) they produce, and in their terrible plight are most concerned in making sense of their inner experiences to themselves"[877]. Indeed, Greenfeld offers a comparison of the artist and the schizophrenic: "The radical difference between the artist and the schizophrenic is that in the case of the latter the autonomization of language is not willed. Rather than letting oneself go to offer free play to language, the schizophrenic experiences language as an oppressive external force and feels forced to give utterance to words and sentences willed by someone else."[878] Recognizing the affinity between the two personalities opens a passage to a metafictional reading of *As I Lay Dying* and potentially other Faulkner's texts: the commonality of voice recognized across various characters as the voice of their author[879] means that the madness of the characters results from the imposition of the author's literary discourse on their minds.

Faulkner also connected madness with "super-perceptivity"[880], which is also symptomatic of the artist. This extraordinary perceptivity that both Darl and Quentin possess is of their particular culture. Greenfeld states that "schizophrenics are exceptionally attuned to their cultural environment."[881] Given her conviction that mind and culture are "one and the same process on different levels"[882], Greenfeld assumes "an interpretation of schizophrenia in

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[874] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 168.
[875] Gwynn and Blotner, eds., *Faulkner in the University*, 113.
[876] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 168.
[877] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 168.
[878] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 170.
[879] As Weinstein keenly observes, "'Faulkner' is misleading shorthand for a complex and many-voiced enterprise that operates under the cover of his name." Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 98. See also Matthews, *William Faulkner*, 152.
[880] Gwynn and Blotner, eds., *Faulkner in the University*, 113.
[881] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 611.
[882] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 30.

the terms of the theory of the mind as a cultural phenomenon, the individualized culture in the brain."[883] This leads her inevitably to the conclustion, in agreement with what Faulkner suggests, that "schizophrenic maunderings reflected the transformation of the culture around them as a whole. Those suffering from the mild, run-of-the-mill, all-American form of mental disease, or neurasthenia, *represented* the culture as a whole."[884]

It is not only human culture at large that puts a strain on the self, there is a specific stress that is exerted on the human self by the culture of modernity. Greenfeld bluntly calls modernity "the age of madness"[885]. Matthews observes that Darl "as the one Bundren who has had the most experience with the modern age, ultimately suffers a mental breakdown."[886] The experience of modernity for Darl means, on the one hand, war experience possibly pointing to the trauma of shell-shock and, on the other hand, capitalism given that his "family's centrifugal whirl out toward cash mania and consumer-drives seems to underlie Darl's addling. […] It's as if notions of the Cartesian self as the property of consciousness, based on the simple idea of things being used and owned by those who make them, have been unmoored by the fetishistic mysteries of commodity exchange."[887]

Interestingly, the connection between property ownership and madness is made in the novel by Cash, the most opportunely named character for the occasion. Even though he perceptively and generously suggests the endemic status of madness in culture, in the end, Cash cannot square Darl's actions with his own maker personality which cherishes his creations: "I can almost believe he done right in a way. But I dont reckon nothing excuses setting fire to a man's barn and endangering his stock and destroying his property. That's how I reckon a man is crazy" (134-135). If the cartesian notion of the self is underpinned by property ownership, then, in a novel where cartesian and post-cartesian notions of the self compete, Darl's act of barn burning is an embrace of the embodied and extended mind which in his extreme version leads to schizophrenia.

Unsurprisingly, in a novel concerned so much with history, Quentin's descent into madness in *Absalom, Absalom!* is fuelled by his culture's past. The extreme extension of the mind, the intersubjectivity of the self and its attendant madness find their correlate in, as Sundquist puts it, "one central issue that the Civil War would in retrospect seem to be about and the issue *Absalom, Absalom!* is so outrageously about: amalgamation – or rather,

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[883] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 147.
[884] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 611.
[885] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 20.
[886] Matthews, *William Faulkner*, 148.
[887] Matthews, *William Faulkner*, 149.

miscegenation."[888] The topic reflects the push and pull of the narrative form as "[m]iscegenation and incest, here in fiction as elsewhere in fact, create a drama of intimate merger and extreme alienation that both doubles and divides husband and wife, father and son, brother and brother."[889] In creating a "scintillating merger of characters and voices", the crisis of novelistic form "creating extremities of merger and imitation […] matches the crisis of blood"[890].

Furthermore, the "hallucinating pitch of fraternal entanglements", as Sundquist aptly names it, causes "the distinctions between narrators (or authors) and characters dissolve in a frenzy of nondifferentiation in which identity collapses along with almost every vestige of plot, chronology, and order."[891] The novel ends with Shreve's vision of the future in which all distinctions of race dissolve through the cumulative iterations of merger, of miscegenation: "I think that in time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the western hemisphere. Of course it wont quite be in our time and of course as they spread toward the poles they will bleach out again like the rabbits and the birds do, so they wont show up so sharp against the snow. But it will still be Jim Bond; and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings" (302). It is this vision of total dissolution of race that immediately precipitates Quentin's ambivalent answer to the question "Why do you hate the South?" (303): in the insistent repetition of "*I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!*" (303) the voice of schizophrenia, the voice of culture mad with its irrational hatred undermines what it overtly says.

Both the reasons for Darl's and Quentin's madness are relevant to the central argument of Greenfeld's study which "connects in a causal relationship the cultural phenomenon of nationalism and psychiatric diseases of unknown etiology: schizophrenia, manic depression, and major unipolar depression. These diseases are the *explanans,* the effect, and nationalism is the *explanandum,* the cause."[892] Nationalism, as Greenfeld defines it, is "a form of consciousness, an essentially secular view of reality, whose socio-political component rests on the principles of fundamental equality of membership in a community and popular sovereignty" which "forms the cultural framework of modern society" and reflects "all the characteristic institutions of modernity, including the open system of stratification, the impersonal—state—form of government, and the economy oriented to sustained growth."[893]

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[888] Sundquist, *Faulkner*, 107.
[889] Sundquist, *Faulkner*, 122.
[890] Sundquist, *Faulkner*, 127-128.
[891] Sundquist, *Faulkner*, 126.
[892] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 2.
[893] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 2-3.

This social system which is a form of consciousness – "specifically the presumed equality of all the members of the society, secularism, and choice in self-definition, implied in the national consciousness"[894] – affects the formation of identity: it "makes the formation of the individual identity problematic, and the more so the more choices for the definition of one's identity a society offers and the more insistent it is on equality."[895] Greenfeld continues, "[a] clear sense of identity being a condition sine qua non for adequate mental functioning, malformation of identity leads to mental disease, but modern culture cannot help the individual to acquire such clear sense, it is inherently confusing."[896] She concludes her train of argumentation by claiming that schizophrenia and depressive illnesses "are caused specifically by the values of equality and self-realization, which make every individual one's own maker – and the rates of such mental diseases increase in accordance with the extent to which a particular society is devoted to these values, inherent in the nationalist image of reality"[897].

