

William Faulkner's Dialogue with the Pastoral Genre

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ABSTRACT

This essay deals with the fact that *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August* dialogize the pastoral genre. In this respect, the first part of the essay presents a discussion about the definitions and modifications of the concept of the pastoral in different epochs. Then it will be proved that pastoral and specifically post-pastoral codes are appropriated in the two novels and, in this way, these novels can be categorized as pastoral novels. It will also be explained in detail that the mentioned novels not only appropriate the pastoral and post-pastoral codes but also reverse them and render a carnivalised version of the pastoral. The objective is to show that dialogue with the pastoral genre is not simply the appropriation of its codes within the two novels, and that the two novels interact with this genre in terms of giving a new version of the pastoral through negating its codes. The researcher will show that this interaction provides a good opportunity for Faulkner to question and criticize the social ideology of his time.

Keywords: William Faulkner; *The Sound and the Fury*; *Light in August*; the Pastoral Genre; the Post-Pastoral; Dialogue; Bakhtin; Carnivalization

1. INTRODUCTION

In his interpretation of Bakhtin's ideas, Holquist explains that in order for a person to know himself, he should know others. Otherness necessitates "particularity" and "situatedness" in time and space (Holquist 12). To know others, one should relate oneself to or address the others' time and space. As Holquist mentions, "two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time" (26). Therefore, the self and the other each occupies a particular space at a specific time. In order to relate the self with the other, one should attempt to enter the space or share the temporal features of the other.

Faulkner's novels appropriate the domain of the pastoral genre as the other. Through their dialogue with the pastoral genre, Faulkner's novels find new, multiple strata of meaning and significance. Deducing from Holquist's discussion, one may say that *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*, as two multiple phenomena, are essentially based on three elements: "a center, a not-center, and the relation between them" (29). It is the nature of this relationship between the center (the novels) and the not-center (the pastoral genre) that makes the novel meaningful.

Here, the question is raised whether pastoral and post-pastoral codes are relevant to *The Sound and the Fury*, where there are abnormal characters such as the hypochondriac Mrs.

Compson, the drunken Mr. Compson, the adulterous Candace, the suicidal Quentin, the money-blinded Jason, the idiot Benjy, and the corrupt Miss Quentin. Moreover, one doubts if *Light in August* which is the story of the betrayed Lena Grove, the exiled and unfrocked Hightower, the murdered Joanna Burden, and the lynched and castrated Christmas could be considered a novel containing post-pastoral codes. The characters in both novels are drowned within their past memories and, then, return to their hurried chase of the real life in the loud world. They seem to be tragic, but beneath the facade of their tragic lives lie post-pastoral elements. Simultaneously, these codes are undermined, even subverted, in the two novels. In Bakhtinian terms, a parody of the pastoral genre exists in the two novels. This parodic treatment is an essential part of the dialogue between the novels and the pastoral genre.

The present study aims at elucidating the mechanism that promotes this dialogue. In other words, the researcher will explain why the pastoral codes in these novels do not meet the expectations of the pastoral genre. This mechanism could be discussed in terms of time, space and culture or ideology of the Southern society which nullifies the effects of the pastoral codes in characters' lives. So time and space, which could be changeable in Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, enhance the connection between the pastoral genre and the two novels with respect to their treatment of the pastoral codes. The ideological forces within *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August* which do not let the pastoral codes function as they do in the pastoral genre, will be foregrounded and criticized. Here, the researcher will locate these codes and their subversion in the two novels, proving that *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August* dialogize pastoral and post-pastoral codes.

For this purpose, this study will deploy Gifford's theories on the pastoral. The researcher will trace Gifford's codes of "attention to nature," "birth-death-rebirth," "retreat and return," "consciousness and conscience," and the way they are recast, subverted and recreated in *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*. This project will manifest that Gifford's critical outlook corresponds Faulkner's philosophy of life in a dialogic way, and that Faulkner's works consequently concretize Gifford's pastoral views.

2. DISCUSSION

2. 1. The Pastoral

According to Cuddon, pastoral in a broad sense is a genre characteristically representative of "nostalgia for the past," "some hypothetical state of love and peace" which is now missing. What comprises the principal theme of almost all pastoral is the quest for "simple life" which is distant from life of the court and the city, or from "corruption, war, strife, the love of gain," earning and "spending." Pastoral is also nostalgic of the innocence of man's prelapsarian life and "harmony with nature" (490).

As for the origin of the pastoral, Abrams refers to Theocritus, the Greek poet (3 B.C.) and originator of the pastoral genre, who represented "the life of Sicilian shepherds" - it is interesting to know that "Pastor" is the Latin word for "Shepherd." Theocritus' pastoral poems were called idylls. Imitating Theocritus in his Latin Eclogues, Virgil constituted a long-lasting "model for traditional pastoral" which could be described as a "deliberately conventional poem expressing an urban poet's nostalgic image of the peace and simplicity of the life of shepherds and other rural folk in an idealized natural setting." Then, other succeeding conventions imitating Virgil contained images like a shepherd resting under a tree and "meditating the rural muse, or piping" as if he would never become old, or "engaging in a friendly singing contest, or expressing" his bad or good luck "in a love affair, or grieving over the death of a fellow

shepherd." The last type which developed as the pastoral elegy was much more enduring compared to other traditional types of pastoral (141). On the whole, all of the classical poets considered the pastoral life as the lost golden ages.

The Dark and Early Middle ages, according to Barrell and Bull, were witness to the disappearance of pastoral in Europe. The only representation the pastoral found during these periods was in French troubadour *pastourelles* with its main subject as the conflict between the different worlds of the country and the court enacted in "the attempted seduction of a peasant girl by a courtly knight." However, the hierarchical and static structural feudal society would not allow "a proper consideration of pastoral matters" (13).

