REPETITION AND STRUCTURE: A STUDY OF
WILLIAM FAULKNER AND CLAUDE SIMON

by

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This study focuses on repetition as a literary device and documents its findings with examples from William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Claude Simon's *La Route des Flandres*. It distinguishes between the following kinds of repetition:

1. Immediate repetition of words where two or more identical or near-identical words succeed each other immediately.

2. Interrupted repetition of words or sentences where some material separates two or more occurrences of the same or similar words (sentences).

3. Repetitive patterns in the narrative structure which take the form of a) simple duplication of episodes, characters, narrators; b) repetition as a retardation device in the suspense structure of *Absalom, Absalom*; c) repetition in the fragmented structure of *La Route des Flandres*; d) doubling of characters in repetitive behavioral patterns.

4. Repetition and Intertextuality where literary allusions draw attention to the "copy mechanism" which connects a text with a pre-coded cultural system.

These divisions form the major chapters of this study; they move from the smallest to the largest units of the fictional text and follow an analogical rather than a causal pattern.

The major purpose of repetition in *Absalom, Absalom!* and *La Route des Flandres* is to perform such functions as ambiguities; formal transitions between episodes; the relationship between main narrative and digressions; narrative pace, temporal stratifications, narrative voices, thematic associations; the relationship between fact and fiction; narrative progression; the symmetrical arrangement of narrative fragments; the doubling of characters and narrators in structural and psychoanalytic terms; representation and non-referentiality in literature. As a result, repetition in
Absalom, Absalom! and La Route des Flandres:

1. conforms to conventional usage in some instances and exploits experimental possibilities in others.

2. contributes both to narrative continuity and discontinuity.

3. functions as an ordering, stabilizing device but acts as a subversive agent when it erodes the coherence it supposedly establishes and maintains.

4. challenges literary conventions by blurring the distinctions between such categories as character and narrator, past and present, time of narration and time of the narrative, main story and narrative frame.

5. challenges assumptions about human nature by undermining the concept of the independent and isolated human individual.

6. challenges assumptions about the nature of creativity by questioning the possibility of original (ex nihilo) literary production.

Most critics discuss repetition in terms of sameness and "spatial form."

Assuming that a word or phrase, when repeated, is identical to its previous occurrences, they conclude that the aim of repetition is to abolish time by space. But this study makes difference rather than sameness the main focus and accounts for the effect on repetition of intervening material. This new perspective corrects the overemphasis that the "spatial form" orthodoxy places on analogical relationships. When repetitive devices are analyzed both temporally and spatially, Faulkner and Simon are seen to go beyond spatial form to exploit repetition through breaks in the narrative sequence. Continuities and discontinuities thus complement each other in ways that differ significantly from "spatial form" interpretations.
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This study has arisen out of a more or less intuitive awareness that recent prose fiction makes both frequent and innovative use of repetition. As I turned to critical investigations of the theory and practice of literary repetition, I found that very little work had been done in this area and that the existing approaches tended to be rather one-sided. Since articles and books dealing directly with my subject were relatively scarce, I had to extend my research into related fields in order to apply their methods and findings to my own study. With some diligence and some luck I stumbled on many interesting theories of language and fiction that shed considerable light on my enterprise. The main difficulty of my approach was that I did not know in advance what exactly I was looking for. Since I could not find a coherent and convincing theory or model for repetition, I had to formulate one with the supplementary help of literary texts. The texts did not only supply illustrations (answers) for a theory but, at the same time, they provided the questions that would have to be asked for such a theory to come into existence. This meant that I had to start my analysis from the texts without making an interpretation my main concern.

My initial intention was to consult a representative cross-section of contemporary fiction in order to determine the role of repetition in recent literary developments. But, since texts had to be read very closely for the right theoretical questions to emerge, I decided to limit myself to two texts. *Absalom, Absalom!* and *La Route des Flandres* suggested themselves because they typify the "difficult" or experimental novel and because they include a variety of examples illustrating the use of repetition. Although
the main focus of my study is the theory and practice of repetition, the juxtaposition of *Absalom* and *La Route* occasionally threatens to take over center stage. It is unavoidable, and perhaps even desirable, that this juxtaposition initiates certain shifts in the established interpretations of the two novels. One of the main attractions of comparative studies is that works illuminate each other, often highlighting aspects that would otherwise have gone unnoticed. The early comparatists' insistence on "influence" favors the interpretation of a later work in the light of an earlier one. This insistence obscures the importance of the opposite direction in the process of continuous critical evaluation which T.S. Eliot has formulated in "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

... what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new.¹

In certain areas, then, Simon's work modifies our attitude towards Faulkner's just as Faulkner's modifies our attitude towards Simon's. Aside from certain coincidences between *Absalom* and *La Route*, the juxtaposition should bring out most clearly where Faulkner is audaciously experimental and Simon unexpectedly traditional.

Confronted with an overwhelming number of literary repetitions in *Absalom* and *La Route*, I had to settle on a suitable arrangement of my material. Since I was interested in literary repetition as a manipulative
device rather than as an imitation of speech rhythms or natural phenomena, I decided to analyze repetition on different levels of textual complexity. A division suggested itself that would move from the smallest to the largest units of the text. The first chapter thus concentrates on the immediate repetition of words, the second on the interrupted repetition of words and sentences, the third on the repetitive patterns in narrative structure, and the fourth on the repetitive nature of intertextuality. The chapters turned out to be of rather unequal length. Although I considered dividing the long chapter on narrative structure into two smaller ones, I rejected this procedure because it would have distorted the controlling idea behind the study's organization. Contrary to the traditional thesis format, my study is not arranged according to causal sequence but according to analogical patterns. In defense of my analogical structure I can cite two particularly important considerations. The inductive nature of my investigation does not lend itself to the deductive form of a thesis statement that is supported by the body of the study. And, perhaps more significantly, the structure of my study reflects the assumptions and conclusions about the nature and function of literary repetition. Since the way Faulkner and Simon use literary repetition challenges center-controlled unity and linear causality in fiction, I have chosen a critical methodology based on analogy and levels of complexity.
INTRODUCTION

Although practical discussions of repetition in prose fiction appear once in a while, they generally fail to provide a clear understanding of the theoretical assumptions on which they are based. The concept of repetition is perhaps not as easy to pinpoint as it may seem. Since repetition is a fact of both life and art, discoveries made in one discipline are often applied to the study of another. The result is that different areas of inquiry are treated as if they were the same. The mechanistic workings of repetition in the natural world often provide a metaphor for repetition in behavioral fields like psychology or literature. One may object that this problem is merely a question of metaphoric distinction. But, as Jacques Derrida argues, "la métaphore n'est jamais innocente. Elle oriente la recherche et fixe les résultats." Choosing the right metaphor is therefore a matter of great importance and I propose to evaluate and, where necessary, replace existing metaphors for literary repetition.