Greenfeld notes that it was "the increasing number of choices the American society offered its members and the growing extent of social mobility in it"[898] which was the main reason for the distinguished spread of schizophrenia in the population. The Bundrens journey from their farm to the city is one from the rusticity of farming life to the modernity and pleasures of capitalism in the city, a journey from the past to the present and future. This is manifest in the unfulfilled teleology of the plot, as Matthews elaborates:

> As the Bundrens gamely recover their balance at the end of *As I Lay Dying*, we come to realize that the characters who survive have always been all about gratifying desire rather than mourning loss, about the future, however belatedly arrived at, than the past. […] Once we get to town, the novel shows its hand; we never get to the presumptive climax of an actual burial scene, but instead witness a frenzy of acquisition, the most notable success Anse's unexplained procurement of a [new] Mrs. Bundren to replace the one he wore out. Like many other members of the modern work force in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, Southern farmers were being converted from producers into wage laborers, their salaries expected to fuel an emergent consumer

[894] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 28.
[895] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 4-5.
[896] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 5.
[897] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 5. The summary of Greenfeld's argument does not do justice to the complex treatment it gets. Dividing her book in sections called "Philosophical", "Psychological" and "Historical", she starts with the treatment of the nature of mind (one that is in concordance with the ideas presented here), continues to an in-depth presentation of the psychological aspect of the mental problems at stake, and concludes with a historical survey of the spread of "madness" from its cradle in England throughout Europe all the way to North America, USA "which was born with national consciousness (though not defined at first as a separate nation) and madness already present." Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 548-549.
[898] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 586.

culture. The personal disorientation and social disintegration sustained by newly mobile, mass media-shaped, nationally conscious populations were balanced by a new sense of enfranchisement […] as well as new sources of consolation […]. The novel shrewdly observes how modernity fills the very holes it has itself dug.[899]

Quentin trying to understand, to explain the South manifests "the schizophrenic mental process as impersonal, as culture processing itself, resulting from the disintegration of individualized culture and loss of self."[900] Dealing with matters like history, race or nation, Quentin bears testament to the fact that "schizophrenics are unusually preoccupied with subjects of very general significance."[901] Significantly for Quentin's case, not only does Greenfeld list delusion as one of the typical symptoms of schizophrenia, but she also defines it as "the inability to distinguish between information originating outside the mind and information generated by the mind (or inside the brain)" [902], in other words, "between culture within […] and outside"[903]. That, indeed, is the affliction that Quentin, "barracks filled with stubborn back-looking ghosts" (7) suffers. The potential delusion arising from Quentin's cognitive extension serves to highlight the nationalist context as it manifests in service of the romance of the national reunion.

In embedding Darl's and Quentin's madness in the social sphere, in taking it outside their head, Faulkner reveals that "mental illnesses are not just brain diseases", as Thomas Fuchs puts it, but that in fact "altered subjective experience and disturbed relation to others are not mere epiphenomena of an effective organic process; much rather, they are essential elements of the illness itself."[904] By making the schizophrenia of his prominent characters manifest only after their isolation from their network of relationships, he highlights the "interpersonal aspects" of the diseases and underscores them as "interactional dysfunctions."[905] Giving prominence to this "all-American disease"[906] in his texts, Faulkner embeds madness in the modern concept of the nation state. Not only is the madness in and of his texts another testimony of his conception of the mind as transcending the brain, but also to the autonomy of literature as a source of knowledge about the human mind: as Greenfeld notes, for the psychiatrists of the early American nation a "major source of their understanding was English literature – above all

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[899] Matthews, *William Faulkner*, 153.
[900] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 171.
[901] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 171.
[902] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 19.
[903] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 108.
[904] Thomas Fuchs, "Are Mental Illnesses Diseases of the Brain?," in *Critical Neuroscience: A Handbook of the Social and Cultural Contexts of Neuroscience*, ed. Suparna Choudhury and Jan Slaby (Malden: Blackwell, 2012) 332.
[905] Fuchs, "Are Mental Illnesses Diseases of the Brain?," 336.
[906] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 607.

Shakespeare […] but also the numerous descriptions of madness in the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century poetry and fiction"[907].

5.3. Thinking Ahead

Surveying the state of the art of cognitive literary approaches twenty years ago, Tony E. Jackson admonished that if literary cognitive studies are to become a really interdisciplinary enterprise, they "will have to involve some dialectical interaction between cognitive universals and variations of cultural forms, for example, great social, political, or ideological upheaval. Otherwise, though the reasoning may be convincing, it will still read as if we are being persuaded only *that* a cognitive affect is present in a literary object, and that is not likely to interest most scholars in the humanities."[908] Besides focusing on the particular realities of the US South such as the environment or the history of the region, the main upheaval shaping my observations on cognitive universals can be formulated as modernity. On the one hand, this means the social and economic processes of nationalism along the lines of Greenfeld: i.e. the romance of reunion and the position of the South not only within the nation, but also within the larger hemispheric region, as well as the rise of capitalism. Hand in hand with this context, the shaping force of Faulkner's minds and narratives is the technologico-cultural dimension of modernity, especially the medium of film showing him to be an author evincing "uncommonly sensitive writer's responsiveness to the cultural field."[909]

Necessarily, this dissertation is selective in its corpus of texts and topics. To suggest a possible line of pursuit within Faulkner studies that cognitive literary approaches can take, I will turn to one of the key issues in Faulkner's works, race and wed it to theory of mind. After all, modernity heeds racial divides as the following scene from *As I Lay Dying* suggests and does not affect everyone equally: "A car comes over the hill. It begins to sound the horn, slowing. It runs along the roadside in low gear, the outside wheels in the ditch, and passes us and goes on. […] This hill is red sand, bordered on either hand by negro cabins; against the sky ahead the massed telephone lines run, and the clock on the courthouse lifts among the trees. […] We follow the wagon, the whispering wheels, passing the cabins where faces come suddenly to the doors, white-eyed" (132). With the car passing them on the road and with the telephone lines on the horizon, the path to modernity is lined with black labor not just for the

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[907] Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 532.
[908] Tony E. Jackson, "Issues and Problems in the Blending of Cognitive Science, Evolutionary Psychology, and Literary Study," *Poetics Today* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 171.
[909] Lurie, Peter. "Faulkner's Literary Historiography," 235.

Bundrens, but the South and the nation as a whole. The bodies whose labor makes technological modernization possible are themselves left out of the enjoyment of modern technology as suggested by the position of the cabins that fringe the road and are positioned before the threshold of the town, the site of modernity.

