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## Phenomenology of Visual Arts in William Faulkner's the Sound and the Fury and as I Lay Dying

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**PHENOMENOLOGY OF VISUAL ARTS IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S**  
***THE SOUND AND THE FURY AND AS I LAY DYING***

A Masters Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, English

By

Zeinab Zamani

August 2017

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**PHENOMENOLOGY OF VISUAL ARTS IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S  
*THE SOUND AND THE FURY* AND *AS I LAY DYING***

English

Missouri State University, August 2017

Master of Arts

Zeinab Zamani

**ABSTRACT**

The early decades of the 20th century marked drastic changes in philosophy, science, visual arts, literature, and music. In philosophy, this change occurred in the work of Edmund Husserl whose *Phenomenology* introduced a new “way of knowing” or epistemology. In art, the exhibition of Pablo Picasso’s Cubist *Les Femmes d’Alger* (1907), given its rebellious nature, began an innovative artistic tradition which called for a new “way of seeing.” Phenomenology as theory and Cubism as practice shared a common aim: to *re-vision* the world—an aim of many Modernist movements. Modernism is an umbrella term for a mélange of artistic schools and styles, which are characterized by such features as aesthetic self-consciousness, structural and thematic fragmentation, and a complexity of representation. Modernism contains Phenomenology and Cubism as twin attempts to re-vision and reconstruct the viewer’s experience of the object-world. The aim of this thesis is twofold: 1) to outline the complex vocabulary of Husserlian Phenomenology and Cubism, and 2) to apply those vocabularies to William Faulkner’s texts. As examples of visual and phenomenological perspectivism, Faulkner’s *The Sound and The Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* were explored for their correlations to Husserlian Phenomenology and Cubism. By utilizing artistic techniques drawn from Fauvism, Surrealism, and, Cubism, Faulkner’s novels provide literary samples for how artists reconstruct the world visually through their art. Husserlian Phenomenology likewise aims to reconstruct our human perceptions and experience.

**KEYWORDS:** modernism, Husserlian Phenomenology, Cubism, perspectivism, Faulkner

This abstract is approved as to form and content

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James S. Baumlín, PhD  
Chairperson, Advisory Committee  
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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

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I would like to split the dedication of this thesis in two ways:

To my mother, Touran Angouti and to my sister, Mary, whose indefatigable, magical, sweet, gentle, pleading, innocent, delicate, sympathetic, loyal, untutored adoring, female hearts stood by me until the very end.

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## INTRODUCTION

Modernism presents us with a world becoming a realm of appearances—  
fragments, patchwork quilts of color, dream-tableaux made out of disconnected  
phantasms.

—T. J. Clark, “The Painting of Postmodern Life?” (14)

The beginning decades of the twentieth century witnessed fundamental and drastic developments in painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, philosophy, music, and the sciences. The arts of painting and sculpture celebrated the emergence of Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Marcel Duchamp, Jean Metzinger, Alexander Archipenko, and other brilliant, innovative artists. In philosophy and psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson, and Edmund Husserl among others led revolutions in the study of human consciousness. In literature, Marcel Proust, Guillaume Apollinaire, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and a host of others experimented with forms of writing; in fiction especially, they developed innovative and complex narrative techniques. All these artists, thinkers, authors participated in the same cultural movement: modernism. In an age of political and economic alienation, when forces of capitalism, mechanization, urbanization, and the seemingly all-powerful nation-state threatened the sovereignty of the individual, much of art retreated into the last remaining bastion of individualism: subjective experience. As an aesthetic movement, modernism explored our human “ways of seeing” within a larger philosophical project: an exploration of our human “ways of knowing” or epistemology.

Modernism is a spacious container holding multiple, in fact contradictory attitudes and movements: other revolutions—of Marxism in political economy, of

expressionism and vorticism in art, of naturalism in literature, etc.—take their place in early twentieth-century intellectual-aesthetic culture, though not in this present thesis. It is not the sociology, but rather the subjectivist psychology, of modernism that is of interest here. In 1907, Edmund Husserl published his *Phenomenology* (*Die Idee der Phänomenologie*). In that same year, Pablo Picasso exhibited his legendary painting, *Les Femmes d'Alger*. While there is no direct connection between these works, both represent an aspect of the *Zeitgeist* of modernism. Both works sought to *re-vision* the world. The insight that drove both Phenomenology and Cubism was that the human perceiver engages in an active *construction* of the object-world. For Husserl as for Picasso, the older traditions of an “objective” realism fail to describe our subjective “ways of knowing.” The subject cannot be alienated or removed from the object-world, since “knowing” is an activity that occurs *between* the knower and the phenomenon. And “knowing,” for Husserl as for Picasso, is a process that unfolds in time. In any given instant, only a portion of the object-world is presented to the perceiver. In traditional realist art, the observer “never [perceives] an object in its entirety but only a part of it, a side, a foreshortening” (Pedragosa 749). In order to perceive an object in its wholeness, the observer has to change location. Divided into separate instants of perception, all “knowing” is perspectivist—partial, fragmented. By “giving the lie” to realism, Cubism acknowledges the narrowness of any one sight-angle while using art as an antidote to that same narrowness of perspective. The flat canvas provides the space where multiple perceptions, perspectives, and temporalities can be constructed into a complex frame.

Modernism contains Cubism and Phenomenology as twin attempts to reveal the constructed nature of the object-world. Phenomenology provides a vocabulary to

illuminate the aesthetic practice of Cubism. In the ways that they approach the object-world, Phenomenology and Cubism are mirror-images of each other or isomorphic. While Cubism is “characterized by its representatives as an atheoretical or even antitheoretical movement” (Pedragosa 749), Phenomenology is a theory characterized by its study of the structures of consciousness. Hence, “What Cubism achieves by pictorial means is what Phenomenology achieves by theoretical means” (Pedragosa 749). In other words, Phenomenology is a *theory whose destination is practice*; its practice culminates in what Husserl terms the “transcendental attitude.” Cubism, by contrast, is a *practice that gives birth to theory*—specifically, a theory of constructionism. In philosophy, Husserl explored a new way of knowing; in art, the Cubists explored a new way of seeing.

In his 1997 essay, “New Ways of Seeing the Old: Cubism and Husserlian Phenomenology,” Randall Slettene cites the French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who states that “The entire modern history of painting, with its efforts to detach itself from illusionism and to acquire its own dimensions, has a metaphysical significance” (Merleau-Ponty 178). Merleau-Ponty’s assertion is notable, due to “the connection he draws between modern art and philosophical concerns” (Slettene 104). As Slettene argues, a full understanding of the development of modern art requires that one comprehend “the correlation between the world of [the] aesthetic and the world of the metaphysical” (104). Though this same correlation holds throughout art history, it receives greater attention in modernism, due to the radical developments in both art and philosophy in the twentieth century. As Slettene notes, modernism is marked

by radical change and discontinuity in both these fields, in each case due (at least in part) to the “nature of visual perception” (104).

As Slettene describes them, the correlations between movements in visual art and philosophy are of two kinds: “They are either the result of the direct and demonstrable influence of developments in one field upon the other, or they are causally unconnected, parallel developments that occur independently in each field at roughly the same time” (104). One striking instance of these parallel developments, Slettene notes, is the “twin emergence of cubism in painting and phenomenology in philosophy” (104). While Slettene is content to note their contemporaneity, other theorists have sought firmer connections between these fields. In *Der Weg zum Kubismus*, art historian Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler relates Cubism to “certain philosophies as their pictorial *analogon*” (Pinotti 63). Among candidates for these “certain philosophies,” Kahnweiler includes neo-Kantian idealism, the existentialist phenomenology of Henry Bergson, and the pre-Freudian psychology of William James. But most interesting is Kahnweiler’s claim that “One day people will certainly try to discover the connections between cubism and a philosophy *contemporary* to it. It seems to me probable that Edmund Husserl will be taken into consideration, since his phenomenology remains a transcendental idealism” (Pinotti 64).

Can one make similar correlations among *literary* art, visual art, and philosophy? In William Faulkner’s case, it appears that one can. Faulkner was among the modernist writers whose ground-breaking narrative techniques modulated the structure of the modern novel. The complete *oeuvre* of Faulkner demonstrates his abiding interest in painting. One would expect that his early interest in modern art had some influence on his

writing style and narrative techniques. Faulkner began drawing before he tried his hand at writing. Arguably, his experiments in the structure of the novel correlate with many of the innovations in modernist art, the Cubist movement particularly. His idea of how a novel should be written marks a disjunction from his “realist” predecessors, much like Picasso’s work diverged from artists before him.

As Joseph Blotner states in *Faulkner: A Biography*, Faulkner referred to the act of novel writing as an act of building—a visual-spatial construction. Explaining how he put *A Green Bough* together, Faulkner stated, “I chose the best manuscripts *and built a volume* just like a novel” (Blotner 790; emphasis added). Quoting Faulkner in *A Cosmos of My Own*, Panthea Reid Broughton notes that “novels are spatial, not linear constructions” (36). According to Broughton, novelists of Faulkner’s generation wrote “not by tracing the linear development of a single plot line, but rather by building and arranging blocks of narrative with an eye for the sorts of patterns they were creating” (44). The correlation between Cubism and Faulkner’s literary modernism lies in their mirrored techniques: both seek to multiply perspectives, the former through visual recombination, the latter through narrative.

Expanding Slettene’s approach to include literary modernism, this thesis will explore the correlations between Phenomenology and Cubism in Faulkner’s *The Sound and The Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. It offers to situate his literary technique within two vital components of modernism: Phenomenology *as theory* and Cubism *as practice*. Of course, there are other ways of reading Faulkner, just as there are aspects of modernism that lie beyond the purview of this thesis. Cubism, like Phenomenology, “is an occasion to learn to see” (Pinotti 65). Can the same be said of Faulkner, that his fiction “is an

occasion to learn to see”? Faulkner scholarship has explored the presence of modernist art within his novels; this thesis will build upon and, perhaps, add to this scholarship.

Chapter 1 outlines the complex vocabulary of Husserlian phenomenology. Chapter 2 outlines the visual-spatial techniques of Cubism. Chapters 3 and 4 apply these to Faulkner’s own perspectivist art. A thesis of this scope can offer, at most, a sampling of Faulkner’s visual/phenomenological perspectivism. It would be this work’s contention that examples can be further multiplied throughout Faulkner’s *oeuvre*, and that perspectivism can be shown to lie at the heart of his modernist aesthetic. In the following chapters, this thesis will attempt a way of reading that shows how such a claim can be demonstrated. If successful, this thesis will show how the Phenomenological and Cubist vocabularies can contribute to the ongoing discussion of Faulkner’s *The Sound and The Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*.