Critical studies of literary repetition tend to cite Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle as a main source for their theoretical assumptions. Let us see where Freud himself borrows his metaphor for repetition in order to decide if literary scholars are indeed justified in basing themselves on his work. Beyond the Pleasure Principle discusses the relationship between the compulsion to repeat and the death instinct. Freud distinguishes between two principles. The pleasure principle is the "principle of constancy" which endeavors to avoid or reduce tension to an ideal state of equilibrium or inertia. The reality principle, on the other hand, arises
from external circumstances which force man to tolerate unpleasure or to postpone pleasure. With the famous Fort/Da example, Freud shows how a child transforms an unpleasant situation into a pleasant one by actively initiating unpleasure instead of being its passive victim. The compulsion to repeat is an instinctual urge to establish or rather to return to a state of pleasurable inertia. Freud argues that an instinct does not generate change but "is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things." An organism abandons its initial inertia only under the "pressure of external disturbing forces" so that the "aim of all life is death." The sex instincts, Freud's "true life instincts," only prolong the organism's road towards death. Human beings are therefore caught in a "vacillating rhythm" between the pressure towards death and the pressure towards life.

In System and Structure, Anthony Wilden claims that Freud's argument is weakened by two basic errors: a) the assumption that Fechner's bioenergetic model applies to the human organism; b) the belief that Eros and Thanatos are of the same level of abstraction. Let me elaborate on these two points. As we have seen, Freud considers stasis the basis of pleasure and the goal towards which all living organisms strive. Wilden argues that this is not so. Freud's models, Fechner and Helmholtz, are discussing a mechanistic, closed system, whereas Freud is concerned with human behavior, that is, with a system that is open to external (social) circumstances. Freud thus fails to distinguish "between closed-system or instinctual or programmed repetition and the OSCILLATION induced in goalseeking systems, not as a result of 'causes' emanating from their 'internal properties,'"
but as a result of constraints imposed on them by an environment."\textsuperscript{10} Wilden concludes that the main error associated with this confusion is that "tension is DEVIANT or an environmental intrusion; whereas in fact tension is one of the products of organization itself."\textsuperscript{11} Wilden's point is well taken, especially when we consider that the dynamics of conflict and contradiction as well as the oscillation of paradox and ambiguity are essential forms of human experience and behavior.

The second major flaw in Freud's model results from a confusion between Eros as a "principle of information"\textsuperscript{12} (human or social communication) and Thanatos which "cannot be properly applied above the physical or biochemical level."\textsuperscript{13} In other words, Freud discusses the human organism as a closed system which is divorced from any social context. The "'desire for death' (\textit{Todestrieb})," then, is "a bioenergetic explanation for the behavior of the goalseeking system [Freud] is studying (and inadequate so long as it reduces all goals to the biological level). . ."\textsuperscript{14} Repetition as a form of human behavior and human perception should not and cannot be abstracted from a social and temporal context. Inertia and stasis are manifestly dangerous and false metaphors for all repetition operating in open, behavioral systems. Since literature functions within a social and hence open context, these metaphors are therefore inadequate critical tools.

The stasis metaphor plays a central role in another often cited study on repetition: Eliade's \textit{Myth of the Eternal Return}.$^{15}$ Eliade's main point is that archaic man, practicing "ritual repetition,"\textsuperscript{16} is in "revolt against concrete, historical time."\textsuperscript{17} This revolt is based on observations about the cyclical recurrence of the seasons and the continuous renewal of
organic life. The attempt to abolish historical time is influenced by
the conservative tendencies of archaic man. Life for him was the constant
reenactment of the cosmic Creation:

1. Every creation repeats the pre-eminent cosmogonic act, the Creation of the world.

2. Consequently, whatever is founded has its foundation at the center of the world (since, as we know, the Creation itself took place from a center).18

Mythical experience is thus firmly grounded in an original source and a center around which all subsequent manifestations of life must turn. A definite beginning engenders and controls all later repetitions so that archaic man is always looking backwards and never towards the future. In harried modern times, we look back nostalgically toward archaic man's denial of historical time and see it as a more healthy attitude toward existence. There is no doubt something consoling in the belief that even the individual's own death represents only a step towards a new beginning. This notion of an eternal return certainly compares favorably with our own anxiety about the destructive process of time. However, modern society can only dream of recapturing this mythical notion of abolished time. Science has shown that even the cycles of nature are developmental and that the cosmos itself is entropic. The argument that repetition abolishes time is thus based on inadequate knowledge about the actual world and resorts to a metaphor which is supposed to describe natural phenomena rather than social interaction or literary artifice.