Even though laden with such a semantic potency, race appears in *As I Lay Dying* only marginally. Philip M. Weinstein comments on the marginal position that blacks in Faulkner's work occupy noting that "marginalia may comprise less examined markings: more able to escape the mind's censorship, more likely to accommodate fugitive energies not welcome within the central enterprise."[910] In *As I Lay Dying*, however, this aspect is downplayed and, thus, race in this novel evinces the literal aspect of marginality that Weinstein also points out, saying that "though they may serve us as a semiotic key for interpreting the center, those in the margins *are* marginal. No amount of deconstructive privileging transforms the representation of peripheral lives into central ones."[911]

This marginal, yet central lack corresponds to the treatment of theory of mind in the novel. While mind-reading is a common cognitive ability, "our ability to attribute states of mind to ourselves and other people is intensely context dependent. That is, it is supported not by one uniform cognitive adaptation but by a large cluster of specialized adaptations geared toward a variety of social contexts."[912] Ian A. Apperly distinguishes "three quite different ways of thinking about ToM [theory of mind]: as a conceptual problem to be understood, as a set of cognitive processes, and as a social competence or motivation that might vary between individuals."[913] The last view of mind-reading as a social competence or motivation is "the perspective that individuals vary in a trait-like tendency for paying attention to or caring about what other people think and feel."[914] Therefore, the deployment of mind-reading abilities and processes is contextually determined and motivated.

As I Lay Dying presents theory of mind predominantly as a conceptual problem and as a set of cognitive processes. The former aspect is present in Darl, a clairvoyant character who flaunts unrealistic mind-reading abilities and Vardaman, a child, potentially an autistic one,

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[910] Philip M. Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject: A Cosmos No One Owns* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 44.
[911] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 44. Comparing *As I Lay Dying* with Faulkner's other fiction, Donald M. Kartiganer observes that one of the things missing from the novel is race, "which would always be a standard omission in his fiction about country people in the southeastern quarter of what in this novel he named Yoknapatawpha County." Donald M. Kartiganer, "'By It I Would Stand or Fall': Life and Death in *As I Lay Dying*," in *A Companion to William Faulkner*, ed. Richard C. Moreland (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), 431.
[912] Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 8.
[913] Apperly, "What is 'theory of mind'?", 828.
[914] Apperly, "What is 'theory of mind'?", 834.

who lacks mind-reading skills. The latter aspect is present in the careful attention paid to the dynamics of looks and the detailed description of characters' eyes. The social dimension is not totally lacking; the distinction Apperly makes is mainly a theoretical, analytical division of aspects that commonly go hand in hand. Ziegler's observation on the limits of Darl's clairvoyance might serve as an example: she points out that Darl's supernatural mindreading "is restricted to what concerns Jewel and those closest to Jewel: Addie and Dewey Dell […] the scope of his clairvoyance is limited by this hatred."[915] Darl's clairvoyance, as an extreme case of theory of mind, is motivated and potentially limited (at least in the sense that that is all the clairvoyance there is in the novel) by Darl's personal biases. This dimension informs also the mind-reading deployed by the characters who observe the Bundrens' plight, as Cora, Doctor Peabody, Moseley and others "represent the rural community they belong to; they are its spokesmen, harboring its virtues and prejudices; they embody respectability confronted with scandal, collective wisdom challenged by the Bundrens' folly."[916]

To look at mind-reading in relation to the determining social fact/fiction of the South, race, I now turn to Faulkner's "Pantaloon in Black". As Barbara Ladd notes, "the social fact of race and the fictions upon which race-consciousness was built were very real matters of daily life in Southern cities, towns, and rural areas where the memory of slavery and racism was not only alive but very personal."[917] The social fact and the fictions upon which the racially coded caste system was built were premised on seeing the African-Americans as the other of white Southerners. Not only a social fact, "segregation also was very much a scientific project,"[918] Melissa Stein insists. At the turn of the twentieth century "prevailing scientific and medical opinion armored the ideology of segregation with the idea that a biological imperative justified quarantining the biologically and culturally degenerate black race."[919] The racist notion of degenerateness of African-Americans was couched within the rhetoric of Darwinian evolution. Within this framework, races evolved from savagery to civilization through time. Basing their convictions on ideas of progress and civilization, "white Southerners boasted that they and their Anglo-Saxon peers elsewhere had attained the highest level of civilization. […] In contrast,

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[915] Ziegler, "*As I Lay Dying*," 91.
[916] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 59.
[917] Barbara Ladd, "Race as Fact and Fiction in William Faulkner," in *A Companion to William Faulkner*, ed. Richard C. Moreland (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), 133-134.
[918] Melissa Stein, "'Nature is the Author of Such Restrictions': Science, Ethnological Medicine, and Jim Crow," in *The Folly of Jim Crow: Rethinking the Segregated South*, ed. Stephanie Cole and Natalie J. Ring (Arlington: The University of Texas, 2012), 125.
[919] W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Introduction," in *The Folly of Jim Crow: Rethinking the Segregated South*, ed. Stephanie Cole and Natalie J. Ring (Arlington: The University of Texas, 2012), 3.

primitivism and barbarism still prevailed among the darker and debased races, especially African Americans."[920]

Consistently with this rhetoric of biological and cultural superiority of whites, African-Americans are often described by Faulkner's white characters as inferior, often even dehumanized. The following quote from his novel *Go Down, Moses*, which Ladd considers "Faulkner's most ambitious critique of white supremacist ideology"[921], articulates this view bluntly. A deputy sheriff tells his wife about a case he was dealing with that day making the following observation: "'Them damn niggers,' he said. 'I swear to godfrey, it's a wonder we have as little trouble with them as we do. Because why? Because they ain't human. They look like a man and they walk on their hind legs like a man, and they can talk and you can understand them and you think they are understanding you, at least now and then. But when it comes to the normal human feelings and sentiments of human beings, they might just as well be a damn herd of wild buffaloes.'"[922]

This passage reveals the inextricableness of theory of mind in the view of African-Americans as inferior and non-human. In fact, for the deputy, the body does not pose such a problem: for him, blacks "look like a man and they walk on their hind legs like a man". The racial difference starts to assert itself when the deputy crosses from describing the body to addressing mental abilities. The first subject that is broached in his speech is communication. The deputy says that "they can talk" suggesting the ability to create sounds. However, immediately after that he expresses his uncertainty about the blacks' ability to understand.[923] The last sentence addressing "the normal human feelings and sentiments" is a full-blown expression of white racial supremacy in which the black race becomes "a damn herd of wild buffaloes," an unfeeling and uncultured mass of brute beings in the deputy´s eyes, their "animal" state shifting focus on their body not animated, inhabited by mind, but governed by instincts.

Ladd insists that in *Go Down, Moses* the matter of race "comes down to white recognition – white recognition of black humanity and, in that, white *self*-recognition."[924] Nowhere in the book is the rift between black and white communities resulting from the denial of black humanity shown more conspicuously while being tethered to mind-reading, than in the

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[920] Brundage, "Introduction," 2.
[921] Ladd, "Race as Fact and Fiction," 144.
[922] William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses* (New York: The Modern Library, 1942), 154. All quotations are from this edition and are hereafter cited parenthetically within the text.
[923] See Baron-Cohen's notion of communication as a matter of theory of mind. Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 27-29.
[924] Ladd, "Race as Fact and Fiction," 142.

section titled "Pantaloon in Black." It opens in the following way, signaling a focus on the protagonist's body: "He stood in the worn, faded clean overalls which Mannie herself had washed only a week ago, and heard the first clod stride the pine box. Soon he had one of the shovels himself, which in his hands (he was better than six feet and weighed better than two hundred pounds) resembled the toy shovel a child plays with at the shore, its half cubic foot of flung dirt no more than the light gout of sand the child's shovel would have flung" (135).