## PHENOMENOLOGY

Natural objects ... must be experienced before any theorizing about them can occur.

—Edmund Husserl, “Pure Phenomenology” (125)

During the same years that Picasso and Braque’s Cubism revolutionized painting and sculpture, dramatic changes were taking place in philosophy. In Germany, Edmund Husserl was taking courses in astronomy, mathematics, physics, and philosophy. Husserl’s mentor, the Czech philosopher Thomas Masaryk, was a former student of the German philosopher Franz Brentano, with whom Husserl came into contact and whose lectures were to have an enormous influence on Husserl’s philosophical maturation. In the years 1900 and 1901, Husserl published his first major work, *Logical Investigations* (*Logische Untersuchungen*). Written in two volumes, the first, titled *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* (*Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*), was a critique of psychologism.<sup>1</sup> The second, titled *Investigations in Phenomenology and Knowledge* (*Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*), was a larger and more ambitious investigation into six different areas: (I) expression and meaning, (II) universals, (III) the formal ontology of parts and wholes (mereology), (IV) the “syntactical” and mereological structure of meaning, (V) the nature and structure of intentionality, and (VI) the interrelation of truth, intuition and cognition. The publication of *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* laid the foundations for Husserl’s analyses in *Investigations in Phenomenology and*

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<sup>1</sup> “Psychologism is a pejorative description for the view that psychology can account for the laws of logic” (Russell 9).

*Knowledge* which, subsequently, laid the groundwork for his mature phenomenology. He developed and refined his philosophical method into what he later called transcendental phenomenology, publishing his influential *Ideas (Ideen)* in 1913.

Husserl believed that “Western philosophy was in need of a radical overhaul if it was to fulfill its mission of being the science of sciences, the foundational realm of systematic knowledge upon which the sciences, and in fact, the entire body of organized inquiry, were built” (Slettene 106). Husserl believed that if philosophy was to remain influential in the twentieth century, “its theoretical and epistemological foundations had to be clarified in ways that would avoid the cognitive shoals and reefs upon which so many metaphysical vessels had crashed” (Slettene 106). Husserl thought that the foundations of philosophy will remain firm only if philosophers “consider conscious experiences *in the concrete fullness and entirety* with which they figure in their concrete context—the *stream of experience*—and to which they are closely attached through their own proper essence” (*Ideas* 116). In other words, philosophers are required to analyze the units of consciousness in order to comprehend the world. In his book titled

*Phenomenology*,<sup>2</sup> Shaun Gallagher emphasizes two definitions:

Phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience. (Robert Sokolowski, qtd. in Gallagher 7)

Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. (David Woodruff Smith, qtd. in Gallagher 7)

To illustrate the definitions and to put them into simple terms, it can be explained that Phenomenology is the study of phenomena. Edmund Husserl, who was known as the

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<sup>2</sup> As citations indicate, the following outline draws extensively on Gallagher’s discussion.



founder of phenomenology, focused on human consciousness. He believed that consciousness is like “our window onto the world” (Gallagher 9). Basically, modern philosophical Phenomenology tries to provide an account of how things appear to human awareness and how the world appears to human consciousness in terms of one’s subjective experience of it. In other words, Phenomenology reflects upon everyday experiences to gain a sense of their order and structure.

The following section will present a brief overview of terms relevant to a Phenomenological reading of Faulkner. It will begin with an explication of the natural attitude.

### **The Natural Attitude**

As mentioned previously, Phenomenology is a study of the units of consciousness; however, the ultimate aim is to achieve a “transcendental rather than a naturalistic analysis of consciousness” (Gallagher 41). To put it in simple terms, we are all familiar with the natural attitude without even being aware of it, because we naturally *assume* that the world around us is real, that we live in a real world, and that the objects around us are real (Gallagher 41). Hence, the natural attitude, by virtue of its nature, is usually taken for granted by all of us. Moreover, the natural attitude, as Gallagher notes, is “a very practical attitude to be in,” especially for our survival (41). All of us, despite our occupations and careers, experience the natural attitude — the real world around us that “characterizes our everyday life” — by immersing ourselves in the natural attitude (Gallagher 42). However, this sets the phenomenologist apart because she takes a different attitude by *bracketing* the natural attitude.

## The Epoché

As mentioned above, to be in the natural attitude comes, as the name suggests, very naturally to everyone. As people work, play, cook, eat, pay rent, and so forth, they are in the natural attitude. The phenomenologist, however, adopts a different approach by *bracketing* the natural attitude and, hence, moving into the phenomenological attitude. This happens by “[suspending] the natural attitude [in order] to disengage from it” (Gallagher 43). In other words, if the natural attitude consists of a “collection of beliefs, judgments, opinions, or theories about how things work, then to bracket these established beliefs and judgments is to set them aside” (Gallagher 43). Husserl calls this “the epoché — a Greek word for suspension of belief” (Gallagher 43). Bracketing does not negate the existence of the aforementioned beliefs and ideas; the phenomenon is still present to consciousness and one can describe it and how it appears within her experience. This is called the phenomenological residuum, which is what remains after performing the epoché (Gallagher 44).

Husserl believed that consciousness is the only way to one’s understanding or knowing anything, and the epoché is the first step towards reaching philosophical understanding. When one suspends all preconceptions, incidental meanings, and judgements about an object—a book for instance—she suspends all scientific and metaphysical judgments about it. That does not necessarily mean that she is left with nothing, because she still has the fresh, unprejudiced “experience of the world” (Gallagher 44). Shaun Gallagher relates this to the idea of methodic doubt in Descartes’ *Meditations*, according to which Descartes begins to doubt everything because he cannot

trust his “perceptions or his reason” (45). This whole world could be merely a dream and the only thing one can be certain of is “the fact that he is *doubting*, which is a form of thinking” (45). In other words, the only thing one cannot doubt is *doubting* itself: the *cogito* — the “I think,” which is followed by *ergo sum* — “therefore, I am” (Gallagher 45). As Gallagher explains, Husserl concurs with Descartes up to the point of *cogito*, which is the consciousness that “he can’t suspend or bracket out” (45).

Again, applying the bracketing technique does not negate an object’s existence, because even if the epoché is executed, the consciousness of it remains. After one suspends all beliefs and judgments about the world, about the universe *in toto*, she still has her experiences of the world within which she is situated (Gallagher 45). For Husserl, “this world as experienced is the very starting point of knowledge” (Gallagher 45). The “*stream of experience*” remains, even after all judgements, beliefs, and opinions are removed. Therefore, what one sees, hears, feels, and perceives is the starting point and foundation of all subsequent knowledge (Gallagher 46). In other words, “all science starts with our consciousness” (Gallagher 46).

To give an example, one may have a clear definition of an apple. She may even be able to provide a scientific definition for an apple as “fruit of the domesticated tree *Malus domestica* (family *Rosaceae*), one of the most widely cultivated tree fruits” (“Apple”).

More generally, all meaning — the meaning of the world itself — can be traced back to experience — the way things appear to consciousness. Using the epoché, we can, without contradiction, cut through, as it were, the empirical connection between the experience and all thingly existence. We thereby achieve a kind of *distinctio phaenomenologica*. But what does that mean? What kind of cutting through is that? Is it not true that experiences are experiences of experiencing humans and, hence, that they have a relationship to a body and in insertion in nature? Can I change anything about that? To be sure, it just so happens to be that way. But we can indeed consider the experiences in and for themselves, without considering them in their empirical relation. We can disengage each natural

positing (positing of the existence of nature) in the sense that we undertake scientific considerations, in which we make no use at all of any positing of nature and where, accordingly, these considerations keep their validity, whether or not nature or an intellectual-embodied world exists as such. (Gallagher 47)

## The Phenomenological Reduction

The second step in the Husserlian method is the *phenomenological reduction*, which some phenomenologists believe to include the epoché. In other words, the whole process of reduction, including the epoché, could be referred to as the phenomenological reduction. The phenomenological reduction turns one's "attention toward the phenomena as they appear" (Gallagher 47). In this step, what matters is what one experiences just as she experiences it, which leads to reflection on *how* one experiences and how things *appear* in that experience. In this step, it is essential that the individual describe what she experiences, which might be a complex phenomenon; but it is important to describe *what* she sees, and *how* she sees it—which is a remarkably unique experience (Gallagher 47). Even if she observes the same object twice or thrice, each of her experiences will be different from the previous one. Gallagher brings up an intriguing example:

What you see, even if it's a simple thing like the apple on the desk in front of you, may be somewhat complex. For example, in your visual experience of the apple you can note that you see a certain complex color—it's red, but there are various shades of red that pattern the surface. Perhaps, it is not sitting in clear light and there are shadows falling across its surface. Nonetheless, you seem to see it as having a more-or-less consistent color, despite the variations that come from the shadows. Also, there are some things you can describe about its shape. But notice that you can't see the entire apple all at once. You always see it *in profile*. It's quite amazing that even though you can't see its inside, you see that the apple has (must have) an inside. And although you can't see the other side of the apple, you see it as having another side. In some way you see this without seeing the other side. Of course you can also manipulate the apple or your own position so that you see more of it. But there seems to be a rule here that says you can't see more than one profile at a time, and you never see the entire apple at once, although you do see it as a whole. You can also explore the apple by touching it or by tasting it. If you close your eyes you can still describe what you learn from touching it and

manipulating it. Or you can take a bite and try to describe what you taste. Such explorations, however, only point to other ways in which the apple is perceived incompletely. (47)

The preceding example illustrates Husserl's phenomenological reduction, and it can be utilized to explain how a cubist painter perceives an *objet d'art*. This point will be explicated in detail in the section concerning Cubism.