Two book-length studies on repetition in prose fiction resort to a stasis metaphor in order to describe the ways in which repetition functions in the works of writers like Faulkner, Forster, and Proust. Bruce
Kawin's *Telling It Again and Again* refers to Eliade and claims that repetition "has the power to abolish time" and to "abolish history." E.K. Brown, in his *Rhythm in the Novel*, reaches a similar conclusion about Proust's ambition to recapture the past. Since *A la recherche du temps perdu* is no doubt the most often cited work in critical evaluations of literary repetition, Proust's theories regarding timelessness are of considerable interest. Although the critical consensus identifies timelessness with stasis, Proust's aesthetic theory and practice do not really advocate the abolishment of time. Timelessness is an aesthetic principle that has its roots in relationships and analogies between different times, localities, characters, and other entities. The common assumption that the "mémoin involontaire" represents the most valuable lesson in *A la recherche* does not take into account that this experience is only a stepping stone towards Marcel's artistic breakthrough. As Gilles Deleuze points out:

Chez Proust, les clochers de Martinville et la petite phrase de Vinteuil, qui ne font intervenir aucun souvenir, aucune résurrection du passé, l'emporteront toujours sur la madeleine et les pavés de Venise, qui dépendent de la mémoin, et, à ce titre, renvoient encore à une "explication matérielle".

The steeples of Martinville and Vinteuil's little phrase are superior to the madeleine and the cobblestones because they consist of pure aesthetic pattern. Deleuze discusses a hierarchical order in *A la recherche* in which art occupies the highest position, whereas other realms, those of "la mondalité," "de l'amour," and "des impressions ou des qualités sensibles" represent imperfect stages on the road to pure aesthetic form. *A la recherche* exemplifies and argues for a relational aesthetics. The emphasis is on relationships and entities are denied any essence. The best art produces new
forms and rearranges habitual perceptions in such a way that established attitudes must be redefined. Elstir's painting "le port de Carquethuit," for instance, abolishes the normal demarcation between land and sea by using "pour la petite ville que des termes marins, et que des termes urbains pour la mer." Similarly, Marcel attributes the originality of an unnamed writer to the fact that "les rapports entre les choses étaient différents de ceux qui les liaient pour moi..." In spite of a strong subjective element in his aesthetic, Proust does not encourage or condone any unconstrained relativism. Art mediates between an inner and an outer reality because "toute impression est double, à demi engainée dans l'objet, prolongée en nous-même par une autre moitié que seul nous pourrions connaître." Even the finished work of art is not a self-contained entity. It interacts not only with its social referents but also with both previous and future works of art. The timelessness of art is not a question of subject matter but rather a constant struggle towards formal innovation. The creative artist must surpass and refute even those he admires because "on ne peut refaire ce qu'on aime qu'en le renonçant." The individual work transcends time only insofar as its formal novelty provides a new impetus for art. Proust's relational aesthetic thus works on the principle that everything is always potentially already something else, so that the novel functions as a complex network of analogies and relations that partially repeat each other. Repetition in the universe of A la recherche is more than a mnemonic device and is not tied to a center or origin. It is a formal principle which has the power to anticipate future patterns. Therefore, in the face of Proust's theory and praxis it seems inadequate to speak of repetition in terms of stasis and immobilization.
The stasis metaphor is flawed because it implies the absolute coincidence of events or points in time. In the case of the "mémôire involontaire," stasis would mean that the past and the present are identical rather than just the same. However, identity could not give aesthetic pleasure because it is undifferentiated and therefore cannot be perceived. Sameness, on the other hand, implies or subsumes difference. The same can only be perceived against a background of difference and, as Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze argue, it does in fact contain difference. Sameness and difference are thus as inextricably linked as presence and absence in Derrida's notion of "différence." In practical terms, it is important to remember that the impression left by the madeleine or the cobblestones in A la recherche is more intense when it is recollected than it was when first experienced. There is therefore a qualitative difference between two experiences which conjure up sameness. If the emphasis of the "mémôire involontaire" is on the relationship between two experiences, the result is a temporal parallax or displacement. Time and history are therefore not actually abolished.

The effect that is usually ascribed to arrested motion is really an oscillation between two or more moments in time. Even Kawin and Brown, although they stress the immobilizing effect of repetition, acknowledge that it "allows for progress" and "accretes meaning from the succession of contexts in which it occurs." Moreover, the "expanding symbol," that is "repetition balanced by variation," permits for Brown "a rhythmic arrangement that can do more than unify and intensify" because it is "an expression of belief in things hoped for, an index if not an evidence
of things not seen."  

Kawin also admits that "the aesthetics of repetition cannot really be separated from the aesthetics of change" and indicates that he has simply "chosen to emphasize the former." It is, however, questionable that the two aesthetics can be separated. A more complete method would have to approach repetition as a process of oscillation. Oscillation is an image that conveys not only the interrelationship of repetition and change but also the relational nature of repetition on all levels of complexity.

A comprehensive approach to repetition must take the context in which repetitions occur into consideration. The mere reappearance of a word, phrase, character, or episode is not in and of itself significant. It must be viewed against the background of other repetitions and/or of the narrative context. Wilden's discussion of context assumes an unlimited field of possibilities which is gradually narrowed down by natural or artificial constraints. A graphic demonstration of what he calls the "convergence of constraints" shows that the speaker of English is quite free to choose the letters "E L E P" but, constrained by the rules of the English language, he must add the only permissible sequence of "H A N T." The advantage of Wilden's methodology is that it respects levels of complexity. It accounts, for instance, for the relational nature of all context-bound systems:

As in the case of the boundary which separates "figure" and "ground" in a perception, boundaries belong neither to what is inside them, nor to what is outside them. The figure-ground boundary is the result of introducing a digital distinction into the analog continuum of differences in a perceptual field.

This implies that repetition resides neither in the first appearance of an
element nor in its subsequent reappearances but in the relationship between them. Instead of a circle image, repetition should be represented as a wave oscillating through time:

It should now be clear that I propose to replace the stasis metaphor with the more flexible concept of a wave. This image of repetition accommodates both static and temporal dimensions and lends itself to an illustration based on Roman Jakobson's famous metaphor/metonymy distinction:

**METAPHOR:**
- Code
- Selection
- Paradigm
- Substitution
- Similarity
- Condensation

**METONYMY:**
- Message
- Combination
- Syntagm
- Difference
- Contiguity
- Expansion

Repetition works on the syntagmatic axis by means of contiguity which means the reappearance of the same or very similar words, phrases, episodes in linear succession. On this metonymic axis, repetition introduces dispersion and interrupts the continuity of the text. If a continuous sequence like A B C D E F G H periodically repeats a letter, like A B C A D E A F G H A, the reader experiences this violation of the sequence as
unsettling. On the syntagmatic axis, repetition thus disturbs or impedes the linear narrative development and introduces recursive loops that force the reader to retrace his steps. On the paradigmatic axis, on the other hand, repetition unifies the text thematically and structurally through association. The recurrence of the element $A$ in the above example creates a vertical connection which belongs to a non-causal, analogical order. Paradigmatic patterns thus compensate for metonymic dispersion.