Rider, burying his wife Mannie, is presented as a primarily physical being. His physique and strength are outstanding among the novel's characters. This focus on the black body as primarily strong might seem to hearken to the stereotype of the black as a brute. Yet, it is exactly through Rider's body that we are able to read his mind, that is, his grief over his recently deceased wife. Philip Weinstein who remarks upon this section of the novel's uniqueness "in its abiding focus on a black man's physical prowess" acutely observes that Rider's "ungovernable anguish over the death of Mannie […] is everywhere conveyed not by conceptual abstractions but by Faulkner's lyrical prose of the body in motion" and, consequently, "Faulkner's investment in the representation of Rider's physical moves goes well beyond the static ease of cliché. Faulkner's verbal attention to Rider's body is so unfalteringly fine that through this bodily notation we are invited to construe the more-than-bodily lineaments of a being in torment."[925]

The torment Rider feels leads him ultimately to death. Rider virtually commits suicide by killing the white sawmill overseer who has been cheating at a game of dice with the black workers for years. After revealing the loaded pair of dice in the overseer's hand, Rider takes out his razorblade and "he actually struck at the white man's throat not with the blade but with a sweeping blow of his fist, following through in the same motion so that not even the first jet of blood touched his hand or arm" (153-154). Thus ends the first part of "Pantaloon in Black" focalized through Rider. The second part changes focalization as it is constituted by a report of the sheriff's deputy to his wife. The clean break divides the discourse into African-American and white parts: the form of this section of *Go Down, Moses* thus mimics the segregation of the races in the US South of the time.

Edward Clough observes that "Faulkner deliberately dramatizes the apparent social, physical, and psychological gap between black and white by juxtaposing Rider and Mannie's marriage with a marriage that has become spatially divided, above all, through the failure and

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[925] Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 59.

refusal to adequately communicate."[926] The breakdown in communication is apparent through the positioning of the married couple: while the deputy sits at a table, his wife is making dinner. They are thus not facing each other and as the wife is preoccupied, she might not even pay attention to what her husband is saying. Indeed, upon his first address of his wife as his narrative audience, she bluntly refuses to take part in the communication by refusing her role as a recipient of his message. The deputy starts his story of Rider, a member of the "damned herd of buffaloes" that African-Americans are to him, by saying "'Now you take this one today –' 'I wish you would,' his wife said harshly" (154). The wife, by not facing her husband and by refusing her participation in the communication, ultimately refuses mind-reading both of her husband and the black man he wants to talk about.

The deputy's narrative has three functions. Firstly, it completes the story of Rider. It shows the reader that in killing the white overseer, Rider consciously chose to end his grief over his lost love by willingly facing the threat of lynching. As the deputy reports, expecting Rider to be long gone, he passes his house by accident and surprised finds Rider there "[s]itting behind the barred front door with a open razor on one knee and a loaded shotgun on the other? No. He was asleep. A big pot of field peas et clean empty on the stove, and him laying in the back yard asleep in the broad sun" (157). Depending on his experience and a set of beliefs about the behavior of murderers on the run as well as African-Americans committing crimes against whites in the South under Jim Crow, the deputy fails to read Rider's mind correctly and expects him to either fight or flee.

Secondly, in telling the story, the deputy tries to understand Rider's actions using narrative as a cognitive artifact, a tool for thinking. This is underscored by the fact that his wife refuses to be his audience: as a result, he is largely re-telling the story for himself in order to make sense of his experience.[927] The deputy cannot pierce the story he has been told and reach an explanation; all he finds himself to feel is utter bafflement: "His wife dies on him. All right. But does he grieve? He's the biggest and busiest man at the funeral. Grabs a shovel before they even got the box into the grave they tell me, and starts throwing dirt onto her faster than a slip scraper could have done it. But that's all right […] maybe that's how he felt about her. There aint any law against a man rushing his wife into the ground, provided he never had nothing to do with rushing her to the cemetery too" (155).

[926] Edward Clough, "Violence and the Hearth: Lynching and Resistance in *Go Down, Moses*," *Mississippi Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 402.
[927] In this function, the second part of "Pantaloon in Black" casts Rider as a symbolic figure: as Weinstein observes of Faulkner's depiction of blacks, they are figures who "take on incandescent symbolic importance for the anguished whites viewing them." Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject*, 44.

The difference this retelling provides of the first scene of "Pantaloon in Black" the reader has already encountered "directly" gives clue to the third function of the deputy's narrative: it bespeaks the gulf separating the black and white experiences of the Jim Crow regime, the segregated caste system of the US South, couched here mainly in epistemological and emotional terms. The deputy is unable to mindread Rider in the way that the reader is. Relying on his social dimension of theory of mind, that is, the set of beliefs inherent in the ideology of white supremacy, the deputy falls back on his stereotypical view of blacks: "So he comes to work, the first man on the job, when McAndrews and everybody else expected him to take the day off since even a nigger couldn't want no better excuse for a holiday than he had just buried his wife, when a white man would have took the day off out of pure respect no matter how he felt about his wife, when even a little child would have had sense enough to take a day off when he would still get paid for it too. But not him" (156). The deputy here draws on the stereotype of blacks as lazy. By recounting what a white man and a child would have done in the same situation, the deputy again positions Rider as non-human and irrational.

While the deputy is mystified by Rider's behaviour in his failed quest to understand what for him constitutes the other, his wife does not try at all. Right after Rider's assertion of his inability to stop grieving his lost wife, the story closes with the deputy asking his wife "And what do you think of that?" (159), meaning the whole story. His wife responds: "I think if you eat any supper in this house you'll do it in the next five minutes [...] I'm going to clear this table then and I'm going to the picture show" (159). Not wanting to hear the story in the first place, the deputy's wife dismisses this story of grief and violence preferring instead the cheap and shallow spectacle of "the picture show". While problematic for the deputy, for her African-Americans do not constitute subjects for mind-reading at all, because in her view they are hardly selves, conscious beings at all.

Recent studies on theory of mind have connected mind-reading abilities to moral concerns. Mind attribution does not serve only purposes of behaviour explanation or action prediction, but also moral evaluation.[928] This research puts mind attribution and personhood in a relationship of identity, that is, "to qualify as a person an individual must be seen as possessing a mind and as deserving moral consideration."[929] According to the experiments carried out within this research, "personhood may be attributed or denied to people in a flexible and

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[928] See Liane Young and Adam Waytz, "Mind Attribution Is for Morality," in *Understanding Other Minds: Perspectives from Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, ed. Simon Baron-Cohen, Helen Tager-Flusberg and Michael Lombardo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 93.