With the advent of the sixteenth century, an interest in the pastoral was revived. At the same time, feudal society was seriously threatened for the first time. Now pastoral was not only a nostalgic myth, but also became more sophisticated and lent itself to didacticism and even religious satire. In Renaissance, the Bible also became available in the vernacular. Here, a tangible enhancement of the relationship between pastoral and Christ took shape with its emphasis on "the nativity and its associations with the pastoral theme of regeneration and the coming of the new Golden Age" (13). Christian pastoralists gave a Christian color to the Golden Age of the pagan fable, mixing it with the Biblical Garden of Eden, and made use of the religious symbol of the shepherd "in the ecclesiastical or parish 'pastor,' and the figure of Christ as the Good Shepherd" (Abrams 141).

The first prominent English pastoral in the Renaissance was Spenser's *The Shepherdes Calendar* (1579), an assimilation of the conventions established by several pastoral poets such as Theocritus, Virgil, Sannazaro, Mantuan, and Marot. In addition, Spenser's pastoral poem is an English (native) version of pastoral (Barrell & Bull 13). Besides Spenser's enterprise, the pastoral works of this period were incorporated into other literary forms; for example, Sidney's *Arcadia* (1581-84) was a long pastoral romance in an elaborately artful prose; or Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love" which was a pastoral lyric; or Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherd* as a pastoral drama (Abrams 141). The paramount example of pastoral drama was Shakespeare who reacted against the aristocratic Arcadia of Spenser and Sidney. The latter poets regarded poetry in terms of different kinds with diverse subjects suitable for each kind. Thus, for instance, kings would appear in epic and tragedy, while shepherds of low life would populate pastoral poetry. Nonetheless, Shakespeare broke this hierarchy by bringing the high and low ranks together. A case in point is *As You Like It* (Barrell & Bull 107-8).

In the seventeenth century, the new golden age of the Renaissance declined as the "life of the Court" became "increasingly subjected to external political pressures." The metaphysical poets, in this epoch, were not interested in the pastoral tradition. Their poems were permeated with imagery of a "new mercantile age [...] commerce, exploration, political struggle and conquest." Though the poetry is critical of the values of its age, it is unable to "see a viable alternative in a world of pastoral innocence" (141). This poetry lost its connections with the rural, while nourishing an urban culture or an atmosphere for individual meditation and turning inward. Thus, if there were any expression of pastoral, it was from looking back to an aristocratic culture or "an implicit assumption in urban and court satire" (142). However, one could still find cases of pastoral poetry like Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

In the Augustan or Restoration period, the pastoral voice never found expression, rather it became a joke; it reflected decadence, not nostalgia. The countryside was not an alternative any longer and even in the Restoration Comedies, the country was a place to be avoided and not a place of life (223). Aristocratic manners and attitudes merged with the larger tradition, and thus a poet like Pope who was not of the court, composed a sort of pastoral poetry in which the past was no longer believable even to the poet himself. This caused a gap between the ideal

pastoral or golden age and the real lives of shepherds in the Augustan age. Accordingly, Barrell and Bull believe that Pope's *Pastorals* are "defiantly artificial in their adherence to the neo-Classical, in a way that does not reflect his social role—as it had for Spenser" (224).

In the Whig and post-Augustan period, attitudes toward the pastoral changed to some extent. The important pastoral work of this period is James Thomson's *Seasons*. His work represents the mid-eighteenth century in England as the Golden Age. This pastoral world is bereft of any nostalgic sense and its attitude toward nature is contradictory: nature is both hostile and productive, at once man's enemy and his bountiful provider (296). Another key poem which rediscovers the pessimistic roots of pastoral is Gray's "Elegy Written in a Churchyard." Gray's emphasis in this poem is on sentiment and the refinement of feeling through the theme of rural retreat from the town, wealth and fame in favor of the obscure life of the cottager (299). The tone of this elegy is melancholic.

Against Thomson's and Gray's versions of pastoral that at least displayed the agricultural laborer with comfortable jollity, one could enumerate Crabbe's realism and Goldsmith's extreme pessimism. Crabbe's *The Village* (1783) and Goldsmith's *The Deserted village* (1770) distorted the pastoral vision, brutalized the agricultural laborer, and impoverished and destroyed rather than created by the advance of the mercantile spirit in agriculture (377). These anti-pastoral works were not only an argument against the pastoral tradition, but against a "deliberate idealization of the English laborer in almost all eighteenth-century discussion of him" (379).

The Romantic period embraced pastoral poets such as Wordsworth who, unlike other poets, neither believed in nature as only hostile to man nor thought that it was extremely bountiful. He acknowledged that the work done by his rustics was "arduous" and caused suffering, but at the same time it was "rewarded." Wordsworth's poetry was nostalgic of childhood when one was in harmony with nature, but he himself opposed this nostalgic sense by seeing the process of growing old whereby one came to grasp nature and universe more deeply (428).

In the Victorian Age, writing a credible version of pastoral was impossible. Hardy's novels are instances of this impossibility, where there is a conflict between the pastoral and realism. The tension is a result of the "impossibility of describing the upheavals in nineteenth-century agricultural history, and their effect on the inhabitants of rural England, in the old terms of a timeless Golden Age and shepherds whose reactions are slow" (431). Unfortunately, Barrell and Bull do not continue to trace Pastoral in its modern sense because they think that the "separation" of life in the town and in the country that the pastoral demands is now almost "devoid of any meaning" (432).

Such a need, however, has been met by Terry Gifford's *Pastoral*. Gifford identifies three diverse "strands of usage" of pastoral: (1) pastoral as a historical form concerning a sort of "retreat and return;" (2) pastoral as an area of content describing the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban;" (3) and pastoral as a critique of idealization of the rural life in a pastoral vision (Smith 193).