In this example, one depends upon perceptions and senses rather than theoretical or scientific knowledge; the above description is purely empirical rather than transcendental. What, then, makes Husserlian method transcendental? As Gallagher notes, "some phenomenologists refer to a *transcendental reduction* that takes the phenomenological reduction to another level" (48). In the example provided above, what the individual describes is not the apple itself but rather the "*lived experience* of the apple" (Gallagher 48). Hence, one will not claim that the apple is red but that she *experiences* it as red. Husserl attributes a kind of uniqueness to each experience of an object, because "when part of the experience is present, some previous part of it is no longer there" (Gallagher 49). Therefore,

This experience of the apple has its own existence, and it exists in a certain way. Within that experience the apple appears from a certain perspective. This is the characteristic *of the experience*, not of the apple. Each experience presents the apple incompletely, and this is an essential feature of the way we experience things. (Gallagher 48; emphasis added)

Hence, one cannot claim that "the apple *is* red, but that the apple *appears to be* red. This is where Phenomenology shares some common ground with the art of painting. Husserl points to the "finitude and partiality of our knowledge and perception of reality" (Pedragosa 749). As previously mentioned, one can only capture one side or aspect of a

given object; but, in order to have a thorough perception of that object, one needs to capture it as a multifaceted whole.

Gallagher here refers to Husserl's 1913 *Ideas*, where each experience is absolute and there is no other side to an experience *per se* that one can reach by means of that singular experience:

When we attend to the experience itself—which is an attending to the way that we experience the world—we are starting to grasp certain aspects of experience that can be considered transcendental. There is here a certain a priori aspect that constrains every visual perception that we have, namely, that it involves a perspective which limits the way in which any object appears to us. (48-49)

As Gallagher explains, this transcendental experience exists in one's phenomenological intuition and is permeating in one's visual experience of the world (49).

### **The Eidetic Reduction**

It is only “within the transcendentially reduced sphere of consciousness [that] we can grasp the essence of the phenomenon” (Gallagher 49). Husserl calls this aspect of his method the *eidetic reduction*, which stems from *eidos*, a Greek term for essence. The eidetic reduction serves as an “imaginative variation” upon experience, by means of which one uses her “imagination to change various features of the phenomenon” (Gallagher 49). As Husserl describes this notion in *Ideas*, to explore consciousness is to undertake a search for its essence or *eidos*: that is, for the features of human experience that are both necessary and immutable and that, consequently, make one's experience what it is. To further explain, once one has turned one's reflective awareness toward experience by employing the *phenomenological reduction*, one can then undertake a second reduction—an *eidetic reduction*—with respect to some more specific question.

Husserl refers to a special moment in an individual's reflective awareness, a moment that he calls an *intuition*, when the individual realizes the essential nature of a given object. The *eidetic reduction* helps create an intuition into something's essence by employing a method known as *imaginary variation*, in which the individual varies all the possible attributes of an experience as a way of exploring what is truly necessary for the experience to be considered what it is. For instance, what characteristics make an apple, an apple? Gallagher gives the following example:

We can imagine the apple we see on the table in front of us being bigger or smaller than it is; being green instead of red; being redder than it is; being more round than it is; being heavier or lighter than it is; being more or less sweeter than it is. We could imaginatively vary the way the apple *appears by imagining walking around it or seeing it in a different context*. There are all sorts of things that we could change about the apple. Through all of these changes it nonetheless remains an apple. (49; emphasis added)

One may pose a myriad of questions about the apple and its distinguishing characteristics, i.e. all the qualities that make an apple and that assist one in recognizing an apple as an apple. Characteristics that are invariant are thus linked to the essence of an apple *qua* apple: as Gallagher states, “the essence of something is equal to the set of invariables that we can discover through this process of imaginative variation” (49). Therefore, the eidetic reduction is a means for gaining insight into essences (*Wesensschau*).

### **The Theory of Intentionality**

It was mentioned earlier that Franz Brentano exerted a profound influence on the young Husserl; therefore, it comes as no surprise that Husserl insisted upon revisiting and revising Brentano's ideas. One of the main concepts that Husserl borrows from Brentano

is the idea that consciousness is intentional<sup>3</sup>. Intentionality can be traced back to Aristotle, “who claims to be explicating a saying from Empedocles: ‘Like is known by like’ (*homoia homoiois gignôsketei*)” (Gallagher 62). Within Brentano’s model of intentionality,

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by ... what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, *reference to* a content, *direction toward* an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself ... (Gallagher 63; emphasis added)

As Gallagher notes, intentionality is “the ‘aboutness’ or the ‘directionality’ that is involved in perceiving or knowing anything” (63). Intentionality is also considered as the “mark of the mental” (Gallagher 64). Here, too, Gallagher refers to Brentano:

Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired, and so on. This intentional inexistence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We can, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves. (64)

According to Brentano, intentionality is concerned with two things:

- (1) The aspect of ‘aboutness’ or ‘direction toward an object’; and
- (2) The internal existence of the object perceived, judged, believed, loved, hated, etc. (Gallagher 64)

Husserl acknowledges the first point, stating that “all consciousness is consciousness of something” (Gallagher 64). Intentionality is derived from the Latin term *intendere*, which means to “aim in a particular direction, similar to drawing and aiming a bow at a target”

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<sup>3</sup> This is a Husserlian term and is different from the English word as it is commonly used.



(Gallagher 64). But Husserl takes issue with the second point, in that “perceived object *is itself* the intentional object, and ...we have a direct perceptual access to that object, without any intermediary” (Gallagher 64-65). According to Husserl, when a physical object is perceived, or even when a non-physical object is imagined or conceived, it is imagined *from a certain perspective*. The Husserlian “imaginative variation” comes into play, since it is impossible for two people to perceive the same object from precisely the same angle. As Gallagher notes, “The way I see the palm tree next to my house is not precisely how you see it, since you see it from a different angle from where you stand; the way I think of Hamlet is not precisely how you think of Hamlet, since you’ve played the part and I haven’t” (65-66). This kind of consideration leads Husserl to the concept of *noema*.

In Husserlian phenomenology, intentionality denotes two things simultaneously. First, the intentionality of consciousness means that it is actional in nature: that is, consciousness is always *doing* something. Second, the intentionality of consciousness means that it is referential in nature—that it is always *pointing to* something. In other words, when one perceives, feels, or judges or thinks, her “mental state is *about* or *of* something” (Gallagher 64; emphasis added). The following visual schema (Fig 1) helps explain.

### **Noesis-noema**

As it was mentioned previously, Brentano and Husserl established that “all consciousness is consciousness of something” as the first aspect of intentionality

(Gallagher 67). Moreover, they both believed that intentionality is a “directionality toward something” (Gallagher 68). Husserl rejected Brentano on the second aspect of

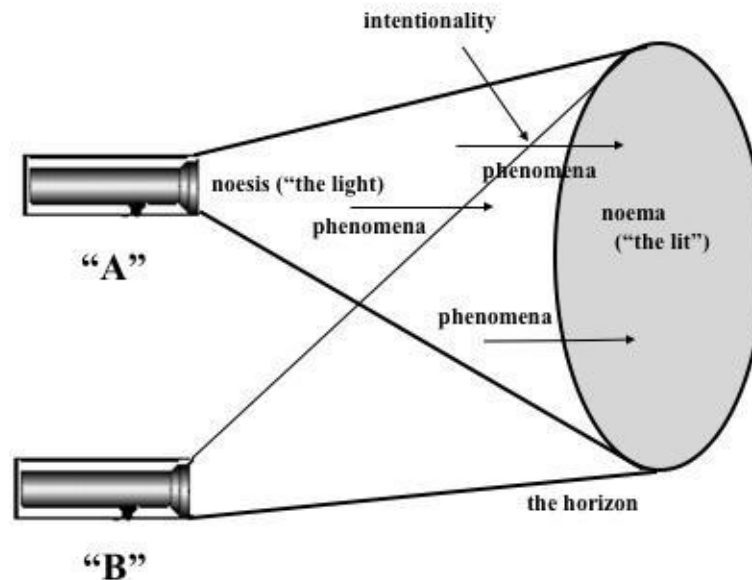


Figure 1. Basic Phenomenological Concepts: Two perspectives of the same phenomena. Retrieved from [webpace.ship.edu/cgboer/qualmethone.html](http://webpace.ship.edu/cgboer/qualmethone.html), and has been edited to fit the purposes of this thesis.

intentionality which, according to Brentano, was the idea that “there is some kind of internal ‘inexisting’ intentional object in the mind” (Gallagher 68). Husserl, however, suggested that “consciousness has a certain structure which can be expressed as ‘consciousness of something as something’” (Gallagher 68). Husserl differs from Brentano in the sense that he analyzes consciousness into two parts. The *noesis* refers to the *act of consciousness* in knowing, whereas the *noema* refers to the object *as structured in consciousness*. The relation between the two is what Husserl calls the noetic-neomatic

correlate. The noetic act of consciousness can stem from memory, imagination or perception (Gallagher 68). Here again, Gallagher sets forth an example:

I can be conscious of the same object in different ways: I can perceive an apple tree, or remember one, or imagine one; I can judge the apple tree to be large; I can dislike the tree because it is blocking my view, etc.... My judgment may be fed by my memory of certain facts (I may remember falling out of an apple tree as a kid); by imagining certain things (e.g., imagining what it would look like if the apple tree were not there); by my dislike of apple trees, etc. likewise, my consciousness of the apple tree has one intentional object—the apple tree. But I am always experiencing the apple tree in a certain way. As perceived, it appears visually from a certain perspective. Like the apple on my desk, I can see the apple tree only from one side at a time, for example, although when I see it from one side I also implicitly see it as having more than one side. If the wind is blowing, or if clouds are interrupting the sunlight, the appearance of the tree is constantly changing. Also, if I move and change my angle of perception, there is a corresponding shift in appearance of the tree. Throughout all of these noematic changes, the intentional object is the same apple tree. Likewise, if I close my eyes and then remember what the apple tree just looked like; or if I imagined what that apple tree would look like in a different place; or if I judged that the apple tree was getting too big—all of these differences would have corresponding noematic changes. The noema is the meaning or sense (German: *Sinn*) that the apple tree has for me as I perceive or remember or judge, etc.—the apple tree as experienced, or as it appears to me. (Gallagher 68-69)

The object is the same in each of these cases, though what makes the experience different is the “character of the act of consciousness directed at it” (Gallagher 68). According to Husserl, “consciousness has this kind of intentional structure, where on one side we have the noetic act (or act of consciousness) and on the other side we have the noematic meaning—the way things are experienced” (Gallagher 69). In the above example, *what* one sees is not the noema, because noema is *how* one sees—the tree “as shimmering in the breeze,” for instance. Hence, as Gallagher notes, “the noema is to be understood neither as an ideal meaning, nor a concept, nor a proposition; it is not an intermediary between subject and object; rather, it is the object precisely *as experienced*” (70).