[929] Steve Loughnan et al., "Objectification Leads to Depersonalization: The Denial of Mind and Moral Concern to Objectified Others," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 40, no. 5 (2010): 710.

motivated fashion"[930] Of particular relevance here is the finding that there are two dimensions of mind perception connected to morality: "The dimensions thus relate to Aristotle's classical distinction between moral agents (whose actions can be morally right or wrong) and moral patients (who can have moral right or wrong done to them). Agency is linked to moral agency and hence to responsibility, whereas Experience is linked to moral patiency and hence to rights and privileges."[931]

The racial caste system as evidenced by "Pantaloon in Black" is premised on African-Americans being denied personhood on the basis of denying them experience, that is, the capacity to feel pain or pleasure. This is exactly what the deputy does by casting them as a mass of animals. Consequently, they are denied moral patiency: one cannot do them moral right or wrong. This is what allows the white supremacist ideology to unleash the violence of lynching against black subjects without feeling any responsibility, let alone guilt and shame. The deputy is a bad mind-reader of Rider and of the African-Americans in general. Relying on the ideological system of racial segregation, he denies an entire group of people "the normal human feelings" based on the colour of their skin.

This lack of mind attribution is the more striking as humans tend to attribute mental states based simply on movement. In their "An Experimental Study of Apparent Behavior," Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel conducted an experiment that involved subjects watching a short film featuring three geometrical objects moving. They observed that the vast majority of subjects "interpreted the picture in terms of actions of animated beings, chiefly of persons."[932] Attributing motives to the objects based on their movement, the experimenters concluded that "this method is useful in investigating the way the behavior of other persons is perceived."[933] In view of this study, although the white subjects submitting to the ideology of white supremacy over blacks may share the beliefs of the non-humanity of African-Americans, the lack of mind attribution, the denial of mind is precisely a denial, because, in the words of Hutto, "the bugbear of anthropomorphic overinterpretation lurks forever nearby."[934] Mind-reading thus points out that the social norms regulating interracial relations in the caste system of the Jim Crow regime are rather conscious disavowals of phenomena than unreflective beliefs in their absence.

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[930] Loughnan, "Objectification," 710.
[931] Heather M. Gray et al., "Dimensions of Mind Perception," *Science* (February 2007): 619.
[932] Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel, "An Experimental Study of Apparent Behavior," *The American Journal of Psychology* 57, no. 2 (April 1944): 259.
[933] Heider and Simmel, "Experimental Study," 259.
[934] Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives*, 59.

The segregation of the races during the Jim Crow regime was premised upon these two dimensions of mind-reading and at the same time perpetuated them. Mind attribution is influenced by perceived group allegiance. As recent research has found, "people will attribute particular mental states […] preferentially to in- vs. out-group members […] Thus, the motivation for social connection, especially with those within our own moral circle, is a major determinant of mind attribution [and] should preferentially increase the attribution of *experience* to others."[935] In the US South there was little motivation for social connection among the races. It is thus symptomatic of this fact that "Pantaloon in Black" shows interracial mind-reading as incapacitated by the separation on the level of discourse, having the narrative divided into two parts with different focalizations.

Rider's suffering is cast most tragically by juxtaposing his final cry of torment expressing his inability to stop feeling grief of his wife's death with the uncomprehending and insensitive white society which objectifies him into a brute unable to do the one thing he cannot stop doing, yet which he would like to be unable to do: "[…] he could see him laying there under the pile of them, laughing, with tears big as glass marbles running across his face […] laughing and laughing and saying, 'Hit look lack Ah just cant quit thinking. Look lack Ah just cant quit'" (159)." It is highly ironic that Rider's own assertion of his inability to stop thinking, that is, feeling is enclosed by a narrative that utterly fails to understand the nature of his "thinking" and even considers him as unable of such mental activity.

5.4. Thinking Back

I have looked closely at two of Faulkner's major novels, *As I Lay Dying* and *Absalom, Absalom!*, while framing my readings in the larger contexts of the concept of the human mind and cognitive approaches to literature. Mind as conceptualized by the second wave cognitive sciences is prevalently a twenty-first century frame of reference within literary studies that has not yet achieved fully acknowledged status of a literary-theoretical framework in the larger literary academia. The field of Faulkner studies has been left more or less intact by cognitive approaches to literature with only a few swallows heralding as yet a distant summer. Thus, introducing both the concept of mind within the 4e cognitive sciences and adoption of ideas originating there into literary studies was a necessity.

The motivation for the approach did not come from the outside, trying to look for a new way to read Faulkner's works, but from the works themselves. It was motivated by the

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[935] Young and Waytz, "Mind Attribution," 98-99.

recognition of Faulkner's own concept of the human mind figured narratively in his prose. Consequently, the use of 4e cognitive approaches is not meant as a justification or confirmation of the imagined workings of the human mind in his works making him into a precursor to a scientific sanction. Instead, the discourse of cognitive sciences is used as the most appropriate vocabulary that can adequately describe the topic and its narrativization in his works that science has eventually come up with. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Faulkner's and second wave cognitive visions of the human mind are identical: Faulkner's works sometimes problematize and sometimes provide a corrective to the ideas put forth by current cognitive sciences.

In the case of *As I Lay Dying*, reading cognitively allowed me to recognize the importance of the act of looking and the "language" of the eyes in the novel for a fundamental process of human cognition – theory of mind. This mindreading process is presented in the novel as an essential everyday activity of navigating a network of human relationships while also being figured as literal telepathy. Presenting a paranormal extreme of this cognitive universal, Faulkner utilizes the fictional nature of his medium to throw into relief the common workings of the human mind. The focus on theory of mind in the novel demonstrated that the cognitive function operates by wedding two aspects – spectatorial and narrative – that are seen as competing within the cognitive sciences, one excluding or marginalizing the other. Concurrently, giving mindreading the central status it deserves in the novel paved the way to recognizing Faulkner's conceptualization of the mind as embodied, thus providing an interpretation countering the prevalent dualistic reading of the novel as separating the mind from the body. The embodiment of mind is reflected in the very structure of the novel.

My reading of *Absalom, Absalom!* through the ideas of cognitive extension and enactivism underlay a holistic approach to the narrative situation of the novel. The subject matter, the collective production of narrative as a cognitive artifact entails the necessity to approach it from the position of distributed (social or intersubjective) cognition. In the cognitive paradigm used here, cognition has been recognized as originating primarily in the social, as opposed to the private, domain. Therefore, I put stress on the scenes of storytelling as emergent gestalts co-constructed by the narrator(s) and the audience embedded in the environment and drawing on the social and cultural contexts, instead of on individual narrators (and their differences) as is often the case in critical literature on the novel.

This approach highlighted the intersubjective, interactive aspect of the mind and language, hence narrative as well as major tools of cognitive extension. It revealed that the novel is structured by narrative couples connected by various degrees of extension constituted

by environmental, cultural and interactional features. It also provided an argument for an interpretation that goes against the grain of the influential psychoanalytic reading of the novel which situates the self in narcissistic isolation. The ideas of extended mind also helped to provide answers to certain partial aspects of the novel, such as the emotional and intellectual involvement in the story and the process of its narration of Shreve – an outsider to the regional and community setting of the story, a stranger to the characters involved and a foreigner to the nation at large.