2. 2. The Pastoral Paradox

Gifford believes that pastoral in any epoch and any form contains a central paradox which makes it a suitable means for social criticism. Such criticism becomes possible only because of the "artifice of Arcadia" whereby nature does not provide the earth with rich and colorful tapestry as different poets have done. The world of nature is, due to Sidney's statement, "brazen" while that of the poets is "golden" (25). This paradox can be viewed in Pope's time

too. In "An Essay on Pastoral," Pope claims that the pastoral is an image of the Golden Age and that poets must try to use "some illusion" to make a pastoral pleasant and delightful. Thus, the poet should expose the "best side" of a shepherd's life and conceal "its miseries" (qtd. in Gifford 32).

Even the Christian version of pastoral represents this paradox. On the one hand, the biblical "nature was not wild, but a garden for the delight of Adam and Eve;" on the other hand, this Eden was occupied by the serpent that tested man's innocence, and man's failure in such a test brought him to a different "landscape: the city and its vices" (Gifford 33). The paradox undermines the notion of pastoral as a form of life always peaceful and safe from violence and hardships. Examples of poems representing the pastoral paradox are Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

It is, therefore, the paradox inherent in pastoral that endows it with the function of social criticism. Gifford believes that pastoral is "carnavalesque" in Bakhtin's sense of playfully subverting what is currently taken for granted: "the hegemony of the urban establishment." He adds that when the carnivalesque sense is taken from pastoral, it becomes "dangerously open to exploitation by a culture that might prefer to hide reality in the myth of Arcadia" as sometimes happens in Horace (23). What gives pastoral its carnivalesque function is its indirectness and its view of "matters other than those apparently being treated." As a result, making benefit of such a capacity, the pastoral can recover moral disciplines and values of the Golden Age (24).

Another important issue in Gifford's view is that the pastoral also looks forward to a future full of hope. He argues against W. H. Auden's fundamental distinction between the favorite daydream of the Arcadian as Eden and that of the Utopian as New Jerusalem (35). In Auden's view, pastoral always looks backward for its nostalgic expectations. However, Gifford argues, since pastoral represents an idealization, "it must also imply a better future conceived in the language of the present." Otherwise, pastoral would lose its paradoxical potential, and would no longer be able to "imaginatively construct an alternative vision": "behind the negative critique within the pastoral" lies an "implicit future." When the pastoral "retreats only into a dosed past in order to preserve a myth about the present, it has no force for future action. But at its best the pastoral will always imply that its vision of Arcadia has implications for a New Jerusalem" (36).

2. 3. The Discourse of Retreat and Return

One of the key terms Gifford uses in his book is "retreat." He professes that pastoral is fundamentally a discourse of retreat which means either simply to escape from the confusion and difficulty of "the city, the court, the present", or to explore them. Thus as a discourse, pastoral is able to reflect upon the present (46). According to Gifford, "pastoral retreat is a return to essentials" and this reductive discourse can be either "simplistic or profound" (54); it means that the discourse recognizes "the necessary qualifications, reservations, contextualities any expression of essentials must contain." Thus, the discourse may be comprised of simple poetry, but it may end in "philosophical profundity" (55). Examples of this retreat, in Marinelli's words, could be a retreat to "nature, to the primitive simplicity of the Church, to primitive freedom from passion, to primitive modes of feeling and thinking" (13).

Interestingly, paradoxical features can be traced in the discourse of retreat too; in fact, this paradox is quite essential to the discourse. The paradox is that a retreat to a place devoid of the confusion and anxieties of the city, the court and the present, gives one "insight into the culture" which originates it. Consequently, the pastoral author cannot ignore or escape his own "culture and its preoccupations;" hence, the pastoral construct reveals "preoccupations and

tensions of its time." Even if the pastoral author does not intend any reflection upon his time, place, and culture, his "determined escape returns something" to his audience (Gifford 82). In brief, retreat and return are important pastoral movements which deliver insights to the audience that might not be comforting at all, but will essentially be "healing" (92).

2. 4. Post-Pastoral Codes

Gifford also defines and explores the post-pastoral works. In this respect, he distinguishes six important qualities characteristic of the post-pastoral: (1) "an awe in attention to the natural world;" (2) "the recognition of a creative-destructive universe equally in balance in a continuous momentum of birth and death, death and rebirth, growth and decay, ecstasy and dissolution;" (3) "the recognition [...] that our inner human nature can be understood in relation to external nature;" (4) "an awareness of both nature as culture and of culture as nature;" (5) "that with consciousness comes conscience;" (6) and "the ecofeminists' realization that the exploitation of the planet is of the same mindset as the exploitation of women and minorities" (Smith 197).

Gifford believes that a literary genre like pastoral addressing the problems of human accommodation with nature should include the past as well as the present visionaries. It should also encompass a range of forms from ballad to travel writing. More importantly, one should make a distinction between "sentimental pastoral" and "complex pastoral" in order to meet the urgent need for responsibility and to advocate the welfare of Arden (Gifford 149). Thus, like ecocriticism which is interdisciplinary, pastoral could also be interconnected with environment and ecology, feminist studies, cultural studies, etc.