The vertical and the horizontal axes of repetition interact in such a way that one always mediates the terms of the other. The most accurate representation of repetition is therefore a triangle in which bilateral relations are inevitably connected by a locus of mediation. I am using the term "mediation" in the "formalist sense" defined by Raymond Williams in *Keywords*. Williams speaks of "mediation" as "an activity which directly expresses otherwise unexpressed relations" and traces this meaning to the notion of interaction as in itself substantial, with forms of its own, so that it is not the neutral process of the interaction of separate forms, but an active process in which the form of the mediation alters the things mediated, or by its nature indicates their nature. All entities are thus mediated by specific relations "but cannot be reduced to an abstraction of that relationship." If repetition could be achieved in the content of repeated events, it would be a bilateral and time-abolishing phenomenon. But since, at the very least, time separates events, a bilateral approach obscures the real relationship between them. If $A_1$ is the first occurrence of an event and $A_2$ represents its recurrence,
their relationship looks as follows:

The message in repetition cannot be transmitted directly from $A_1$ to $A_2$ (dotted line) but has to be mediated by a context. The mediated relationship between events changes both of them so that each is modified by the other. Mediation plays a positive role in repetition and provides an energetic rather than a mechanistic approach. The text no longer appears as a collection of either linear or geometric (static) relationships but as an energetic interplay of forces and processes. Structuralism is especially guilty of reducing texts to binary and geometric patterns which do not take other forms of organization into account. Jacques Derrida's critique of structuralism extends to Jean Rousset's phenomenological model in which "le géométrique ou le morphologique n'est corrigé que par une mécanique, jamais par une énergétique." Derrida himself favors a more process-oriented model which is able to account for the generative potency of literary texts: "La force de l'oeuvre, la force du génie, la force aussi de ce qui engendre en général, c'est ce qui résiste à la métaphore géométrique, et c'est l'objet propre de la critique littéraire." When Derrida claims that "le travail des forces ne se laisse plus traduire dans une différence de forme," he gestures towards a relational theory which concentrates not only on different kinds but also on different levels of relation. The dominance of the
spatial metaphor is particularly detrimental to critical discourse because it tends to blind us to other possibilities. Liane Norman warns of this danger when she points out:

The critical habit of seeing a piece of literature as a whole design, a symmetrical object in space, as it were, rather than an event apprehended in time, often obscures many of the structural functions of particular stratagems.45

If the dominance of the spatial metaphor for repetition is broken, the manipulative possibilities of the device can move into the foreground. As an energetic rather than a static influence, repetition creates ambiguities, controls complex relationships between characters, narrators, and implied readers, affects narrative pace, and initiates intertextual references. From the smallest linguistic units to the largest intertextual sphere, repetition demonstrates the same impulse to connect what is disparate and to separate what is unified. What should emerge from the present study of two examples of recent prose fiction is the variety and influence of repetition operative on all levels of literary discourse.
CHAPTER I

IMMEDIATE REPETITION

1. Introduction to immediate repetition

Kurtz's famous cry "'The horror! The horror!'" represents the climax of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Marlow's puzzled and fascinated recounting of Kurtz's last words imparts effectively the unknowable nightmare vision of the dying man. The mystery surrounding Kurtz's figure throughout the story is once more emphasized without being analyzed. Conrad conveys his message not only through the content of the word uttered but also through its repetition. Immediate repetition* of words or sentences is, of course, a general linguistic habit and it is not surprising that it should have found its way into literature. However, this type of repetition is not as innocent as it appears. Indeed, in novels, this device is often used to perform specific literary tasks. The title of Faulkner's novel *Absalom, Absalom!* is a good case in point. Had Faulkner chosen to call his novel simply "Absalom," the reader would expect a story centering on a character of this name in the tradition of *Madame Bovary*, *Anna Karenina*, *Tom Jones*, *Lord Jim*, or *Mrs. Dalloway*. The repetition in the

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*I use the term "immediate repetition" quite loosely and include both epizeuxis (immediate recurrence of a word) and diacope (repetition of the same words with words occurring in between). It seems to me that we react to both "All right, all right" and "All right, he said, all right" in essentially the same way. Moreover, I don't insist that my repetitions be absolutely identical in either form or content. Whether a statement reads "What shall I do" or "What shall we do" does not represent a significant enough difference to warrant a distinction.*
title informs us that Absalom, Absalom! does not belong to this tradition and that the focus of the novel will be on the universal implications of the circumstances associated with King David's son. As with Kurtz's words, the repetition in Faulkner's title communicates a message that goes beyond semantic significance. As a literary device,* immediate repetition implies more subtle suggestion than meets the eye.