Being an inherently fuzzy and multilayered phenomenon, having a biological, environmental as well as cultural substrate, the mind necessitates multiple frames of reference for its explanation. To avoid reducing the discourse on the mind to a matter of brain scans on the one hand, or to a matter of stating that literature demonstrates the mind at work, it must be approached from an interdisciplinary position. The major advantage of the second wave cognitive sciences which recognize the multifaceted, distributed and processual nature of mind is their ability, predisposition to connect disparate ideas in the process of capturing the various dimensions of the life of the mind. This has an important implication for literary criticism, or aesthetic one in general: taking advantage of the concept of 4e mind equips one with a pluralistic, heterogeneous heuristic framework of literary interpretation that is able to draw together disparate topics, contexts and motifs in analyzing a literary work, like a loom pulling together various threads to weave a tapestry of interpretation.

This shows prominently in my reading of *As I Lay Dying* in the link between the processes of mindreading unfolding in the novel determining its narrative form and the aesthetic of silent films, a major medium and cultural influence of the times. While an engagement of Faulkner's novels with the movies has been claimed for his later works[936], it has not been done for his *tour de force* written in 1929. My reading of *Absalom, Absalom!* while also stressing the narrative and ideological implications of a movie aesthetic, gathers in its analysis of the major extension of the mind in the novel, that of Quentin and Shreve, topics such as, environmental (atmospheric and other) conditions, sexuality, storytelling interaction, love and intimacy, or the ideological rapprochement between the North and the South in the postbellum period. These aspects are not merely contexts for the cognitive processes of the mind's extension but constituting their very form and operation.

Looking at two of Faulkner's novels, I might have only scratched the surface of an explicitly cognitive interpretation of his oeuvre; however, at the same time, this has allowed me

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[936] See Lurie, "Introduction," 1-2.

to do a variety of things concurrently. For one thing, I have put myself a task of analyzing Faulkner's conception of the human mind – a topic which, as a whole, has not been critically addressed before to my knowledge. In the pursuit of this goal, I have ventured beyond the well-tried analysis of stream of consciousness to introduce a new approach to Faulkner's work. This has shown Faulkner to be a great explorer of "the novel, the great verbal art form of the verbal mind" as "the aesthetic of consciousness, the aesthetic that tells the mind's story."[937] On the one hand, Faulkner's achievement bespeaks the claim for literature's supreme suitability for and authority on depicting the mind, staging "what no neuro-imaging can map – *the experience of how we mind.*"[938] On the other hand, this analysis was couched in the more particular claim for modernist literature as invested in depicting the mind "'as it is,' be it verbalized, streaming, intersubjective, unconscious, or fragmented."[939] Faulkner shares the modernist bent of narrating the mind as a phenomenon transcending the biological substrate of the brain and the spatial boundaries of the individual's skin.

Taking full advantage of the bricolage of cognitive literary studies, tying in various motifs, topics and approaches to reveal their interconnections, I have also offered a new perspective on old problems besides readings going against the grain of some traditional interpretations of the novels. While similar or even the same claims have been sometimes made before, these usually address only particulars and if they have more general validity to the topic of mind, they are only cursory comments made on the way to a different destination. Thus, even when addressing aspects of Faulkner's works and reaching similar conclusions as other critics before me, I have contextualized these in the topic of human cognition as embodied, distributed and social, consequently casting them in a new light. As Jackson puts it, "that really is a kind of bottom line for justifying an approach."[940]

This raises the ghost of the question that if similar claims can be made without invoking the cognitive sciences, are they necessary? While only some of the claims I have put forth had been made before without drawing on cognitive approaches to literature and referring to the concept of mind, they have been made without any specificity and, thus, larger substance regarding the topic of mind. Laying this ghost to rest, Stockwell lists the benefits of "[p]lacing detailed arguments, which might accord with other ways of doing things, into a consistent overarching framework": "It lends the argument a validating context from within the frame

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[937] Young, *Imagining Minds*, 11.
[938] Young, *Imagining Minds*, 11. Italics in the original.
[939] Mäkelä, "Cycles of Narrative Necessity," 130.
[940] Jackson, "Issues and Problems," 174.

itself; it draws external validity from other forms of evidence associated with the general approach; it retains a consistency of purpose and method; and the fact that there are points of contact with other forms of analysis suggests a commonality between them that points to precision."[941]

Several critics have made observations about Faulkner's concept of mind without being overtly interested in it as a topic of analysis and without recourse to the discourse of cognitive sciences, thus providing me with a source of "external validity" to draw on in my readings. Speaking of *As I Lay Dying*, it is especially André Bleikasten's analysis of "the language of the eyes" that gives support to my reading of the workings of theory of mind in the novel. Bleikasten all but says the name of the game, remarking, for example, that "the exchange of looks can be […] a fusing of two minds in an experience beyond words."[942] Bleikasten also notes the attendant topic of multiperspectivity pointing out that "each monologue takes its place in a polyphonic ensemble", within the "multiplicity of voices and eyes and the even greater multiplicity of relationships established between them"[943]. While these are prominent aspects of the narrative, it is only Bleikasten who dissects the ocular semiotics of the novel.

Multiperspectivity is ipso facto a phenomenon arising from a community. Both Bleikasten and Stephen M. Ross recognize the collective, transindividual nature of consciousness and voice in *As I Lay Dying*. Bleikasten notes that "the anonymous voice of the community" is "an indispensable reference"[944] for Faulkner. Identifying language and consciousness, a reductive equation that marks some non-cognitivist readings of Faulkner, Ross observes that consciousness in the novel "often seems a matter more of communal awareness than of psychological idiosyncracies – and this is perhaps to say that, rather than being revealed by language, consciousness *is* the language used and shared by the narrators."[945]

Pursuing other ends, both authors highlight the intersubjective nature of consciousness. This is a quintessential feature of the mind in *Absalom, Absalom!* which comes to the fore in the novel through both the story and the discourse of the narrative. As such, it has not escaped the critics' eyes with many of them noting, albeit sometimes in passing, its distinctiveness. Glissant designates the ultimate setting for Faulkner's works as a community[946] marked by a "'continuous stream of consciousness,' composed of outbursts and fractured thoughts, anxious,

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[941] Stockwell, *Texture*, 191. Cf. Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 5.

[942] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 72.

[943] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 66.

[944] Bleikasten, *Faulkner's* As I Lay Dying, 59.

[945] Ross, "'Voice' in Narrative Texts", 304.