A post-pastoral work does not necessarily contain all of the six elements mentioned above and since any post-pastoral work has its origins in aspects of the pastoral and anti-pastoral traditions, a pastoral writer can make use of pastoral, anti-pastoral and post-pastoral features in a text at the same time. What makes the pastoral an enduring genre is that it can be

a mode of political critique of present society, or it can be a dramatic form of unresolved dialogue about the tensions in that society, or it can be a retreat from politics into an apparently aesthetic landscape that is devoid of conflict and tension. It is this very versatility of the pastoral to both contain and appear to evade tensions and contradictions - between country and city, art and nature, the human and the non-human, our social and our inner selves, our masculine and our feminine selves - that made the form so durable and so fascinating. (11)

2. 5. Pastoral in American Literature

Gifford claims that the pastoral is vital to American literature, since "the possibility of retreat to a rural home outside a commuter village is very much part of the American Dream that combines wealth with social decay and ownership of a parcel of land" (77). The whole foundation of the American society is based on this notion of pastoral retreat. Therefore, as Sahami mentions, the pastoral ideal is completely interwoven with culture and still holds upon the native imagination. The fresh, green, and virgin continent (America) dazzled the European mind to gain harmony with nature and joy and, on the whole, to make a new beginning. Thus all of the American writers were concerned with pastoral in a way. These writers include Hawthorn, Thoreau (*Walden*), Cooper, Melville, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Fitzgerald (30), as well as Philip Roth (*American Pastoral*) and William L. Heat Moon (*Blue Highways*) (Gifford 77-8). Amongst these, the researcher has selected William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and

Light in August as the subject of this study. These two modern novels have close affiliations with the concept of the pastoral in terms of thought processes, memory, and time.

The French novelist, Claude Simon, called Faulkner "the Picasso of literature", since Faulkner "made use of techniques derived from recent discoveries in many realms of thought: ethnology, psychology, philosophy, music, painting, sculpture, and writing" (McHaney 48). Most significantly, Faulkner draws on earlier psychological fiction and makes innovations via interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness techniques.

The modern novel has some affinities with the concept of pastoral in terms of time and memory. In fact, *The Sound and the Fury* is permeated with interior monologues and the stream-of-consciousness technique through which the characters in each section retreat to their past memories and examine their effects upon their present situation. This is more significant in case of Quentin and Jason who are seriously damaged by their destructive memories and their understanding of time. Likewise, the notions of time and memory are quite vital to understand the life and meaning of some of Joe Christmas, Hightower and so forth in *Light in August*.

Indeed, the concepts of time and memory bring the modernist novels and the pastoral genre together: "Pastoral's concern with time is what [...] renders it universal, for it is one of the most deeply rooted instincts of mankind to claim that the world is too much with us and to find an scape from the overwhelming present in a sanctified past or in some indistinct and redeeming future" (Marinelli 9-10).

2. 6. Post-Pastoral in *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*

2. 6. 1. Attention to Nature

As a basic post-pastoral code, attention to nature seems to be appropriated in *The Sound and the Fury*. Section one begins with Benjy's reaction to the fences surrounding the pasture that once belonged to him and later was sold in order for the family to afford the expenses of Caddy's marriage and Quentin's education at the university. Ben's attention to and love for his pasture is very conspicuous. This attention is highlighted on different occasions when Ben's guardians take him to the pasture in order to calm his crying and shouting. In addition, the Compson house is located somewhere on the hill with natural landscape. They have a barn where they keep some cows, horses and pigs; below the hill is a branch where the Compson children play and Negro servants wash. This can also be seen in Benjy's camera-like account of the story:

The ground kept sloping up and the cows ran up the hill T. P. tried to get up. He fell down again and the cows ran down the hill. Quentin held my arm and we went toward the barn. (26)

Then they played in the branch [...] Versh came around the bush and lifted me down into the water again. Caddy was all wet and muddy behind. (24)

Another evidence of attention to nature is that even Benjy is referred to as the "natural" (illegitimate) child, not an "idiot" or "retarded" being. Furthermore, Benjy loves fire (a natural element) and is given flowers by his guardians. One more sign of nature is the wood near the Compson place where Caddy meets her lovers. It is in this wood that Caddy satisfies her sexual instincts and, according to his brother, makes love with her lovers like a Negress.

Furthermore, the odor of honeysuckle and trees permeate Benjy's and Quentin's sections: "Caddy smelled like trees" (*The Sound and the Fury* 44) or "getting the odour of honeysuckle all mixed up She would have told me not to let me sit there on the steps hearing

her door twilight slamming hearing Benjy still crying Supper she would have to come down then getting honeysuckle all mixed up in it" (118). It is interesting that the odour of honeysuckle peculiar to Caddy is connotative of her natural sexual desire.

The description of natural elements is myriad in the Quentin section too; the descriptions are really interesting in their being detailed:

A sparrow slanted across the sunlight, onto the window ledge, and cocked his head at me. His eye was round and bright. First he'd watch me with one eye, then flicked! And it would be the other one, his throat pumping faster than any pulse. The hour began to strike. The sparrow quit swapping eyes and watched me steadily with the same one until the chimes ceased, as if he were listening too. Then he flicked off the ledge and was gone. (76)

Elsewhere in the same section, now at Harvard, Quentin describes the bridge and the river in which there is a big trout no fisherman has been able to catch yet. Quentin explains in detail how the indomitable trout would jump and "lip" a fly "beneath the surface" and how this would create a vortex that would "drift away down the stream" (108). Quentin's beautiful description of the sparrows show how attentive to natural details he is or how strong his imagination and meditation about these things are.

Light in August, too, contains post-pastoral elements and descriptions; for instance, Lena's peaceful and placid trip to Jefferson at the beginning of the story is significant. Impregnated, betrayed, and left alone, Lena sets out to find her lover, enduring the hardships of her trip quite calmly and patiently, taking her shape into consideration. Not complaining about anything, she reconciles "all the opposites and disparates." Lena's mocked placidity is "not only that of the cow but unmistakably that of the gods in their eternity." Therefore, Faulkner has given her "a ritual office" by attributing to her the "religious procession depicted in Keats's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'" (Chase 104). The name of "Lena" comes from the Greek name "Helena," which denotes "torch" or "light." Both denotations reflect "the radiance of an older time" with pastoral connotations (Tuck 54).

Signs of nature could also be detected when Joe is adopted by a farmer and is transferred to the country where he helps McEachern milk the cows. It is in the country that Christmas finds a flock in a hidden valley and stalks and kills a sheep with a gun, then puts his hands in the "warm blood of the dying beast" just in order to reconcile himself with the fact that women have a natural period of menstruation (*Light in August* 140).