In sum, Husserlian phenomenology seeks to describe the workings of consciousness within our perception of the object-world. To move from the natural attitude toward the phenomenological and eidetic reduction is a goal of Husserlian method; as an exercise in perspectivism, much of Cubism can be described within the vocabulary outlined above.

## CUBISM

Cubism ... is like standing at a certain point on a mountain and looking around. If you go higher, things will look different; if you go lower, again they will look different. It is a point of view.

—Jacques Lipchitz (qtd. in Van Bork 199)

### **Cubism: A Stylistic and Historical Phenomenon**

Cubism is an early twentieth-century avant-garde art movement which developed between the years 1907 and 1914 and impacted numerous artists, sculptors, musicians, and writers even after its decline from 1914 until about 1925. It was initiated by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso in Paris, and, due to geographical, cultural, and historical reasons, it might never have been anything but a Parisian phenomenon had it not been for the cosmopolitan nature of that city, which attracted artists and writers from Spain, Italy, Germany, and other countries such as Russia and the Low Countries (Fry, *Modern Artist* 11). Therefore, Paris, this cultural mecca, was the center for a gathering of great artistic minds “whose presence constituted an intellectual ‘critical mass’ that soon produced a series of revolutionary cultural explosions,” the first of which was in painting (Fry, *Modern Artist* 12).

Labeled as “Fauvism” and commencing in 1904, the work of Henri Matisse and his followers “used color with unprecedented freedom, intensity and arbitrariness” (Fry, *Modern Artist* 12). Matisse was followed by André Derain and Maurice de Vlaminck in the discovery and admiration of African and Oceanic art, which impacted Cubism briefly.

Fauvism did not develop further than the late nineteenth century and it was, in nature, an expansion of such movements as the pointillism of Signac, “the brilliant coloristic achievements and expressive brushwork of Vincent Van Gogh, and Paul Gauguin’s decorative color patterns” (Fry, *Modern Artist* 12). Matisse’s *Bonheur de Vivre* (*The Joy of life*) (Fig 2), which does not offer any new concept of space or depth, represents the fundamentally representational nature of the Fauvist painting.

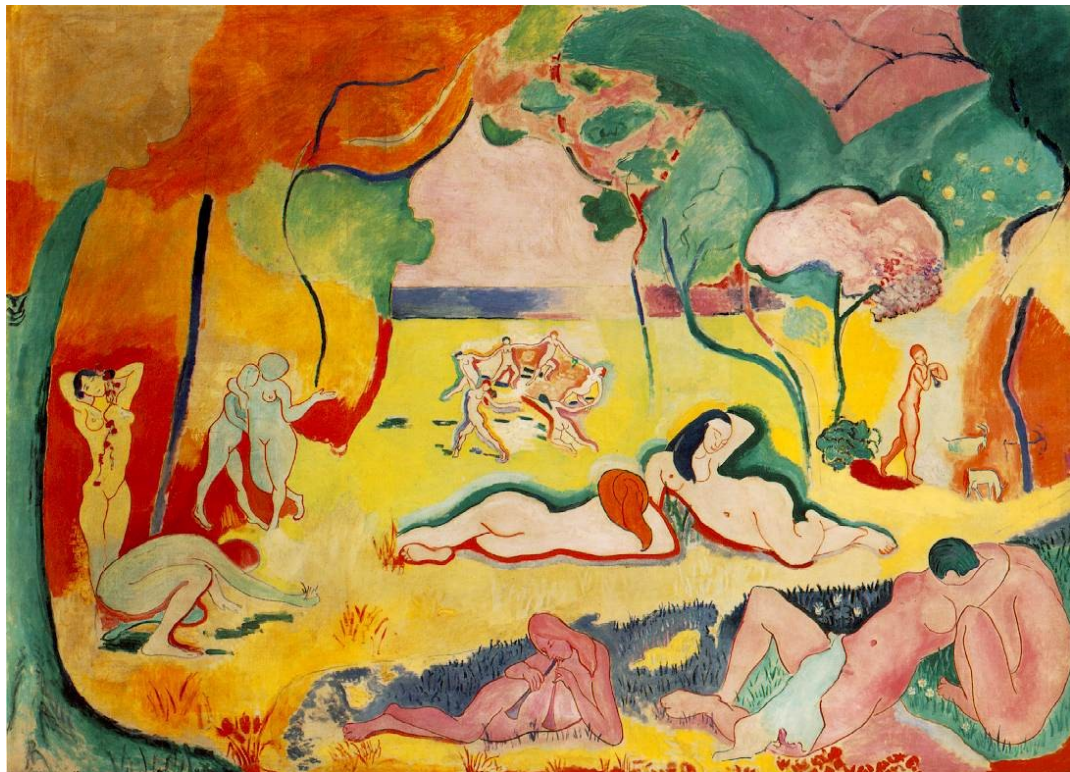


Figure 2. Henri Matisse, *Bonheur de Vivre* (Joy of Life), oil on canvas, 1905-06. The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia. Retrieved from [www.henrimatisse.org/joy-of-life.jsp](http://www.henrimatisse.org/joy-of-life.jsp)

It was in such an artistic background that Pablo Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger* (Fig 3) emerged in 1907, abandoning all known representation of traditional art. Though Picasso’s painting is often described as a further step down the path of



Figure 3. Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.K.)*, 1907, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Retrieved from [www.pablopicasso.org/avignon.jsp](http://www.pablopicasso.org/avignon.jsp)

Fauvism, some critics believe that Picasso was in fact reacting against Matisse's *Bonheur de Vivre* and *Nu Bleu (Blue Nude)*. *Les Femmes d'Alger* embraced new approaches to the concept of space and the expression of emotions and states of mind. *Les Femmes d'Alger*, which is a revolutionary work of art, breaks away from the characteristics of Renaissance painting which followed "the classical norm for the human figure, and the spatial



illusionism of one-point perspective” (Fry, *Modern Artist* 13). Picasso’s new approach to the human figure, which he had been pursuing for a year before completion of the painting, manifests itself “in such details as the reduction of human anatomy to geometrical lozenges and triangles, as well as in the abandonment of normal anatomical proportions” (Fry, *Modern Artist* 13). The influence of African sculpture is strikingly conspicuous in the mask-like faces of the two right-hand figures in the painting. Previously, Picasso had been fascinated by the elongated figures of Doménikos Theotokópoulos—known as El Greco—and by the work of the post-Impressionist painter, Paul Gauguin, but the influence of African sculpture on his *Les Femmes d’Alger* and his later work is indisputable.

What Picasso was after—“the creation of a new system of indicating three-dimensional relationships that would no longer be dependent on the conventions of illusionistic, one point perspective”—had been anticipated by Paul Cezanne, whose work Picasso had observed in various large exhibitions in Paris, beginning in 1904 (Fry, *Modern Artist* 14).

As it was mentioned above, Phenomenology as a new “way of knowing” and Cubism as a new “way of seeing” were twin attempts at re-visioning reality. Andreas Pinotti states, “cubism does *the same* as phenomenology” (Pinotti 64). He adds, “Cubist painting is thus not an object of phenomenology among other objects, but is in itself phenomenological” (64). To explain Pinotti’s point, it is essential to go back to Husserl and his *Ideas*. Husserl develops his ideas around the concept of perception of an object which he connects to *consciousness* and *experience*. According to Husserl, one can never see an entire object all at once. In *Ideas*, he illustrates:



If I remain purely within the realm of seeing, I find new differences arising in very manifold form in the course of any normal seeing.... I express this somewhat in the following way: the pure thing seen that is visible “of” the thing, is first of all a surface, and in the changing course of seeing I see it now from this “side,” now from that, continuously perceiving it from ever different sides. But in them the surface exhibits itself to me in a continuous synthesis; each side is for consciousness a manner of exhibition of it. This implies that, while the surface is immediately given, I mean more than it offers. (*Ideas* 108)

In the preceding passage, Husserl describes the constructivist activity of perception. Later in *Ideas*, he elaborates upon his example:

Keeping this table steadily in view as I go around it, changing my position in space all the time, I have continually the consciousness of the bodily presence out there of this one and self-same table, which in itself remains unchanged throughout. But the perception of the table is one that changes continuously, it is a continuum of changing perceptions. I close my eyes. My other senses are inactive in relation to the table. I have now no perception of it. I open my eyes, and the perception returns. The perception? Let us be more accurate. Under no circumstances does it return to me individually the same. Only the table is the same, known as identical through the synthetic consciousness which connects the new perception with the recollection. (*Ideas* 130)

Though the object remains, one’s perceptions “change continuously” (*Ideas* 130), making each perception a unique experience. Furthermore, one will always see the object from one side, so one can never see an object in its three-dimensionality; rather, the object will be perceived in *single profile*. As an act of imagination, however, the mind supplies the missing/hidden sides. The perceiver “knows” that the (hidden) sides of the object exist because of the “synthetic consciousness, which connects the new perception with the recollection” (*Ideas* 130). It is this synthetic consciousness that aids one’s recollection of the existence of the entirety (all the sides of the object) that makes the complete mental *Gestalt* of the object possible.

As mentioned, Cubism contributes to modernism a way of seeing that brings into practice the Husserlian phenomenological attitude. Taking Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)* as evidence, the painting depicts five nude ladies who are "constructed" out of geometrical lozenges and triangles. The right-hand figure is depicted in a seated position with her back to the viewer, but Picasso's painting illustrates her full figure. By constructing an image of three-dimensionality within a two-dimensional space, Picasso enacts the Husserlian "synthetic consciousness," which takes the backside of the figure and brings it to the forefront. According to Husserl, the viewer is not capable of seeing the figure in its entirety all at once, so the synthetic consciousness completes that image in one's mind.

Prior to Cubism, painters were constantly in search of a way to create the illusion of a three-dimensional space. Linear perspective and tonal gradation were among the techniques they used. Linear perspective is "a system of creating an illusion of depth on a flat surface. All parallel lines (orthogonals) in a painting or drawing using this system converge in a single vanishing point on the composition's horizon line" ("Linear Perspective"). Similarly, tonal gradation in art is a "visual technique of gradually transitioning from one colour hue to another, or from one shade to another, or one texture to another. Space, distance, atmosphere, volume, and curved or rounded forms are some of the visual effects created with gradation" (Martin 36). By making objects bigger and much clearer when they are close-up, and smaller and less clear when they are further away, a painter can create the illusion of space. Similarly, painters can use tones (shadows) to create this illusion.