Ludwig Klages exemplifies a traditional view of repetition as anachronistic vestiges of primitive thought processes. He supports his view with evidence of repetition in children's games, folklore, and music. This evidence convinces him that art forms which rely heavily on repetition (especially music) are backward examples of communication and will be left behind as the human mind evolves. But instead of diminishing in importance, as Klages foresaw in 1925, repetition seems to flourish in recent art and literature. If repetition should indeed be considered the remnant of a more primitive epistemology, its comeback in the twentieth century would represent a nostalgia for a pre-Cartesian or the hope for a post-Cartesian form of knowledge. In either case, it suggests a general dissatisfaction with Cartesian premises based on the following "copy model" of perception:

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object → sensation → perception → interpretation
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An alternative to this linear causal model would have to be relational and analogical. In medieval times, argues Michel Foucault in Les mots et les

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*I do not wish to deny that immediate repetition is perhaps equally complex in normal speech; however, my focus is on its literary use.
chooses, such a relational approach to reality was the order of the day:

Jusqu'à la fin du XVIè siècle, la ressemblance a joué un rôle bâtisseur dans le savoir de la culture occidentale. C'est elle qui a conduit pour une grande part l'exégèse et l'interprétation des textes: c'est elle qui a organisé le jeu des symboles, permis la connaissance des choses visibles et invisibles, guidé l'art de les représenter.3

The medieval world was an interrelated network of relationships, a text that was there to be interpreted: "Le monde est couvert de signes qu'il faut déchiffrer, et ces signes, qui révèlent des ressemblances et des affinités, ne sont eux-mêmes que des formes de la similitude."4 As an endless, limitless network of relationships, "la ressemblance ne peut être connue par elle-même" and therefore "les signes ne peuvent être autre chose que des similitudes."5 In other words, similitude can only refer to itself. Among the four principal figures of resemblance that Foucault isolates are analogy and sympathy. Unlike the dualistic perception of Cartesian rationalism, analogies and sympathies cannot be true or false but only more or less true.

Foucault believes that the twentieth century is in the process of another important epistemological turning point.* If the medieval relational model is the only known alternative to the Cartesian causal approach, a new epistemological shift would again turn towards some relational solution. Recent investigations into theories of perception support this assumption. A more accurate description of perception than the Cartesian

*Foucault identifies the first important epistemological break with the emergence of rationalism.
The copy model takes the form of Ulric Neisser diagrams in *Cognition and Reality.*

This figure emphasizes perception as an ongoing, relational process rather than a finite movement from object to interpretation.

Repetition, as a mode of communication that transcends rational limits, moves towards a relational model of perception. Especially immediate repetition, being the most emotive type of repetition, offers connotative rather than denotative messages. Wilden's differentiation between analog and digital information (terms borrowed from computer communication) permits a clear understanding of the interrelatedness and complementarity of such concepts as Frege's "Sinn" (connotation) and
"Bedeutung" (denotation). The analog is for Wilden "the emotive, the phatic, the conative, and the poetic" whereas the digital would be "the cognitive and the metalingual." The analog and the digital relate to each other in terms of a principle of balance:

The analog is pregnant with MEANING whereas the digital domain of SIGNIFICATION is, relatively speaking, somewhat barren. Thus what the analog gains in semantics it loses in syntactics and what the digital gains in syntactics it loses in semantics.

Measured in Wilden's sense, immediate repetition is pregnant with meaning but lacking in signification. Considering that language belongs to the domain of signification, any analysis of immediate repetition finds itself impeded by the heavy weight of analog meaning. Language is thus forced to depict a phenomenon that is foreign and hostile to its own nature. The most my study can hope to achieve is to demonstrate not so much the essence as the effect of immediate repetition on the literary text.

2. Immediate Repetition influences relationships within the text

2. a. Affective intensity and semantic ambiguity

Jean Cohen depicts immediate repetition as "la redite du signe entier (signifiant + signifié)" and associates it with tautology. Asking himself what a tautological repetition changes, he concludes: "Mais ce n'est pas le sens noétique. Et ce n'est pas non plus le sens pathétique, dans son contenu... Alors, où est le changement? Réponse: dans l'intensité de l'affect." What Cohen does not mention is that the semantic element of an immediate repetition can either reinforce or contradict the formal aspect. It is true that immediate repetition intensifies the
reader's affective response but, at the same time, immediate repetition also plays on ambiguities. When Rosa calls "'Judith!'... 'Judith!'" (p. 137) after learning of Henry's murder or when she says on two occasions "Why? Why? and Why?" (pp. 167, 170), a question she has "asked and listened to for almost fifty years" (p. 167), then the form simply reinforces and intensifies the speaker's anguish. Elsewhere in the text, immediate repetition works even more explicitly through double meanings. Referring to her barren childhood and youth, Rosa maintains that to be female means to "endure and then endure, without rhyme or reason or hope of reward—and then endure" (p. 144). The word "endure," denoting stoic resignation, is transformed into a bitter indictment of father and society. Similarly, Quentin's visit to Sutpen's Hundred with Rosa contains a repetition that must be interpreted on two levels. Quentin's "'I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do'" (p. 364) applies primarily to his uneasiness about entering a strange house at night, but it also means, on a figurative level, that he is afraid to find Henry, the surviving ghost from the past whose existence threatens to introduce reality into the largely fictive reconstruction of the Sutpen saga. Perhaps the most effective displacement between content and form appears in the ambiguity of the novel's last sentences. When Shreve asks "Why do you hate the South?" Quentin replies:

"I don't hate it," Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; "I don't hate it," he said. I don't hate it he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark; I don't. I don't! I don't hate it! I don't hate it! (p. 378).

If Quentin had stated only once that he does not hate the South, we would accept this as a statement of fact. One repetition of "I don't hate it" would
be construed as simple emphasis or as an attempt to convince Shreve.

But the multiple repetitions betray Quentin's intense, obsessive preoccupation with the South and force the reader to suspect that Quentin really does hate the South although he does not want to.

The use of immediate repetitions for purposes of intensification and ambiguity is a conventional literary device. I use the word "conventional" as the opposite of "experimental" and hope to avoid all pejorative associations in the same way as Simon does in an interview with Ludovic Janvier:

Bien sûr, dans les romans que j'appellerais non pas traditionnels (comme l'a dit Harold Rosenberg, la tradition en art c'est "la tradition du nouveau") mais plutôt conventionnels (et non pas "balzaciens", comme le font abusivement certains critiques en oubliant que les formes romanesques de Balzac étaient: a) absolument neuves et propres à Balzac et b) étroitement liées à un moment très précis de l'histoire dont nous sommes loin)... 12

To speak of a conventional device thus means that it is well established and has satisfied the requirements of many writers. Contemporary novelists, who choose to react against literary conventions, often do so not because they deny the value of well-used devices but because they wish to indicate the audacity and newness of their own endeavors. Simon, counting himself among experimental writers, rejects many conventional devices without, however, scorning predecessors who have used them. At the same time, Simon retains a number of conventional devices himself either because they serve his purposes or because he realizes that the innovative has to overlap with the already familiar if a text is to be accessible to a reading public.