Furthermore, when Christmas flees after killing Joanna, he takes refuge into nature where he returns to a kind of primitive life, far from the city and its people:

For a while he had been hungry all the time. He gathered and ate rotting and wormridden fruit; now and then he crept into fields and dragged down and gnawed ripened ears of corn as hard as potato graters [...] He would make himself eat the rotten fruit, the hard corn, chewing it slowly, tasting nothing. He would eat enormous quantities of it, with resultant crises of bleeding flux. (251)

Thus Christmas experiences a most primitive period of life in the midst of marshes and swamps where he comes closer to pure nature.

All these examples are manifestations of the first and foremost element in any post-pastoral work, namely nature. But at the same time, these natural manifestations are exploited (appropriated) to inaugurate a subversive dialogue with the pastoral genre in terms of making

benefit of the post-pastoral codes and then undermining them. In this regard, the relationship between Faulkner's two novels and the pastoral genre, which is a parodic and subversive one, comes to light. Bakhtin maintains that all "parodies on genres and generic styles [...] enter the great and diverse world of verbal forms that ridicule the straightforward, serious word in all its generic guises" (52).

He reckons the common purpose of all types of parodies: "to provide the corrective of laughter and criticism to all existing straightforward genres, languages, styles, voices; to force men to experience beneath these categories a different and contradictory reality" which is "otherwise not captured in them" (59). In a similar fashion, Faulkner's works present a parodic exploitation of the pastoral code of attention to nature. There are many instances of attention to nature in both novels, but contrary to the pastoral objectives, this attention does not bestow peace, solace, and harmony on characters. Rather, it exacerbates their worries and problems. This creates a negative or parodic effect. As for Ben, his reminiscences of past memories about the pasture do not calm him. The pasture rather exacerbates Ben's trauma because whenever he watches it and hears the word "caddie" spoken by the golfers, he is reminded of his beloved sister Caddy.

Furthermore, Caddy's relation with nature does not improve her condition. It is in nature and with respect to her attention to her natural instincts that she is ruined. The wood is the dark and dangerous place where she is lost and destroyed forever. It is also her natural experience of impregnation that precipitates her divorce and destitution.

Quentin's case is no exception either. His hyper-sensitive attention to natural elements like virginity and its loss, feminine periodical filth, etc., brings about his neurosis. His obsessive attention to nature, like his melancholic meditation about the river, poisons his mind and prepares him for suicide.

One may think that Lena Grove is a different story, but she is not. It is right that she is in harmony with nature and respected by all the community, but this does not change or improve her situation in the eye of the society. She is the betrayed girl impregnated by a worthless vagabond, and retarded by her brother's family.

Christmas's fate is no different. His attachment with nature cannot save him or bring him any peace. Living in the country, he is all the time punished by McEachern. Fleeing into the marshes, he experiences a life of anxiety and unrest. Furthermore, his natural instincts push him toward corruption.

Here, one doubts about the real function of the post-pastoral code of attention to nature as to bring men closer to nature and guarantee their peace and comfort. The displaced function of attention to nature signifies the fact that this code is subverted in Faulkner's works.

2. 6. 2. The Process of Creation-Destruction, Birth-Death-Rebirth, Growth and Decay

The next post-pastoral code is the process of creation-destruction, birth-death-rebirth, growth and decay. This code could be detected in *The Sound and the Fury*. As a case in point, one may refer to Damuddy's death and funeral in the Compson's parlor which reminds Caddy of the decaying bones of Nancy (death and decay) in the ditch where some plant-life (birth) had grown: "'Dogs are dead.' Caddy said, 'And when Nancy fell in the ditch and Roscus shot her and the buzzards came and undressed her.' The bones rounded out of the ditch, where the dark vines were in the black ditch, into the moonlight, like some of the shapes had stopped" (*The Sound and the Fury* 37). This memory causes Jason to assume that buzzards will undress Damuddy too.

Further examples of the cycle of birth-death-rebirth and decay can be traced regarding other major characters of the novel too. For instance, Benjy's pasture is sold to pay for Quentin's university and Caddy's marriage expenses; however, after this constructive bargain, Quentin commits suicide (death) and Caddy is divorced (destruction). In another level, Caddy loses her virginity (destruction) and begets Miss Quentin (birth) after Quentin's death. The baby is named Quentin to the memory of late Quentin (death-rebirth). And subsequently, Miss Quentin grows up (growth) but falls into adultery (decay) and runs away from home.

The same process is part and parcel of *Light in August*. To mention some instances, one could think of Milly's death in labor and Christmas's birth; or Joanna Burden's murder and coming of fertility to her place later through Lena's giving birth to a baby, which demonstrates a process of birth-death-rebirth. Again one notices the fall of Joanna's house to ashes and the rise of life out of the same place by Lena's settling there (destruction-construction).

Considering these examples, this question is raised: how is the above-mentioned code subverted in the two novels? The money the Compsons receive for Benjy's pasture does not do any good to any of the members of the family. That is why Jason sarcastically complains several times about the way Quentin killed himself and this way made a mockery of the family's attempts to give him an opportunity to study in one of the best universities: "Well, Jason likes work. I says no I never had the university advantages because at Harvard they teach you how to go for a swim at night without knowing how to swim and at Sewanee they don't even teach you what water is. I says you might send me to the State University: maybe I'll learn how to stop my watch with a nose spray" (*The Sound and the Fury* 176).