However, Cubists believed that the so-called “illusion of space” does not offer a very faithful image of reality—that is, it does not remain loyal to the physicality and spatiality of the object-world. Therefore, they attempted to provide a more real, accurate, and complete portrayal of an object, person, or landscape. The Cubist painter represents an object from various angles by “building it” out of flat geometric shapes. This approach displays the object from different sides simultaneously. Though it reduces three-dimensional reality to a two-dimensional construct, still it represents a synthesis of perspectives.

There are two phases of Cubism: analytical Cubism and synthetic Cubism. During the analytical phase, painters would (as the name suggests) analyze—in effect, “cut up” or take apart—the subject matter (whether an object, person, or landscape) in an attempt to provide a genuine and precise picture of its components. Having observed the subject closely, they would then show it using flat geometric shapes, lines, planes, and angles, eliminating one dimension and reinforcing the two-dimensional quality. In this early phase, Cubist painters used almost no tonal differentiation, so there would be no highly dark or highly light colors. Emphasizing muted tones, such as black, grey and ochre and the like, this analytical phase lasted until 1912. The austerity and gloominess of this phase gave place to the brighter colors and simpler lines and shapes of the synthetic phase around 1912. Cubists began using collage alongside paint to add texture to their work. Instead of portraying an object in its real shape, they would envisage a new structural relations between components and, by doing so, they would create a novel representation in the form of collage. This made extreme room for creativity and invention of unique approaches to painting.

In August 1925, Faulkner arrived in Paris, “that merry childish sophisticated cold-blooded dying city to which Cezanne was dragged by his friends like a reluctant cow, where Degas and Manet fought obscure points of color and line and love, cursing Bougereau [*sic*] and his curved pink female flesh, where Matisse and Picasso yet painted” (Blotner 162-63). Faulkner’s preoccupation with art movements, especially the works of Cezanne and Cubists is evident in the letters he sent home.

Similar to Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, and multiple other modernist writers, William Faulkner experimented with verbal and narrative techniques in his novels and short stories. He began to draw and sketch at the same time as he wrote stories and composed poems. It is significant to note that, like Sherwood Anderson, Herman Hesse, D.H. Lawrence, and Henry Miller—all who practiced both writing and drawing or painting simultaneously—Faulkner experimented with both drawing and writing.

Encouraged by his two brilliant mentors, Sherwood Anderson and William Spratling, Faulkner had considered studying art and a future career in painting before dedicating himself thoroughly to writing. Faulkner’s adroit mentor, William Spratling, was an American artist and silver-designer whose effort and influence rekindled the native silver craft. Since Spratling had been to the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, he had thorough exposure to the Modern European arts, which he conveyed to Faulkner; in his further advice to Faulkner, he recommended that the young American educate himself prior to his European expedition.

As mentioned above, the aim of this thesis is not to provide a phenomenological reading per se, but to demonstrate the correlation between Phenomenology and Cubism.

Both offer new ways of seeing and, as such, beg comparison to Faulkner's novelistic techniques in *The Sound and The Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. As Andrea Pinotti notes, "the real point ... does not consist in a phenomenological interpretation of cubism ... but rather in the hypothesis that cubism does the same as phenomenology" (64). He refers to Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger's *Du Cubism*, which defines multiperspectivity as "the simultaneous representation of the object in its various aspects that would be offered to perception only successively, gained through a rotation of the object or of the subject around the object" (Pinotti 64). By this illuminating observation, Gleizes and Jean Metzinger provide a more or less accurate account of how Cubism takes Phenomenology and puts its theory into practice.

As previously discussed, in his *Ideas* and through the development of his phenomenological methods and ideas, Husserl provides a striking illustration of how one perceives an object. It is the act of consciousness that makes the object appear as a unity: so even though one does not perceive the entire object, she synthesizes it imaginatively, thereby maintaining its integrity as a multi-sided phenomenon. What Husserl explains is what Picasso sought after: "the creation of a new system of indicating three-dimensional relationships that would no longer be dependent on the conventions of illusionistic, one-point perspective" (Fry, *Modern Artist* 14). The Cubists attempted to bring into vision the entire object so the observer can see the object in its entirety.

Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* both function analogously to Husserlian Phenomenology and the Cubists' idea of perception. The novels' fragmented structures and multiple narrators work in such a way as to synthesize the few events Faulkner has chosen to recount. Furthermore, by devoting individual

sections to each character, Faulkner provides accounts of each character's different point of view, similar to what Husserl explains about each person's different experiences. To provide an aide-memoire, according to his phenomenological reduction, when one perceives an object, what one experiences is unique; so even if one observes the same object repeatedly, each of her experiences is different from the previous ones. In the following chapter, this thesis will provide examples of this larger correlation between Cubist perspectivism, Husserlian Phenomenology, and Faulknerian experiments in structure.

## FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*

In . . . modernist novel[,] the attention turns inward to the movements of the protagonist's minds and consequently the external world is presented as a fragmented perception through a series of overlapping interior impressions.

—Maria Teresa Cabrera, “Benjy’s Memory and Desire” (1)

Written and published in 1929, *The Sound and The Fury* is Faulkner’s fourth published novel. Set in Jefferson, Mississippi, the novel is built out of four separate, distinct narratives, each belonging to a different member of the Compsons, a family of former Southern aristocrats who are struggling with the dissolution of their family and its reputation. The title of the novel is taken from Macbeth’s soliloquy in Act V, Scene V of William Shakespeare’s tragedy, *Macbeth*:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing. (5.5.19-28)

The title is appropriate, given that a section of *The Sound and The Fury* is indeed “told by an idiot” (*SF* 5.5.26-27), Benjy. By describing life as a “tale,” Shakespeare’s Macbeth hits on a popular modernist theme: in place of objective “history,” Faulkner gives his readers competing narratives. Whether these narratives “signify” anything beyond “sound” and “fury” is debatable. Before literary modernism, novels were typically

narrated from a singular point-of-view, sometimes first-person, sometimes third-person. This unified presentation can be compared to the vanishing-point perspective of classical painting: the visual composition is designed to be viewed from one single, privileged standpoint. (To view the artwork from any other standpoint creates visual distortions.) By fragmenting the “family history” of the Compsons into four distinct narratives by four distinct narrators, Faulkner builds a sort of Cubist multiperspectivism into the novel’s structure.

The novel was initially criticized for its untraditional structure. Eventually, as readers became more familiar with modernist techniques, Faulkner’s experimentations in structure won much-deserved praise. The stream-of-consciousness technique, which was initially practiced by European modernist writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, emphasizes the subjectivity of experience—which, as it moves associatively from moment to moment, captures fragments of the object-world. More than interpret, Faulkner’s reader must *construct* the multi-layered plot imaginatively, walking around its multi-perspectives. In this sense, reading Faulkner resembles the Husserlian “eidetic reduction,” which relies on memory and imagination to synthesize disparate perceptions. Though the whole is never “objectively” present to the reader/perceiver, the perceiver nonetheless builds a *Gestalt*, however subjective and fleeting, out of shifting standpoints.

Following Husserlian Phenomenology, each of Faulkner’s characters has a unique way of perceiving the object-world. Therefore, the uniqueness of each individual rests in the uniqueness of his or her *experience*—his or her ways of being “in the world.” Each narrator’s perspective in *The Sound and The Fury* is individual, subjective, and expressive of his or her unique character. This chapter’s focus will be on Benjy



Compson's subjective *experience* and *unique* perception of the object-world. Also, there will be an exploration of the techniques of "cast shadow" and the multiplication of perspectives in Benjy's narration.

As Leon Edel describes it, Benjy's section requires a new way of reading, one that gives up chronology and causality in narrative—the stuff of traditional "realism." Benjy's section is nonlinear, and the reader should attempt to experience Benjy's consciousness as it is presented. Edel writes, "Indeed, when an author elects to tell us a story in this fashion, it would seem logical to follow him in his premises and not to construct new ones. In accepting the material in its scrambled state and seeking to understand it, we are invited by Faulkner to place ourselves *within the angle of vision* or perception of Benjy; we are involved with point of view" (164; emphasis added). Though Edel is unaware of the Phenomenology underlying this description, his reference to Benjy's unique "angle of vision" accords with the Husserlian eidetic reduction. In other words, our task is to experience the world as Benjy experiences it; in which case, our own fragmented perceptions are privileged over our attempts at meaning-making (that is, at rendering Benjy's narrative into a coherent, "realist" world-picture). From a Husserlian perspective, it is not the meaning but, rather, the *experience* of Benjy's world that readers are to strive for.

The novel begins with the narration of Benjy, who is the thirty-three-year-old, mentally-handicapped son of the Compsons. Benjy's section has the most convoluted narration, not due merely to the complicated vocabulary and sentence structures, but due to the narrative techniques that Faulkner employs in the writing of this section. Some of these techniques—like stream of consciousness, dislocation of time and space, and

repetition—belong to the artistry of the novel, while others, like “cast shadow,” belong to surrealist art.

It’s curious to consider the possibility that Benjy’s consciousness comes closest to pure perception—what Husserl calls the Phenomenological reduction—in transcending the “prison house” of language. Unfettered by abstraction and prejudgment, his perceptions come as raw sensual data. More than other characters, his experiences commune closely with the object-world. Still, the concreteness of his experience comes at a price: lacking language, Benjy remains “trapped” in his own subjectivity.

By its visual nature, painting privileges concrete perception over linguistic abstraction. Simonides of Ceos’s expression that “Painting is mute poetry” (qtd. from Plutarch, *Moralia* (346 f) in Jean Hagstrum 10) reinforces this point beautifully; as Leonardo da Vinci famously stated, “Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen.” Taken literally, these artists declare the epistemology of eyesight: the eye has its own “ways of knowing” that exceed language.

Benjy’s section does not provide any evidence of him communicating through words with other characters, and that might have been the reason some critics refer to him as deaf and dumb. Benjy might be mute throughout the story, but Faulkner portrays him through other means of communication. The “words” constituting Benjy’s section are, in Husserlian terms, “bracketed.” They stand in the place of raw perception. That is, we are meant to look “through” the words, and not “at” them. To achieve the Phenomenological reduction implicit in Benjy’s perceptions, we must “translate” his words into the bright color-palette of a Fauvist painter. For Benjy’s consciousness presents the object-world as a moving canvas of bright colors and shapes.