[946] Glissant, *Faulkner, Mississippi*, 128

stammering, aching, stubborn."[947] In this context, *Absalom, Absalom!* represents for Glissant the most successful elaboration of the communal, intersubjective aspect of consciousness which he terms "the continuous stream of modified consciousness" and characterizes it as consisting of "passionate interior monologues, the alarmed responses to these monologues, and the questioning of protagonists and spectator witnesses, all contaminated by deferred revelations, which brings them nearer and nearer to an impossible truth: like a river of perceptions and sensations, full of flashes and shadows."[948]

Glissant recognizes Faulkner's sensitivity to the community and collective underpinnings of the individual as expressions of a fellow writer of the Caribbean and the global South in general, designating his narrative as anti-Western.[949] Similarly anti-hegemonic reading is provided by John T. Matthews who, equipped with Derrida's deconstruction, argues that in *Absalom, Absalom!*, "the narrators oppose Sutpen's rigidly phallic and dynastic language with a playful language that disseminates meaning."[950] Matthews acutely recognizes that the narrators and their audience are participators in the larger situations of telling, that "the hearing and speaking partners of each performance are seized by the intimacies of telling […] at moments of consent and affective truth"[951]. He highlights the leakage of the individual into what Peter Brooks has called "that transindividual voice that speaks through all of Faulkner's characters."[952] Matthews does not only bring up the intersubjective dimension of the novel's narrative, but, guided by Faulkner's description of the narrative situation between Quentin and Shreve as "some happy marriage of hearing and speaking", he underlines marriage as "one of the chief figures for storytelling in *Absalom*" which "embodies the intimacy and pleasure of narration, and also suggests how fiction makes its meanings"[953], and thus broaches the subject of cognitive extension in terms of Faulkner's metaphor.

Matthews goes as far as he can in his pursuit of the extended mind without the framework of cognitive studies, relying only on the novel itself as he keenly highlights enactive features of a truly participatory sense-making: the emergent and immersive nature of a storytelling situation in which "authors give away self-presence to their stories"[954] on the one hand and, on the other hand, the preservation of individual freedom and authenticity in such an

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[947] Glissant, *Faulkner, Mississippi*, 176.
[948] Glissant, *Faulkner, Mississippi*, 179.
[949] See Glissant, *Faulkner, Mississippi*, 22-23 and 29-30.
[950] Matthews, *Play*, 119.
[951] Matthews, *Play*, 121.
[952] Brooks, "Incredulous Narration," 254.
[953] Matthews, *Play*, 122.
[954] Matthews, *Play*, 159.

exchange with "moments of creative dissension."[955] Matthews's reading is highly perceptive, but it has its limits when it comes to the mind, not that that is its goal. His view of the mind in Faulkner reduces it to the matter of language as he claims that "all thought and consciousness appear to Faulkner as kinds of talk."[956] Such a view is probably on account of dealing with the linguistic medium of literature and in Matthews's case specifically on account of his deconstructive position.

More recently, critics have turned to Faulkner with an interest specifically in matters of the mind. Eric Casero draws on philosophy of mind to focus on the complexity of consciousness in Faulkner's work and in *Absalom, Absalom!* especially. The three dimensions of consciousness he identifies are individual, social and historical with the novel developing especially the last one, constituting "an expansive movement of consciousness in which past events cannot clearly be separated from present events, because of the way in which they so closely inform and determine these events."[957] The novel´s importance lies also in depicting "not only the narrative of Sutpen, but the field of conscious processes from which this narrative emerges."[958] While an acute analysis of consciousness in Faulkner that takes it out of the sphere of the individual and situates it among people, Casero's reading is not particularly informed by cognitive sciences and stays close to the non-cognitivist readings in its proclamations.

John F. Padgett is also interested in the historical, or temporal dimension of the mind in Faulkner. He shows intersubjectivity, multiperspectivity and multitemporality as the building blocks out of whose interactions "social space and time emerge"[959] in Faulkner's work. Padgett focuses on the interactional and imaginative aspects of conversations out of which history arises – thus, the history he speaks of is rather collective memory grounded in the experientiality of the community. Since his analysis is informed by philosophy of mind, neuroscience as well as cognitive literary studies, Padgett not only dissects the intersubjective and dialogical (in Bakhtin's terms) nature of the mind, but also relates these phenomena to research on memory and the brain. This allows him to correlate various types of memory to the various temporal scales found in *Absalom, Absalom!*. His study is a cognitive-cultural reading of the novel dealing with both cognitive universals and their realization within the cultural particulars of the South.

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[955] Matthews, *Play*, 149.
[956] Matthews, *Play*, 151.
[957] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 96.
[958] Casero, "Designing Sutpen," 98.
[959] Padgett, "Faulkner's Assembly of Memories," 410.

Ineke Bockting connects linguistic deixis, i.e., the words and phrases expressing the particulars of time, place and person within a specific context, with theory of mind noting that "Faulkner's novels form a gold mine for showing what happens if deictic projection is disturbed, that is, if it is either absent or unanchored."[960] She focuses mostly on *The Sound and the Fury* observing that "in contrast to Benjy's lack of Theory of Mind, Quentin's has become so expansive – so unanchored – that he can no longer distinguish what his father knows, wants, believes, or feels from what he does himself."[961] Her analysis corroborates my reading of Quentin's self as filled with others even in connecting the deictic collapse to schizophrenia as she draws on Rosenbaum and Sonne's study of the language of psychosis like me.[962]

While the "non-cognitivist" Faulkner critics mentioned here have either provided corroborating images of Faulkner's minds in broad strokes, or, in the case of Bleikasten and Matthews have come close to analyzing some specific aspects of the mind, and the "cognitivist" Faulkner critics have provided analyses of specific aspects of the mind in Faulkner, an analysis of the mind as a whole has not yet been attempted. Even though I have undertaken this task here, it is of necessity an incomplete achievement. The general vision of mind in Faulkner's works presented here can be supplemented especially by specific readings of specific works focusing on the portrait of the mind they yield and its narrative presentation.

Besides other works, there are also other contexts important for Faulkner's works that I have not put in the spotlight; I have suggested a possible reading of race in "Pantaloon in Black" with the processes of human cognition on one's mind. Faulkner's portrayal of Rider's mind points to an important ground for investigation. Faulkner's exclusive focus on the body to convey the widower's mind corresponds to what Glissant observes about the Southerner's treatment of black minds in general. He remarks on three narrative modes in Faulkner, namely, the objective narrative, the subjective narrative and the interior monologue observing that "[t]he use of the second mode is rare for Blacks; the third is almost never used for them."[963] One goal to pursue is then charting Faulkner's treatment of black minds and the narrative techniques he uses to depict them.