Caddy, too, renders everything worthless in her own fashion; though her loss of virginity and pregnancy are quite natural, they only degrade her in the family and society, so that Mrs. Compson is forced to find her a husband. However, Herbert divorces Caddy and the whole affair becomes more tragic when Caddy sends her illegitimate child to her family to be raised. Thus, neither loss of virginity nor the birth of Miss Quentin brings comfort to anybody. Rather these events undermine the family's honor. Again one hears Jason nagging about his lost job offer: "Then when she [Caddy] sent Quentin home for me to feed too I says I guess that's right too, instead of me having to go way up north for a job they sent the job down here to me" (176-77). Moreover, Miss Quentin's birth and growth only lead to her decay and corruption, undermining the whole thing once more, and putting the shattered family in shame. Thus, Caddy, Quentin and Miss Quentin only exacerbate Mr. Compson's heavy drinking and cause his early death.

In *Light in August*, one sees the futility and tragic effects of the process of creation-destruction, birth-death-rebirth, growth and decay as well. For instance, Milly's death only causes Christmas's orphanage, corruption, decay, and eventually castration and death. Neither does Christmas's death bring any redemption either to himself or to the society. As Chase professes, "there is no new life, no transfiguration anywhere that would not have occurred without Joe Christmas [...] In Joe Christmas we do not celebrate the death and rebirth of the hero" (109). On the other hand, Lena's childbirth brings life to the devastated place temporarily, but it does not amend her situation. When Lucas Burch unexpectedly meets her and the baby in the cabin, he is taken aback and overwhelmed by a feeling of responsibility to provide for them. Unable to do so, he flees by the cabin window. Thus, Lena cannot restore Burch; rather she is betrayed, left alone and mocked at.

In fact, the dialogization of pastoral and post-pastoral codes by these two novels provides a chance to look critically at the value-system of a modern, industrial society still clinging to its long dead ideology. This, of course, is rooted in the paradoxical capacity of the pastoral and post-pastoral discussed earlier. It seems that all these processes of life and death which are

supposed to bring life to the community and save the society from disease and bad omens, mock the characters of this modernist novel at their faces. According to Raymond A. Morrow, the carnival breaks down the "social distance," constructs "new forms of interpersonal relations," redefines "between high and low culture," and renders "processes of profanation that reconnect people with their bodies and nature" (159). And here, the mockery of the sacred process of death-rebirth and reversal of its results undermine and criticize all the behavioral codes and ideology of a postwar society. In Holquist's words, carnival functions like the novel; it is "a means for displaying otherness: carnival makes familiar relations strange" (89). In this context, the carnivalization of the pastoral codes renders them displaced and impotent. It reminds the reader that like in a carnival, all pastoral or post-pastoral codes are reversed or overthrown.

2. 6. 3. The Discourse of Retreat and Return

One of the most significant issues in a post-pastoral work is the discourse of retreat and return. It was previously mentioned that pastoral life is a kind of escape from court or city life into the country to find peace, riches, and relief. Generally, this escape could be "from the complexities of the city, the court, the present, 'our manners,' or explore them" (Gifford 46). The exploration of the present time and present manners allows us to think of or imagine an alternative future. Thus, such a retreat could be both physical and mental or intellectual in the sense that in the former, one retreats to a location, usually the countryside, and in the latter, one retreats into a mental and subjective state to be released from the pressures of the city or external world. Whatever "the locations and modes of pastoral retreat [...] there must in some sense be a return from that location to a context in which the results of the journey are to be understood" (81). In other words, return is a reflection of what one gains during the retreat period. The discourse of retreat and return plays an important function in both *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*. Again, in Bakhtin's terms, this pastoral code is "incorporated" into the novels. The pastoral code possesses a voice of its own; besides, there is Faulkner's voice too. This constitutes a double-voiced discourse: "It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions." This is what Bakhtin terms as the heteroglossia of the novel (324).

The discourse of retreat and return dominates Quentin's life in *The Sound and the Fury*. As a child, Quentin is deprived of the nourishing compassion and sympathy of his hypochondriac mother. Quentin's section in the novel resonates with this statement: "*If I could say mother. Mother*" (*The Sound and the Fury* 89) or "*if I'd just had a mother so I could say Mother Mother*" (156). Besides, Quentin has been raised in a family clinging to old values and beliefs which plague his mind all the time. According to Wagner, these values are: "integrity is more important than success; that men are the heads of their household, respected in their communities and by their ancestry for much of their pride; that men are morally and physically stronger than women, and must protect them" (561).

Regarding these beliefs, Quentin wishes to protect his sister's virginity, but he is a defeated and weak man himself. He cannot put an end to Caddy's adulterous affairs with strangers. He fights with time by "counting to sixty and folding down one finger and thinking of the other fourteen fingers waiting to be folded down" (*The Sound and the Fury* 83) in the classroom; or by tapping the watch "crystal on the corner of the dresser" (76). Quentin is not a victor over time, since according to his father, time is "the mausoleum of all hope and desire [...] to gain the reducto absurdum of all human experience" (73). Contrary to the nostalgic concept of time in the pastoral genre, the concept of time in this modernist novel represents the demolishing power which robs characters of hope and nostalgic feelings. Thus, the concept of

time in the pastoral is subverted in *The Sound and the Fury*. In this way, the novel redefines time by interacting with the pastoral genre.

Therefore, helpless, deprived of maternal love, impotent to protect his sister's honor, unable to catch up with time, and pressurized, Quentin decides to leave home. He is sent to Harvard, but his escape from the external world and retreat into his mind and self has happened earlier. In Radloff's words, Quentin cuts himself off from "concrete social references and involvements. He understands his lifetime in terms of the world-less time of the defaced watch" (56). Detached from the real world, Quentin refuges into the dead memories of the past. So as Sartre believes, Quentin makes his retreat into a surrealistic past. Sartre compares Quentin to a "man sitting in an open car and looking backward. At every moment, formless shadows, flickerings, faint tremblings, and patches of light rise up on either side of him, and only afterward, when he has a little perspective, do they become trees and men and cars" (89).