Again, Faulkner is helping readers experience the object-world in a manner evocative of Husserl's Phenomenological reduction.

### **Benjy's Artistic Vision**

It is presumable that Faulkner was acquainted with art movements such as Dadaism and Surrealism, for which Cubism was a source of inspiration. Around 1912, after Cubism had completed its development and began its decline, several other movements arose to join it and, eventually, take its place. Born in Zurich in 1916, Dadaism was an avant-garde art movement developed in reaction to World War I. Not surprisingly, the work of Dadaists challenged the reigning aesthetics of art; and, following in the steps of other artists of the time, Dadaists published a collection of their principles in Hugo Ball's 1916 *Dada Manifesto*. Even though Dadaism had come to an end by 1920, its participants joined, and brought many Dadaist elements to, the Surrealist Movement, which was pioneered by Andre Breton. In 1924—the year before Faulkner's arrival in Paris—Breton published *Le Manifeste du Surréalisme* in the French capitol city.

Dadaism and Surrealism remained popular, due to their practitioners' involvement in Parisian social gatherings, demonstrations, and soirees. As mentioned above, Faulkner began as a graphic artist, and, therefore, he would have been keenly interested in the French *avant-garde* art movements, namely Cubism, Dadaism, Futurism, and Vorticism. Curiously, their influence would be felt in his fiction more than in his graphic art. Faulkner's drawings followed the accepted and traditional rules of representational art, which had been scorned by the practitioners of these new movements. In a letter to his

mother dated September 21, Faulkner wrote, “And Cezanne! That man dipped his brush in light like Tobe Caruthers would dip his in red lead to paint a lamp-post” (*Selected Letters* 47). Faulkner’s description suggests an excessive piling-on of paint that calls attention to its texture on canvas. It is the raw, sensuous effect, rather than the illusionist subject, that caught Faulkner’s eye.

Richard P. Adams cites a 1958 interview, which emphasizes the impact of Cézanne, Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism on Faulkner. In the interview, Kraige Klosson asked Faulkner

to comment on the theory of a critic "who is of the opinion that on your first trip to France you became familiar with the works of several of the French impressionists, and especially Cézanne, and who has found a similarity in your use of color in your books and Cézanne's use of color in his paintings." Faulkner said, "I think that criticism probably has a great deal of merit in it. As I was saying before, a writer remembers everything he ever reads or ever sees and then when he needs it, he draws upon his memory and uses it." Mr. Klosson pressed for a more definite statement: "Then, Sir, when you were in Paris you did go to the art galleries and did [you] see and remember the paintings of Cézanne?" Faulkner said, "Yes, that's right." (qtd. in Branch 46-47)

What Adams refers to here is not Cézanne’s use of color *per se*, but, rather, to his manner of “laying on patches of color” on canvas, “until the forms emerged” (qtd. in Branch 47). This was a method which involved the viewer equally as the painter, since it demanded that the viewer “enter into the process of constructing the picture along with the painter, to recapitulate and bring to life the painter’s experience of the scene” (Branch 47). Therefore, while the overall structure of Faulkner’s novel has strongest resemblance to Cubism, Faulkner’s imagery—particularly in Benjy’s section—draws locally on other art movements, such as Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Futurism, and Vorticism (Hönnighausen 559).

In 1924, the poet and critic André Breton published *The Surrealist Manifesto*. As he described this movement, “surrealism was a means of reuniting conscious and unconscious realms of experience so completely that the world of dream and fantasy would be joined to the everyday rational world in ‘an absolute reality, a surreality’” (“Surrealism”). Benjy’s inability to distinguish mirrored-reflected-shadowed images from concrete objects makes for a further complexity in perception. While his experience of the natural world remains largely Fauvist, his engagements with other humans (and with himself as a shadow-casting human) make for Surrealist effects. In Benjy’s section, the terms “shadow,” “window,” “mirror,” and “shapes” recur. First, it is suggestive in his narration that Benjy perceives shadows “surrealistically,” since he observes them walk independently of the object (whether human or natural) to which they are bound: “The flower tree by the parlor window wasn’t dark, but the thick trees were. The grass was buzzing in the moonlight where my shadow walked on the grass” (*SF* 46). Benjy puts it as though he considers his shadow a separate human being: “We went along the brick walk, with our shadows. The pig pen smelled like pigs. The cow stood in the lot, chewing at us. Dan howled” (*SF* 35). He insists, “Our shadows moved, but Dan’s shadow didn’t move except to howl when he did” (*SF* 35). Benjy claims, “We went down the steps, where our shadows were,” as though they and their shadows are separate individuals, and their shadows have been anticipating them down the steps rather than accompanying them. In another part, Benjy observes: “Our shadows were on the grass. They got to the trees before we did. Mine got there first. Then we got there, and then the shadows were gone. There was a flower in the bottle. I put the other flower in it” (*SF* 54). This descriptive technique recalls the 1962 Surrealist painting by Remedios

Varo, titled *Fenomeno* (Fig 4), which might make the understanding of Faulkner's personification easier.

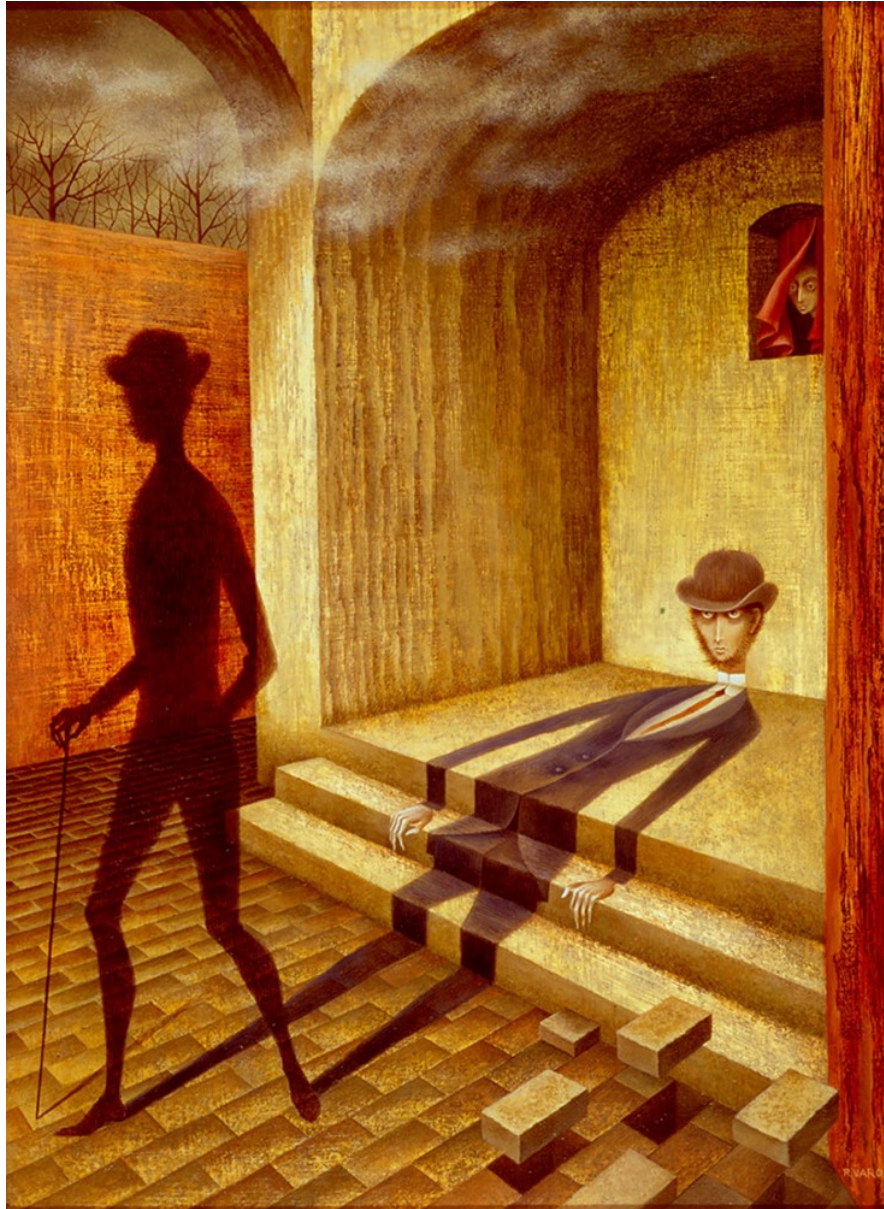


Figure 4. Remedios Varo, *Fenomeno*. 1962, oil on masonite, private collection. This painting is retrieved from <http://remedios-varo.com/obras-remedios-varo/decada-1960/fenomeno-1962/>

In Varo's painting, since each individual (the man and his shadow) are separate beings, their perceptions and experiences are also unique and separate from each other. This makes for a Surrealist variation on Husserl's Phenomenological reduction, since both the man and his shadow will have different angles of seeing.

In another passage, Benjy observes:

"Caddy." Father said. Jason was crying. He wasn't fighting anymore, but we could see Caddy fighting in the mirror and Father put me down and went into the mirror and fought too. He lifted Caddy up. She fought. Jason lay on the floor, crying. He had the scissors in his hand. Father held Caddy. "He cut up all Benjy's dolls." Caddy said. "I'll slit his gizzel." "Candace." Father said. "I will." Caddy said. "I will." She fought. Father held her. She kicked at Jason. He rolled into the corner, out of the mirror. Father brought Caddy to the fire. They were all out of the mirror. Only the fire was in it. Like the fire was in a door. (SF 64-65)

This part of Benjy's section combines Cubist and Surrealist effects. First, from where he stands, and *from the angle he looks*, "we could see Caddy fighting in the mirror" (SF 65).

When Benjy states, "Father went into the mirror and fought too," he has effectively doubled the images of these figures, seeing them both front-and-back. (Such is the effect of observing figures that stand in front of a mirror.) When Caddy kicks Jason, "He [rolls] into the corner, out of the mirror," and it is as though Jason exits the frame of perception—as if he had truly been "inside" the mirror physically, rather than merely a surface image. As Benjy perceives it, the mirror multiplies perspectives—like a cubist painting. It also, for Benjy, provides a substitute reality—a surreality.

In another part of the first fragment of the novel, Benjy describes: "There was a fire. It was rising and falling on the walls. There was another fire in the mirror, I could smell the sickness" (SF 61). From where he stands, Benjy sees two fires instead of one and counts the reflection of the fire as a second real fire. Another character would not have the same perception, but for Benjy, *there are two fires*.