One of the conventional devices Simon relies on is immediate repetition for intensification and ambiguity. The repetitive form of
utterances in *La Route* reinforces their semantic meaning and conveys joy, fear, anger, or mental anguish. Georges, for instance, expresses surprise and pleasure over the unexpected arrival of Blum in the same prison train by thinking: "Bon Dieu bon Dieu bon Dieu bon Dieu, le reconnaissant reconnaissant la voix. . ." (p. 164). On the other hand, desperation and the fear of being taken prisoner mark the plea of a soldier from another regiment who chances on Reixach's group with an empty horse: "'Laissez-moi monter laissez-moi monter oh dites laissez-moi monter!'" (p. 228). Perhaps the best example of immediate repetition in this context occurs in the sexually charged confrontations between Georges and Corinne. During their first meeting, Georges grabs Corinne's arm and presses it violently. Corinne responds by repeating: "Je vous en prie Voyons Je vous en prie Je vous en prie. . ." (p. 239). The repetition of these words conveys a complex message. In the first place, Corinne obviously reacts to the pain of Georges' grip. But, considering that Corinne is a married woman, she also addresses herself to the sexual aggression in Georges' action. Moreover, since Corinne rejects Georges' advance verbally but does not try to remove her arm, her words underline the woman's ambiguity towards the man's unspoken demand. Georges becomes Corinne's lover but the woman's initial ambiguity never disappears and, discovering that Georges treats her as a sex object, it turns into hatred. In the last scene between the lovers, Corinne expresses her mounting anger through a series of immediate repetitions. She attacks Georges, who has turned on the light, by yelling at him: "Eteins je te dis éteins éteins tu entends éteins" (p. 293). Her outburst tells Georges that she is angry even before she intensifies her offensive by calling him:
"Espèce de salaud Espèce de salaud" (p. 294) and by demanding: "Laisse-moi laisse-moi laisse-moi" (p. 294). The break-down of their relationship is as much the result of Georges' own sexual ambiguity as of Corinne's. The search for the essence of what is female leads Georges into a conflict with the "flesh and blood" woman. A similar conflict characterizes the relationship between Georges and his father Pierre. During the evening before Georges leaves for the war, Georges answers his father's innocent question "'Qu'est-ce que tu as?'" with what seems an unwarranted outburst: "'Rien je n'ai rien Je n'ai surtout pas envie d'aligner encore des mots et des mots et encore des mots'" (p. 36). On the one hand, this outburst conveys a typical father-son disagreement. But, on the other hand, it describes a more fundamental ambiguity in Georges' mind. Georges identifies his father with the world of books, whereas the war represents the world of action. The repetition of "mots" therefore communicates a rejection of Pierre's idealistic assumption that the key to a better world lies in education. As in the case of the other examples of immediate repetition in La Route, the repetitive form of Georges' statement reinforces its semantic content.

2. b. Formal transcendence

The interplay between form and content can take the shape of transcending the meaning of repeated words rather than merely reinforcing or contradicting them. In Absalom, for instance, immediate repetition communicates in purely formal terms feelings of entrapment. When Sutpen finds himself caught in an impossible situation, he expresses his inability to find a way out through an internal dialogue in which he discusses what
action he could take against Pettibone, the plantation owner who has insulted him by sending him to the backdoor:

But I can shoot him; he argued with himself and the other;
No. That wouldn't do no good; and the first: What shall we do then? and the other: I don't know; and the first: But I can shoot him... and the other: No. That wouldn't do no good; and the first: Then what shall we do? and the other: I don't know. (p. 235)

The dilemma whether or not to kill Pettibone is conveyed through a potentially limitless dialogue within Sutpen. By conjuring up the image of a mind trapped like a caged animal, Faulkner shows that Sutpen is imprisoned by circumstances. The same image applies to Quentin whose mind is locked in the past history of the South. Meeting face to face with Henry, Quentin's conversation with the surviving ghost takes on the form of a circle without exit:

And you are---?
Henry Sutpen.
And you have been here---?
Four years.
And you came home---?
To die. Yes.
To die?
Yes. To die.
And you have been here---?
Four years.
And you are---?
Henry Sutpen. (p. 373)

The physical presence of a character out of the Sutpen past moves the story Quentin and Shreve have constructed out of fiction and into reality. Quentin is so obsessed with the past that he cannot live properly in the present; but, as long as he can relegate the Sutpen saga to fiction and hence keep some distance from it, he maintains some hold on sanity. This hold becomes precarious once Quentin discovers Henry, for he laments: "'Nevermore of
peace. Nevermore of peace. Nevermore Nevermore Nevermore Nevermore" (p. 373). Quentin's peace of mind has of course been eroded slowly as his preoccupation with the Sutpen saga has intensified. Shreve's needling curiosity edges Quentin on and threatens to suffocate him in the endless repetition of the same facts through Rosa, Mr. Compson, and finally Shreve. Reacting to Shreve's decision to take over as narrator, Quentin thus imparts his anguished fascination by complaining:

Am I going to have to hear it all again he thought I am going to have to hear it all over again I am already hearing it all over again I am listening to it all over again I shall have to never listen to anything else but this again forever. . . (p. 277)

Mere words could not depict as vividly as this repetitive construction an obsessive state of mind. Through immediate repetition, Faulkner forces the reader to enter, through mimetic action, into Sutpen's and Quentin's trap.