I have been preoccupied exclusively with fictional minds but part and parcel of both reading literature and cognitive literary sciences are real minds. The processes of readers' minds when engaging Faulkner's challenging and idiosyncratic prose form a topic of interest. Given

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[960] Bockting, "Importance of Deixis," 178.
[961] Bockting, "Importance of Deixis," 179.
[962] Cf. Bockting, "Importance of Deixis," 179-180.
[963] Glissant, *Faulkner, Mississippi*, 68.

the experimental nature of Faulkner's narratives and their reflection of the workings of the human mind, looking at how they challenge and play with standard processes of reading and readers' expectations could provide a fruitful venue. Since the mind is a fundamentally cultural phenomenon, this research could be conducted with an eye to cultural variations of the various reading strategies. As Stockwell points out, reading "seems solitary but we are capable of it on the back of a long and intersubjective process of learning to read as a social practice. Solitary reading is thus threaded through already with social design."[964]

An obvious and rich topic of investigation in terms of cognitive approaches to Faulkner is memory, given his preoccupation with the past and its weight on the present. My investigation of this phenomenon in "A Rose for Emily" in my diploma thesis suggests that this aspect of human cognition concurs with the picture of the mind presented here. While I have not invoked the frame of cognitive sciences in my previous thesis, the centrality and fruitfulness of we-narration, narration in the first person plural (as is exclusively the case in the short story), and the interdisciplinary concept of collective memory clearly demonstrate that remembering as conceived by Faulkner rebels against widely held yet surpassed notions of memory as an individual, stable and passive phenomenon and gives way to a memory that is distributed not only among minds but also objects, that is actively constructed in the moment and for the moment, i.e., that has an inherent bias and can serve ideologies of the community at large, and that, as a result, cannot be construed as a simple archive providing access to an intactly preserved past upon dusting it off.

Any future foray into a cognitive interpretation of not only Faulkner's works but as a general principle must be guided by the here defended notion of literature as an authoritative discourse on the mind that might draw on hard sciences yet has its distinct methods, goals and subject – art. Even though a fictional depiction of the mind, it can come closer to the truth than scientific representations of human cognition: as Oatley and Mar observe, "carefully crafted literary stories are not flawed empirical accounts, but are instead simulations of selves in the social world. They function to abstract social information so that it can be better understood, generalized to other circumstances, and acted upon."[965] Besides being complex, engaged and engaging, such a picture of the mind is more informative, practical, wholesome and reflective of quotidian life than fMRIs.

Jackson claims investigating the embodied mind in texts to be the most promising research avenue in cognitive literary studies pointing again to the contribution of literature to

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[964] Stockwell, *Texture*, 78-79.
[965] Oatley and Mar, "The Function of Fiction," 173.

the knowledge of the human mind: "It will be reasonable to make the working assumption that what we now know of the embodied mind was always present one way or the other in earlier texts."[966] He compares the spoils of cognitive literary approaches to "the way contemporary findings in, say, feminism or psychoanalytic theory enable us to see immanent properties in texts written long before the advent of the theory."[967] The benefits of developing cognitive approaches to literature extend beyond literary studies concerns; such advances can constitute a mutually beneficial trade-off between literary studies and the sciences: Parker, among others, observes that "[l]iterary theorists are not claiming to be scientists; they are instead laying claim to a conceptual trove that enhances literary studies – and enhances science as well."[968] He comments on the relationship between literary studies and sciences in general (not specifically cognitive ones), and points out that "by drawing on scientific concepts literary theorists find new ways of articulating and apprehending the complex workings of a literary text" while, at the same time, they "rediscover a valuable source of knowledge", i.e. science which "they were forced to abandon as they pursued specialized degrees"[969].

Wedding scientific concepts with specifically cultural interests of literary studies necessitates fundamentally an anthropological approach to literature. Cave prophesies an anthropological future to cognitive studies, one that "will focus primarily on the kinds of thinking that are afforded by literature, where 'thinking' means cognitive activity that includes emotion, imagination, kinesic response, and (not least) interaction with other humans and the world at large" based on the recognition that not only is literature "an ancient and quasi-universal feature of human cultures" but also that "[h]uman cognitive activity is apparent in everything that literature does and says."[970] This anthropological, in other words, cognitive-cultural approach seems most fitting for a principled approach to human verbal art interested in its creator, the mind, and its iterations across various cultures. The anthropological nature of the endeavor – inspecting not only literature but the mind itself as well – is clearly seen when consulting Geertz on the definition of thinking:

> Thinking consists not of "happenings in the head" (though happenings there and elsewhere are necessary for it to occur) but of a traffic in what have been called, by G. H. Mead and others, significant symbols – words for the most part but also gestures, drawings, musical sounds, mechanical devices like clocks, or natural objects like jewels

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[966] Jackson, "Issues and Problems," 175.
[967] Jackson, "Issues and Problems," 175.
[968] Parker, *Narrative Form and Chaos Theory*, 20.
[969] Parker, *Narrative Form and Chaos Theory*, 20-21.
[970] Cave, *Thinking with Literature*, 155-156.

– anything, in fact, that is disengaged from its mere actuality and used to impose meaning upon experience.[971]

Closing his book surveying the history of Faulkner criticism, Taylor Hagood devotes the last chapter to a forecast of trends to come or of trends to become more prominent within Faulkner studies. He assumes a cryptic tone of the fortuneteller that verges on rendering the forecast superfluous: "Undoubtedly there will be developments in the field that no one can now see coming. […] Likewise, as changes in intellectual directions continue, doors will be opened that will make perfect sense to a new generation of readers and scholars even though previous generations would have had no way of imagining them."[972] Cognitive literary studies fits at least the first aspect of this mysterious newcomer´s profile since Faulkner criticism remains still largely unaffected by it.

Whether this approach to reading Faulkner's oeuvre will make perfect sense to either a new or old generation of readers and scholars is for them to judge. What is clear is that Faulkner has a lot to say about the human mind: his texts teem with cognitive processes, mental phenomena, the vibrant life of the mind in general. Given Faulkner's figuration of the human mind as spread across brain, body and the world, as deeply intersubjective, as cultural both as an artefact and as an artificer, focusing on this topic bears the promise of giving birth to new, rich and interdisciplinary readings and scholarly projects. Reciprocally, the enterprise of cognitive literary studies will be sharpened on the whetting stone of Faulkner's work and potentially become stronger and more prominent for it.[973]

In any case, Faulkner is a great philosopher, psychologist and anthropologist of the mind not through experiments or questionnaires, but by means of his idiosyncratic narrative form of art. Faulkner recognizes that the mind is not only brain, but also body, emotions, other minds, communication, environment, tools and history. A supremely humanist writer, he figures the mind by writing about the "problems of the human spirit […] the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself"[974]. Writing about his native US South, Faulkner never loses sight of the fictional arena that literature partakes in and makes his characters larger than life. In their complexity and aesthetics, Faulkner's works are testament to the fact that literature extends the human mind not only as "a tool for thinking", but also by transfiguring the commonplace,

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[971] Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture," 45.
[972] Taylor Hagood, *Following Faulkner: The Critical Response to Yoknapatawpha´s Architect* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2017), 133.
[973] Cf. Hagood, *Following Faulkner*, 1.
[974] Faulkner, "Address," 119.

showing that "literature can 'think' reality when ordinary human thought falls short; that a book can have thoughts that humans *cannot* have."[975]

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[975] Billington, *Is Literature Healthy?*, 44.

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