The technique of visual repetition has long been practiced by painters, illustrators, and sculptors. In the same way, Cubists used repetition as a technique, and what appeared in the works of Pablo Picasso, George Braque, and Juan Gris was subsequently practiced by writers such as Gertrude Stein, who “wrote portraits or still lives of people, groups or things repeating words and sentences over and over again with small variations or gradual modulations (Steidele 149). Writing of Stein’s *Book Concluding With As A Wife Has A Cow: A Love Story*, Angela Steidele argues that Stein “circles her subject and defines it in a way analogous to the analytic Cubist’s presentation of an object from successive points of view” (Steidele 149). Stein exhausts her narration with the employment of endless repetitions. As in modernist painting, repetition multiplies perspectives in Benjy’s section of *The Sound and The Fury*.

At the beginning of Benjy’s section, Caddy insists, “Keep your hands in your pockets, Caddy said. Or they’ll get froze. You don’t want your hands froze on Christmas, do you” (*SF* 5). Variations of the same sentence are repeated on different pages by other characters, as well. Also, at the beginning of his narration, Benjy claims:

I could hear Queenie's feet and the bright shapes went smooth and steady on both sides, the shadows of them flowing across Queenie's back. They went on like the bright tops of wheels. Then those on one side stopped at the tall white post where the soldier was. But on the other side they went on smooth and steady, but a little slower. (*SF* 11)

The preceding paragraph has a parallel in Dilsey’s section:

Ben's voice roared and roared. Queenie moved again, her feet began to clop-clop steadily again, and at once Ben hushed. Luster looked quickly back over his shoulder, then he drove on. The broken flower drooped over Ben's fist and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and facade flowed smoothly once more from left to right, post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place. (*SF* 320-21)



The repetition of words and images makes it appear as though the novel sits between two mirrors, each reflecting the other. This mirroring occurs between other Faulkner's characters as well, such as between Quentin Compson and Darl Bundren, Benjy and Vardaman, Caddy and Addie, and Mr. Compson and Anse.

While examples can be multiplied, the analyses above should demonstrate that *The Sound and the Fury* incorporates a variety of artistic techniques drawn from Fauvism, Surrealism, and, Cubism. This, in itself, is a point worth making. Of equal importance is the effect of these techniques upon Faulkner's readers: just as avant-garde artists reconstruct the world visually, so Husserlian Phenomenology seeks to reconstruct our human perceptions and experience. The life-worlds of Faulkner's narrators differ, because their "ways of knowing" differ. And, in reading, we experience *their* life-worlds from within our own. For instance, Benjy observes: "We went down the steps, where our shadows were" (*SF* 35). Here we, as readers, are placed inside two perspectivist frames, both Benjy's and his shadow's. From where he stands—above the stairs—Benjy *cannot* see things from the same angle as his personified shadow. Yet we, as readers and imaginative viewers of this scene, have access to both perspectives. And, because we can *synthesize* our own experiences phenomenologically, we achieve a multi-perspectivist attitude that the characters themselves cannot reach.

Faulkner continues his modernist-art experimentations in his fifth novel, *As I Lay Dying*—the subject to which this thesis now turns.

## *AS I LAY DYING*

This fragmentary structure is the core of Faulkner's novelistic vision, describing a world of broken orders, a world in which the meetings of men and words need to be imagined again.

—Donald M. Kartiganer, *The Fragile Thread* (xiii)

[By] repeating geometric designs—lines and circles, verticals and horizontals—Faulkner actually facets, like a cubist painting, the design of this book. That is why it is so difficult to speak of theme in *As I Lay Dying*. Here we have a work of fiction that comes remarkably close to being an exercise in pure design, a true tour de force, a cubist novel.

—Panthea Reid Broughton, "Faulkner's Cubist Novels" (93)

Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* begins: "Jewel and I come up from the field, following the path in single file. Although I am fifteen feet ahead of him, anyone watching us from the cotton house can see Jewel's frayed and broken straw hat a full head above my own" (3). These opening sentences embody the perspectivism explored in previous chapters. By referencing the distance between himself and Jewel, Darl Bundren briefly invites a side-angle view, one that observes the space of fifteen feet that separates them. Darl is himself imagining the distance. As he walks, he looks ahead but imagines what is behind him; at the same time, he calls attention to (and, thus, is aware of) the path on either side. The world that he walks in is three-dimensional, though he can only *imagine* (in Husserlian terms, *conserve*) what appears behind him. But then, in his imagination, he takes himself out of his own synthetic, spatial experience and creates another perception entirely. He imagines himself as seen from another viewpoint—by another person, an

“anyone,” up ahead in the cotton house. What that outside viewer “can see” is, in effect, a modernist image: a flattening of space from three to two dimensions, with Darl and Jewel fused into a single, surrealist image. Flattening out the physical distance that separates Jewel’s head from his own, Darl imagines their heads as if stacked on a totem pole.

It is thematically significant that the novel opens with a “painterly” perception that multiplies visual angles and perspectives. Darl sees from one viewpoint, the path and cotton house straight ahead of him; he conserves or imagines another viewpoint, of Jewel walking behind; and he constructs a third viewpoint, of himself and Jewel being observed by another person. Phenomenology is the study of phenomena—that is, of “appearances.” For Husserl, the viewer constructs the object-world out of an active synthesis of primarily visual perceptions and imaginings. In offering to read Faulkner phenomenologically, this thesis makes no claims that Faulkner had direct knowledge of Husserl or of other existential/ phenomenological studies. After all, Husserl’s philosophy seeks to describe *what actually happens* when people experience the object-world. By describing the means to achieve the “transcendental attitude,” his method *seeks to refine* people’s experience by reawakening and enriching perception; but, basically, Husserl is providing a vocabulary to describe people’s “ways of knowing.” Hence, a phenomenological reading of Faulkner (or of any modern novelist) uses the Husserlian vocabulary to highlight the perceptions and experiences of literary characters and the ways they construct those experiences into coherent life-worlds. Characters’ life-worlds will be unique, because their experiences will be unique.

Additionally, Faulkner invites this sort of reading through his awareness of modernist art; as mentioned in previous chapters, the visual arts put into practice what

Phenomenology presents in theory. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to demonstrate Faulkner's acquaintance with modernist-art movements, particularly Cubism and Surrealism. Though *As I Lay Dying* follows *The Sound and the Fury* chronologically, these works belong to the same period in Faulkner's literary development: *The Sound and the Fury* was published in 1929, while *As I Lay Dying* was composed in 1929 and published the year following. This chapter surveys criticism on the latter novel, which incorporates modernist-art techniques into several characters' perceptions. As critics attest, *As I Lay Dying* makes bold thematic use of modernist art; for this reason, it helps reinforce claims made in the previous chapter. Though the focus here remains on criticism pertaining to Faulkner's modernist-art techniques generally, some original character-analysis (particularly with respect to Vardaman's Surrealist imagination) will be offered.

Written in only six weeks in 1929 and published in 1930, William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* recounts the story of the Bundrens, who live on a rural farm in Mississippi in the 1920s. The story is narrated by fifteen characters over fifty-nine chapters. The title of the novel is derived from Book XI of Homer's *Odyssey*, where Agamemnon speaks to Odysseus: "As I lay dying, the woman with the dog's eyes would not close my eyes as I descended into Hades" (566). The story narrates the Bundrens' journey to bury their dead mother.

Later in the novel, Darl Bundren makes specific reference to Cubism: "The front, the conical façade with the square orifice of doorway broken only by the square squat shape of the coffin on the sawhorses like a cubist bug, comes into relief" (*AILD* 219). As Watson G. Branch notes, Darl's description creates a "cubist painting by reducing the

three-dimensional barn to geometric shapes—conical and square—flattened to the two-dimensional surface of the façade with the coffin and sawhorses brought up to the plane of the empty doorway” (117). Branch elaborates:

Darl often exhibits specific Cubist techniques in the verbal constructs by which he expresses his view of the world: geometric patterns of juxtaposed forms, multiple points of view, collages, emphasis on two-dimensional surface rather than three-dimensional depth, and dislocation and disorientation of forms in space. (Branch 48)

In his study of Darl Bundren’s character, Watson G. Branch contends that Darl’s experience “in France at the war” exposed him to Cubism, which then shapes his imagination:

First, the war showed Darl absurd and wasteful death (and, by extension, absurd and wasteful life) on a scale unimaginable to him had he remained at home in Yoknapatawpha County. Second, the exposure to contemporary movements in the plastic arts—especially Cubism, which had been prevalent in Paris for a decade before American soldiers got there—provided Darl with a mode for conceiving reality commensurate to the disorientation he felt. (42)

The war experience had traumatized Darl, slowly eroding his sanity. Branch quotes

Ronald Sutherland in this regard:

Darl has been overseas during the World War, which undoubtedly played havoc with his sensitive nature, broadening his awareness and deepening his sensibilities, creating a problem of readjustment to the temporarily forgotten crudeness of home life—a grotesque kind of crudeness which the atmosphere of the novel vividly impresses upon the reader. It is significant that Faulkner had Darl avoid mention of the war until the last, when, on the train to Jackson, he is rapidly losing his grips on sanity and is speaking of himself in the third person. (Sutherland 543-44; qtd. in Branch 43-44)

In sum, Darl’s exposure to European art in France provided him with a “source for certain imagery—imagery that is the major qualitative feature that sets his language apart from that of the other characters” (Branch 44).

One might add that Darl retreats into Cubism as a mental escape from the traumas of life past and present. By framing his suffering, Darl’s Cubism describes a desperate

artistry. As Lothar Hönnighausen notes, “Darl, *a persona of the artist*, often adopts a painterly view of the reality he so obsessively registers” (560; emphasis added).

Hönnighausen is right. However, Darl’s artistry is symptomatic of the man’s mental fragmentation, suffering, and breakdown. It is his own shattered world that Darl frames within the cold two-dimensionality of Cubist shapes. There is, perhaps, a paradox in Faulkner’s use of Cubism, in that *there is no healing* through its constructs. Darl’s “painterly view” (Hönnighausen 560) does not bring him more concretely “into the world.” Rather, it marks his alienation and mental isolation.