2. c. Cumulative pattern

A cumulative pattern of immediate repetitions is really a case of formal transcendence on a larger scale. The distribution of immediate repetitions can be used to control and develop the intensity of situations or character traits. In Absalom, we find a cumulative pattern of immediate repetitions which communicates the increasing dilemma of a character and the gradual progress towards a plot climax. It is of course impossible to measure the increase in intensity in arithmetical fashion. The cumulative effect is more satisfactorily explained in terms of Gilles Deleuze's comment on the annual festivities commemorating the French Confederation: "La fête n'a pas d'autre paradoxe apparent: répéter un 'irrecommençable'. Non pas
ajouter une seconde et une troisième fois à la première, mais porter la première fois à la 'nième' puissance." The exponential power Deleuze describes represents a suitable analogy for the cumulative effect found in the episodes devoted to the relationship between Bon and Henry that lead up to the crucial fratricide. The pattern of immediate repetitions subtly reinforces the way in which circumstances gradually narrow down Henry's possibilities of escaping from an impossible dilemma.

The fratricide is the consequence of two important factors in Bon's background: he is Sutpen's son from a first marriage and he is part negro. Faulkner traces the way in which Henry learns about these factors and how he tries to accept and incorporate them within his moral framework. The first speculations about the fratricide are offered by Mr. Compson who exemplifies here the customs and attitudes of Southern whites. He believes that Bon's octoroon mistress is the crucial obstacle. This speculation is misleading on a factual level but coincides with the mental and emotional state Quentin and Shreve later attribute to Henry. Although Mr. Compson's reasons are wrong, he is right in showing how a tortured Henry sides with Bon even though the evidence Sutpen offers against the friend at Christmas is no doubt true. Confronted with what he knows to be true and unwilling to accept it, he exclaims:

I will believe; I will. I will. Even if it is so, even if what my father told me is true and which, in spite of myself, I cannot keep from knowing is true, I will still believe (p. 90).

Henry reiterates "I will believe! I will! I will! Whether it is true or not, I will believe!" (p. 111) while he and Bon are looking for the octoroon mistress in New Orleans, and again "I will believe! I will! I will!" (p. 112)
when confronted with the marriage license. For Mr. Compson, the line
Henry will not cross is the legal document because it goes against the
customs of the South: "But you married her. You married her!" (p. 117).
Of course, once Quentin and Shreve pick up the story of what pushed Henry
to kill Bon, the octoroon mistress disappears from center stage.

Quentin and Shreve know that Bon is Sutpen's son and that his in-
tention to marry Judith amounts to incest. In their view, Bon threatens to
transgress not only social custom but also moral law. In this version of
the story, the truth Henry learns at Christmas is the fact that Bon is his
brother. Mr. Compson's depiction of Henry's dilemma corresponds to the
emotional struggle that characterizes the son's decision to turn against
the father. But the focus is now no longer on New Orleans but on the four
years Henry and Bon spend in the war. The main issue seems to be Bon's
intended incest. Henry begs: "'Wait. Wait. Let me get used to it!" (p. 340)
and, when Bon ends the period of suspension by announcing his decision to
marry Judith, Henry sighs: "'Thank God. Thank God,' not for the incest of
course but because at last they were going to do something. . ." (p. 347).
Having given his consent against his better judgment, Henry expresses his
ambivalence in words that are supposed to convey his satisfaction but
succeed in showing only his anguish: "'Thank God. Thank God! panting and
saying 'Thank God,' saying, 'Don't try to explain it. Just do it!'" (p. 349).
Henry tries hard to convince himself that he approves of the incest, and,
even when his father tries to make him retract his permission, he remains
firm: "'Yes. I have decided, Brother or not, I have decided. I will. I will"'
(p. 354). Quentin and Shreve are picking up words from Mr. Compson's version
and are now using them to underline Henry's gradual change of mind. When Sutpen tells Henry that Bon is not only his brother but also part negro, Henry arrives at a barrier he cannot scale. At first he still wavers between rejecting and accepting Bon: "-No! Henry cries. -No! No! I will--I'll---" (p. 356). It is Bon who finally forces Henry to admit defeat. Referring to Bon's irreversible decision to marry Judith, the following dialogue takes place:

-No, Henry says. --No. No.
-I cannot?
-You shall not.
-Who will stop me, Henry?
-No, Henry says. --No. No. No. (p. 357)

Henry moves from an initial "-Yes. I will. . ." to a "-No! I will. . ." and ends with an emphatic "No. You shall not!" He then confirms his painfully established stand by repeating twice more "You shall not!" (p. 358). The immediate repetitions serve to reinforce emotional intensity and stress Henry's gradually narrowing options. The cumulative pattern thus provides signals for the urgency and progress of a situation that is inevitably moving towards a catastrophic resolution.

3. Immediate Repetition influences the relationship between text and reality

The examples of immediate repetition discussed so far are in one sense or another concerned with the relationship between form and content within the text itself. But immediate repetitions also operate on a different level; they signal a conflict between truth and fiction. The narrators in Absalom and La Route are often confronted with a reality which
contradicts the "truth" of their imagination. We are no longer dealing with degrees of ambiguity, generated by differences between form and content, but with absolute either/or questions about factual accuracy. These questions are most skillfully introduced by means of a double narrator. The disputes between Quentin and Shreve in *Absalom* and between Georges and Blum in *La Route* permit a constant evaluation of facts and of their interpretations. Occasionally Faulkner and Simon draw explicit attention to the arbitrary and illusory nature of fiction. They interrupt the even flow of the narrative with immediate repetitions which force the reader to ask himself whether the account he is reading can be trusted or not.