Quentin's escape from the "loud" world into the self and the past gets more complicated when he makes his physical retreat as well. On the day of his suicide, he travels to a country near Cambridge; he is caught with the little Italian girl who reminds him of Caddy. He also fights with Gerald Bland, his fellow student while he is deeply drowned in his past memory of fighting with Dalton Ames, his sister's lover. Subsequently, he makes his return to Harvard. Therefore, retreat and return are enacted by Quentin, but the process does not rescue him, since he retreats to the wrong place or state of mind. He escapes from "bad" (the pressures of life) and retreats to "worse" (his disturbed and ailing mind). Quoting Lowrey, if he escapes, he is just "like the gulls hanging in static relation to the schooner, outside time and space, fixed and eternal" (58). So he decides to take his final retreat into the world of the dead, with a mind replete with escape images such as "dungeons, grottoes, and flame-encircled enclosures, as well as corridors, tunnels, bridges, and oblique lines which function as escape routes" (Slater 4). In this way, Quentin commits himself into an eternal relief which he could not gain in his retreat in this world.

The pattern of appropriation and subversion of the discourse of retreat and return could be detected in *Light in August* too. Christmas's life is full of ups and downs, restless movements, and escapes. When his mother dies, he is taken to an orphan house; five years later, he is adopted by a farmer. Exhausted by his stepfather's patriarchal manners, Christmas escapes from the country and wanders restlessly for fifteen years. Eventually, he settles in Jefferson for three years but escapes after committing murder and is finally captured and killed.

Christmas's life in the orphan house, his adoption and, later, retreat to the country entrench his duality and impotence in coping with the issue of racism, religion, and women. While in the orphan house, Christmas undergoes identity crisis by believing Doc Hines' conviction that he has black blood: "That child, that Christmas boy, is a nigger" (*Light in August* 101). This causes Christmas's perpetual wavering on the white-black border: "the fierce racial conflicts in Joe's mind will not allow him to conceive of himself without reference to imposed racial constructs of identity" (Jenkins 80). Thus, Christmas perpetually shows ambivalent reactions toward whites and blacks; he cannot trust either; he attacks a Negro church; at the same time, he hates whites for what they have done to him.

In the country, Christmas's rigid, Calvinist stepfather exploits his labor on the farm, and punishes him for not memorizing his catechism: "McEachern took the book from between his hands 'Repeat your catechism,' McEachern said. The boy stared at the wall before him [...] McEachern [...] took up the strap. He struck ten times [...] Then the boy straggled and would have fallen" (*Light in August* 114). Christmas would always be punished by McEachern "as if he had committed" the "Cardinal sin" (121). In this way, he develops a "masochistic gratification and peace on the other side of extreme suffering" (Spenko 265). Therefore,

Christmas is under "pressure put by" both "Puritanism and racial prejudices" (Weisgerber 187). This pressure resurfaces after three years of living with Joanna when she finally asks him to pray with her and repent. Again, Christmas is reminded of the rigidity of Calvinists: "'Joe,' she said, 'for the last time. I don't ask it. Remember that. Kneel with me.'" Thus, Christmas kills Joanna while she is aiming at him with a "cap-and-ball revolver almost as long and heavier than a small rifle" (*Light in August* 212).

Christmas's retreat is followed by his return in terms of moving back to the same place where he started his retreat in a circular fashion. This circular retreat and return could not be explained in terms of physical space; rather it should be described with respect to his behavioral pattern from the very beginning. Snead argues that throughout the novel, "Christmas is the sign of resistance to fixed signs [...] He symbolizes the frustration and resistance that knowledge encounters whenever it wants to become permanent, or 'written'" (88-9). He adds that Christmas "is more an absence than anything else" (90), and that he "has not been socialized; he does not 'know' what his 'I' signifies" (93). So, unable to fill his identity split, he falls into a vicious circle. Time and again, he retreats and returns:

he is entering it again, the street which ran for thirty years [...] It had made a circle and he is still inside of it. Though during the last seven days he has had no paved street, yet he has traveled further than in all the thirty years before [...] 'And yet I have been further in these seven days than in all the thirty years.' He thinks. 'But I have never got outside that circle. I have never broken out of the ring of what I have already done and cannot ever undo.' (*Light in August* 255)

Christmas's retreats and returns are travels back and forth along the same road. Therefore, the retreat and return of the pastoral which should function positively are undermined because of their negative results. Thus, the discourse of retreat and return is appropriated and negated at the same time in *Light in August*.

2. 6. 4. Consciousness and Conscience

With the appropriation and negation of the discourse of retreat and return, another post-pastoral code will automatically be carnivalised. This code is that "with consciousness comes conscience;" that is "it is our consciousness which gives us our conscience, our ability to take responsibility for our behavior towards the other species of the plain and towards the plain itself" (Gifford 163). *The Sound and the Fury* portrays Quentin as an extremely conscious person in terms of obsessive attention to Caddy's affairs, lovers, her maidenhead as well as time. But his consciousness does not guarantee his conscience or responsibility toward his behavior. In fact, Quentin only thinks of the responsibility to save his own ideal mind, while neglecting others. For instance, based on his ideals, Quentin is outraged at women, because they "do not suffer man's outrage at the loss of innocence nor share his interest in trying to recover it" (Pikoulis 28). This shows that Quentin cannot reconcile himself with the fact that women have "periodical filth" and "liquid putrefaction" (*The Sound and the Fury* 118). For him "women must be pure to be loved" (Pikoulis 28). He absolutely neglects Caddy's physical potentials in reality, and wants her "body to be as pure as his mind;" Quentin's mistake is that he "does not realize that his mind can be no purer than Caddy's body" (Snead 30).