Alienation, isolation, and fragmentation do not belong to Darl alone; these are features of the “modernist condition” that artists contemporary to Faulkner sought to explore and exploit—and, often, to critique. In his 1919 book, *Quelques Intentions du Cubisme*, Maurice Raynal offered Cubism as a way of “knowing” that frees itself from extraneous details:

To conceive an object is, in fact, to aim at knowing it in its essence, at representing it in the mind ... as purely as possible, as a sign, as a totem if you like, absolutely free of all the useless details such as its aspects—accidental factors which are too numerous and too changeable. (Raynal 152; qtd. in Tucker 395)

As describes it, the Cubist artist structures perception by a process of mental reduction. In

his book, *The Moment of Cubism*, John Berger explains:

[The cubists] reduced forms to a combination of cubes, cones, cylinders—or, later, to arrangements of flatly articulated facets or planes with sharp edges—so that the elements of one form were interchangeable with another, whether a hill, a woman, a violin, a carafe, a table or a hand. Thus, as against the Cubist discontinuity of space, they created a continuity of structure. (Berger 28)

It is John Tucker’s contention that Faulkner applied this same “visual logic” to the structure of narrative (396).

As Tucker notes, the journey of the Bundrens to Jefferson to bury their mother is not a single story, but a recounting of experience by multiple narrators, each with its distinctive “textual voice” (393):

Textual voice is not subordinate to representation. At the same time that the novel disrupts mimetic voices and thus calls our attention to them as voices, it insists on its identity as a text. In *As I Lay Dying* voices (mimetic and textual) are constantly breaking the novel's perceptual “surface” (the print we see, the language we recognize, the speakers we “hear”) into unexpected discursive planes, the way a cubist painting shatters representational images so that the painting can assert the image of itself. (Ross 308)

There is a paradox here, in that the Cubist “image” achieves its unity by “shatter[ing]” the sorts of shifting temporal perceptions fostered by traditional, “representational” art. Thus, when Tucker writes that “the novel *as a whole* exhibits specific cubist techniques” (391; emphasis added), the “whole” that he references consists of a series of textual fragments whose descriptions become arrested or frozen within or “dissolved” into abstract geometric frames, shapes, and attitudes.

As Darryl Hattenhauer observes, “the geometric spatial abstractions in *As I Lay Dying* inform the setting and the plot,” while “the spatiality of setting and plot in turn shape the characters” (146). In effect, Faulkner’s modernist narrative technique reduces characters (or reduces his narrators’ *perceptions* of characters, *themselves* often included) to *objets d’art*. Addie rests in death, metamorphized into her coffin (*AILD* 88); Jewel and Gillespie stand “like two figures in a Greek frieze” (*AILD* 221); Darl watches his brother as he “crosses the floor in four strides with the rigid gravity of a cigar store Indian” (*AILD* 4). Similar Cubist object-reductions recur throughout the narrative. Remaining paragraphs will sample several of the visual techniques by means of which Faulkner achieves these effects.

Darryl Hattenhauer asserts that “the circle is associated with death” (146) in this novel. He offers several examples. When Addie dies, Darl describes “her eyes ... like two candles when you watch them gutter down into the sockets of iron candle-sticks” (*AILD* 8). When Vardaman witnesses Addie’s death his head, eyes, and mouth are described in circular shapes. Later on, Darl represents Vardaman as being “round and his eyes round and his mouth beginning to open” (*AILD* 47). In the same way, after Addie’s death, Tull describes Vardaman “look[ing] at [him], his eyes round and black in the middle like when you throw a light in a owl’s face” (*AILD* 70). Vardaman, who is traumatized by his mother’s death, attempts to save Addie by carving round holes in her coffin. In his despair, Vardaman repeatedly observes buzzards “in little tall black circles on the sky” (*AILD* 197). Ironically, Addie is the center that holds the Bundrens together—or, in Eric Sundquist’s words, “the center that no longer holds” (31). In sum, the Bundren brothers are depicted within circular imagery. One might say that they long for circles: Vardaman longs for a toy train that goes in circles, and Cash demands a “graphophone” that plays in circles.

However, the most significant geometric abstraction in *As I Lay Dying* is the “interplay of verticals and horizontals” (Hattenhauer 147). The most familiar example of “verticality transformed into horizontality” is the tree, since “Addie’s coffin and the wagon that carries it are both images of trees turned into horizontal planks” (Hattenhauer 147). Indeed, the description of Addie’s coffin contains a Cubist pictogram. Tull observes:



They had laid her in it reversed. Cash made it clock-shape, like this with every joint and seam as a drum and neat as head to foot so it



bevelled and scrubbed with the plane, tight a sewing basket, and they had laid her in it wouldn't crush her dress. (*AILD* 88)

Citing Raynal's comment—that "cubism attempts through simplification to eliminate the changeable"—Tucker analyzes Addie's reduction to the "status of totem" (396). Laid in the coffin, Addie becomes a "polyhedron, a form utterly protean, an angular seed or egg seething with perverse life and eager for metempsychosis," "a cubistic bug" (Tucker 396).

In addition to these Cubist object-reductions, Faulkner makes allusions to sculpture. Such descriptions as "the square squat shape of the coffin on the sawhorses like a cubistic bug" (*AILD* 219) and "running against the glare like that figure cut from tin" (*AILD* 221) move from the two-dimensional canvas to three-dimensional compositions of wood and metal. When Dewey Dell looks down at her mother's face, "it is like a casting of fading bronze upon the pillow" (*AILD* 51). Lothar Hönninghausen notes other sculptural effects, like Darl's observation of Jewel and his horse: "Save for Jewel's legs they are like two figures carved for a tableau savage in the sun" (*AILD* 12). Continuing the Cubist emphasis, Tucker compares Jewel's relationship with his horse to Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*. Depicting a "sexual-filial relation, the wooden Jewel [is] borne into the windy heights of Anse's farm by a wooden horse" (Tucker 398).

While Tucker's interpretation makes sense, another possible influence can be found in Surrealism. Where, one might ask, are the circles and planes in the following

fantastical description? Jewel's horse reacts to a whistle, "moving that quick his coat, bunching, tongues swirling like so many flames":

When Jewel can almost touch him, the horse stands on his hind legs and slashes down at Jewel. Then Jewel is enclosed by a glittering maze of hooves as by an illusion of wings; among them, beneath the up-reared chest, he moves with the flashing limberness of a snake. For an instant before the jerk comes onto his arms he sees his whole body earth-free, horizontal, whipping snake-limber, until he finds the horse's nostrils and touches earth again. (*AILD* 12)

Critics like Tucker err, perhaps, in ascribing too much to Cubism and too little to Surrealism. Cubism may "shatter" the natural perspectives and hidden sides of the object-world, but it is not known for fantastic metamorphoses, as described above. The horse raises up and, in an instant, grows "an illusion" of Pegasus "wings," and then, an instant later, shows the "flashing limberness of a snake." This is more than Cubism.

Hönninghausen argues that Faulkner employs synaesthesia "to dissolve the traditionally holistic picture of reality into the perception of details and to dramatize" through the viewpoints of Darl and Vardaman (569):

It is as though the dark were resolving him out of his integrity, into an unrelated scattering of components flames .... I see him dissolve—legs, a rolling eye, a gaudy splotching like cold flames—and float upon the dark. (*AILD* 56)

One might read the description above, not through the circles and planes of Cubism, but rather through the more fluid fantasies of Surrealism. The same can be said of the following passage:

The air smells like sulphur. Upon the impalpable plane of it their shadows form as upon a wall, as though like sound they had not gone very far away in falling but had merely congealed for a moment. (*AILD* 76)

In its reference to "shadow," the above passage recalls the painterly technique of "cast shadow," where "a shadow of more or less definite shape [is] formed on a surface behind

a body that blocks the light” (Pierce 87). A variant of shadowing, chiaroscuro, is the “gradation of light and dark within a picture, especially one in which the forms are largely determined, not by sharp outlines, but by the meeting of lighter and darker areas” (Pierce 19). Faulkner uses shadowing and cast shadow in *As I Lay Dying* in many sections of the novel, but most notably in Vardaman’s section. Vardaman, the traumatized child of the Bundrens, is also the one who is granted a Surrealist painter’s eyes. For example, Vardaman sees “the dark stand up and go whirling away” (*AILD* 65). A few lines later, he observes “Pa walk[ing] around. His shadow walks around” (65). In several places, he repeats the phrase, “He walks around. His shadow walks around” (66) or “Pa walks around. His shadow does” (66). Though painted after Faulkner, Remedios Varo’s 1962 painting, titled *Fenomeno* (“Phenomenon”), shows the resources inherent in this technique.

In his Surrealist imaginings, Vardaman sees his mother as fish and horse simultaneously. He perceives her as a fish “cut up into pieces of not-fish now” (*AILD* 53). Like Darl’s retreat into Cubism, Vardaman retreats into Surrealism as a defense against the truth of her death, which has traumatized him severely. As if to defer his recognition of the irreversible tragedy, Vardaman dissects his mother’s image. There is even a chapter consisting of one sentence only: “My mother is a fish” (*AILD* 84).

In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner demonstrates his mastery of modernist-art techniques, which he has transferred from the painted canvas to narrative fiction. As Tucker writes, “the novel as a whole exhibits specific cubist techniques” (391). These techniques affect the perceptions of individual characters, Darl especially. Surrealism is also an influence, though its impact is focused primarily on Vardaman. It is not surprising

that different characters would imagine the object-world uniquely, since their personalities and perceptions are unique.

## CONCLUSION

The beginning decades of the twentieth century appear to have had revolutionary changes in many disciplines, such as philosophy, the visual arts, music, and literature. This rapid change is more vivid in the appearance of Phenomenology in philosophy and in Cubism in art. What connects these movements—despite of their contradictions and differences—is modernism, which, during the first decades of the twentieth century, explored new “ways of seeing” in art and “new ways of knowing” in philosophy. As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, Phenomenology is a *theory whose destination is practice*; its practice culminates in what Husserl terms the “transcendental attitude.” Cubism, by contrast, is a *practice that gives birth to theory*—specifically, a theory of constructionism.

William Faulkner’s literary art provides a sample for that correlation between Husserl’s Phenomenology and Cubism. Faulkner is known to have employed modernist art techniques in his novels, particularly *The Sound and The Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. By dwelling on the perceptions of characters, his novels also give insight into the workings of Husserlian Phenomenology. Having given samples of these twin traditions in Faulkner’s fiction, this thesis comes to an end.

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