Obsessed with these ideals, Quentin feels responsible and conscientious only to save his peace through suicide, but responsibility and conscience toward others are missing. Hence, the negation of another code is confirmed. The appropriation and negation of these codes and discourses in *The Sound and the Fury* is representative of the novel's responsiveness toward

the pastoral genre's addressivity. The novel is not a passive receptor of other discourses, but incorporates and reacts to them. The response of the novel toward the "other" genre and discourse establishes the dialogic relationship between the novel and the pastoral.

In *Light in August*, Christmas's futile retreats, his escape from society and his returns to it only bring him a sort of painful consciousness, but no conscience in its social sense. In this case, consciousness is both of "truth" or "perfection," and of "the collective, irreversible and unredeemable weight of [...] capacity for wrongdoing" (Jenkins 78). Since Joe is conscious of his guilt, he is instinctively conscious of his terrible destiny as well. So due to his consciousness, he feels "in some way responsible for" his "fate" (Pouillon 85). His conscience is quite personal and forces him to save himself (escape after murdering Joanna) and on the other hand, to be punished (he does not escape or shoot Percy Grimm, but only gives up to him, for he is conscious and conscientious of his sins). The code of consciousness and conscience in *Light in August* is negated, since Joe's conscience does not extend to others. That is why he resorts to Hightower's house so that he may be rescued by him, but strikes him all the same: "their faces seemed to glare with bodiless suspension as though from haloes as they stooped and raised Hightower, his face bleeding, from the floor where Christmas, running up the hall, his raised and armed and manacled hands full of glare and glitter like lightning bolts, so that he resembled a vengeful and furious god pronouncing a doom, had struck him down" (*Light in August* 348). In short, Joe's retreats do not rescue him and his returns do not make him learn from his experience. His consciousness does not make him conscientious of others and merely renders him impotent of reconciliation with his fellow human beings.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, pastoral and post-pastoral codes are interwoven with the texture of *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*. It was shown how these codes are both appropriated and subverted; that is, the codes are dialogized this way; the two novels negatively react against the pastoral genre. First of all, attention to natural world exists in both *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August* but it does not necessarily bring any awe and respect regarding nature. Secondly, one can detect a creative-destructive universe equally in balance in a continuous momentum of birth and death, death and rebirth, growth and decay, ecstasy and dissolution in the two novels, but this reaction does not result in fertility, good luck, and redemption for society or characters. Thirdly, the retreat and return take place in both novels. However, they do not give the characters any relief or comfort. Neither do they cause the characters to learn from their experience after they return. Finally, a great deal of consciousness does not bring conscience and responsibility toward others. Therefore, despite the presence of all these pastoral codes in both novels, the fertility, peace, order, conscience and responsibility demanded of this genre are not fulfilled. It seems that the two novels appropriate the pastoral genre just in order to render a new version of it by a mocking reaction toward its codes. One may ask why the pastoral codes are parodied or why they lose their function in Faulkner's novels. These codes are the same in the pastoral genre as well as in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*, so how come they act contradictorily in the two contexts? In the first part of the essay, we mentioned that in the hierarchical and static structure of the feudal society or the Augustan Age, pastoral matters were not considered properly and that the "country" was not an alternative. So the differing treatments of the pastoral in each epoch and space originate in the temporal and special matrices, culture and social ideology of that time and space. This is the Bakhtinian concept of the specific time and the specific place of the two

subjects in dialogue. The addressivity and responsiveness of the two agents are necessary for the dialogue, but not sufficient. The dialogic relationship is fulfilled due to the diversity of the time and place of each subject in dialogue. Therefore, a comparison between the pastoral world and Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County would justify the reason the pastoral codes are displaced in Faulkner's two novels. There is a central and unchanging core of meaning in the pastoral convention; i.e. primitivism in every aspect of life: "return to nature, to the primitive simplicity of the Church, to primitive freedom from passion, to primitive enjoyment of passion, to primitive modes of feeling and thinking" (Marinelli 13). In other words, the pastoral is a return to the essentials of life.

The Sound and the Fury and *Light in August* provide a chance to question and criticize the pastoral genre as well as the entrenched beliefs and ideology of the society. Put differently, the impotence of the shallow and dead values such as honor, virginity, consciousness, honorable marriage, Christin concepts of scapegoat and redemption are constantly undermined and threatened by violence, betrayal, adultery, selfish responsibility, divorce and murder.

This effect is what Bakhtin termed as "carnivalization." Due to the nature of carnivalization, one can hear more than one voice in the novel and this happens because carnivalization naturally leads to heteroglossia which is a world of multiple voices in a text. As discussed above, the diverse voices of this heteroglot world do not just co-exist side by side, but are also in "competition and even mutual hostility" (Dentith 3). This competition or mutual hostility is the same as the subversive dialogue between Faulkner's novels and the pastoral genre. But this relation is only understandable in the presence of a third party.

That is, only an observer of the agents in dialogue can comprehend the nature of their relationship: "it is only from a position outside something that it can be perceived in categories that complete it in time and fix it in space. In order to be perceived as a whole [...] a person or object must be shaped in the time/place categories of the other, and that is possible only when a person or object is perceived from the position of outsideness" (Holquist 31). These features prove the intertextuality of the novel as a heteroglot world in which an observer can find associations with "other" discourses or genres. According to Bakhtin,

[t]he prose writer as a novelist does not strip away the intentions of others from the heteroglot language of his works, he does not violate those socio-ideological cultural horizons [...] that open up behind heteroglot languages—rather, he welcomes them into his work. The prose writer makes use of words that are already populated with the social intentions of others and compels them to serve his own intentions, to serve a second master. (299-300)

Here, by appropriating the pastoral genre with different intentions, *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August* set up a subversive dialogue with this genre which implies a polyphonic work containing several voices and the interaction between them. In this way, Faulkner's works correspond and propagate Gifford's theory of the pastoral.

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