In *Absalom*, Shreve and Quentin sometimes correct each other as in the case of Quentin's geographical error:

"All right," Quentin said. "---West Virginia wasn't admitted---"
"All right," Quentin said. "---into the United States until---"
"All right all right all right," Quentin said. (pp. 220-21)

The reader knows that it does not matter much whether Sutpen's home state was called West Virginia or not. Nevertheless, he is compelled to consider the reliability of a narrator who is apparently unable to deal with even the most basic factual information. The reader's suspicions are reinforced by Shreve's inability to follow the vertiginous plunges of Quentin's imagination: "Wait. Wait. You can't know yet. You cannot know yet whether what you see is what you are looking at or what you are believing. Wait. Wait." (p. 314). In view of the difficulties the reader experiences with *Absalom*, he undoubtedly shares and applauds Shreve's cautionary scepticism. Quentin himself eventually admits his limitations in understanding the
reasons and motivations of his characters:

"I don't know," Quentin said. "Yes, of course I understand it." They breathed in the darkness. After a moment Quentin said: "I don't know."
"Yes. You don't know. You don't even know about the old dame, the Aunt Rosa." (p. 362)

Quentin's reiteration of "I don't know" indicates that he is often groping in the dark. His failure is of course a general failure. Total reality remains outside the human grasp, and the predominantly subjective selection of pertinent details that Proust suggests in his notion of "involuntary memory" is perhaps the only accessible truth.

In *La Route*, immediate repetitions focus on the same question of truth and fiction as in *Absalom*. Speaking of the story Blum constructs about the Reixach ancestor, Georges queries: "Bien sûr. Bien sûr. Bien sûr. Mais comment savoir?..." (p. 85). Although Georges indicates at least partial agreement with Blum, his qualification and the very need to comment on the story suggest that it might be suspect. When Georges interrupts Blum's narrative with a correction about the ancestor's wife, this suspicion becomes a certainty: "'Donc cette Déjanire....', et Georges: 'Virginie', et Blum: 'Quoi?', et Georges: 'S'appelait Virginie.' Et Blum: 'Beau nom pour une putain. Donc cette virginal Virginie...." (p. 191). Blum immediately incorporates the new information and thereby admits that his reconstruction is built more on supposition than fact.

Blum periodically solicits agreement from Georges and, as in the case of his conjecture that the ancestor was killed by his wife's lover, receives a negative response: "Et Georges 'Non!' Et Blum: 'Non? Non? Non? Mais com-
ment le sais-tu à la fin?" (p. 200-201).* In *Absalom*, Shreve's queries demand that Quentin, as the creator of the Sutpen saga, account for the sources of his material, whereas in *La Route*, the story-teller Blum challenges Georges to prove that his imaginative reconstruction is not true. In spite of the concern Faulkner and Simon share for questions of truth and fiction, there is a subtle shift of emphasis from *Absalom* to *La Route*. Faulkner's concern for verisimilitude makes him defend the claims of fiction, whereas Simon's acceptance of fiction as reality puts the burden of negative proof on the doctrine of verisimilitude.

4. **Immediate Repetition and the relationship between two types of fiction**

The examples of immediate repetition in *Absalom* and *La Route* have so far been motivated by predominantly psychological considerations. They have occurred in direct and reported speech and in direct and reported thought. On the whole, they have commented on emotional or mental attitudes and situations. But a completely different use of immediate repetition appears in *La Route*. Simon adapts immediate repetition to purely structural functions in the form of structural pivots** and word games. These techniques owe their

* A similar passage appears on the subject of the ancestor's return from Spain: "Est-ce que ce n'est pas comme ça?" asks Blum and receives the emphatic answer: "'Non!', et Blum: 'Non? Mais qu'en sais-tu?', et Georges: 'Non!'" (p. 199).

effectiveness to manipulations of language and not to psychologically justified associations. Jean Ricardou, the most adamant spokesman for the nouveau roman, rejects such psychological interpretations as deplorable manifestations of the dominant ideology in critical discourse. Simon's own statements have tended to support the psychological and later the formalistic approaches. His "psychologisme" betrays itself in statements like: "Tout ce qu'on peut écrire c'est non pas le monde extérieur mais sa projection en nous." In a later interview, Simon contradicts this earlier position and sides with Ricardou:

As I have said, my texts have no "referents;" there is no model, imitation, copy, reproduction—words which inevitably come to mind with this unfortunate choice of terminology. There are, instead, excitants and stimuli that both initiate and reactivate, and that are most often brought into play by what I call "writing in action."

If structural pivots and word games are appreciated as formal experiments, they show Simon's tendency to separate his fiction from conventional techniques.

3. a. Structural pivot

The structural pivot, perhaps Simon's most original contribution to fiction, is not strictly speaking an immediate repetition. The repetition is either too diffuse—some material invariably separates the repeated entities—or too condensed—the repetition is subsumed as in case of the pun. Nevertheless, the structural pivot resembles immediate repetition sufficiently to be discussed here. The primary function of the pivot is to bring about a bifurcation in the narrative without recourse to conventional transitions. Contrary to other immediate repetitions, which tend to
intensify or unify the narrative, the structural pivot introduces discontinuities by switching narrative levels without warning. Instead of deepening emotional aspects of the text or exploiting tensions vertically between form and content or truth and fiction, the structural pivot operates on the horizontal level and depends for its tension on the dislocation of narrative strands. The context in which the structural pivot occurs is of crucial importance. The semantic content of repeated words, however, is perhaps even less significant than in immediate repetitions where form underlines content when emotional intensity is desired and contrasts with it when ambiguity is intended. In the case of a pivot, repeated words are chosen because they fulfill a structural need and their selection is usually dictated by an apposite double meaning. The pivot is used not because it comments on the story but because it executes narrative transitions.

The structural pivots in *La Route* are of two basic types. In the one case, the repeated word applies in its literal meaning to two different narrative episodes. In the other one, the pivot works on a double meaning in which one episode relies on the literal and the other on the figurative connotation. The type in which the repetition of a literal meaning is involved is still close to conventional transitions. *La Route* describes Corinne at the races and then, with the help of a pivot, switches to Georges riding through a wet night at the Flanders front. The narrative switch is indicated not only by the pivot but also by a paragraph indentation, a traditional marker for a change in narrative content. The first paragraph ends with: "Corinne se levant nonchalamment, se dirigeant sans
hâte... vers les tribunes..." and the next one starts with: "Mais il n'y avait pas de tribunes, pas de public élégant pour nous regarder..." (pp. 24-25). The two episodes juxtapose an activity in two different contexts so as to make a social comment. The episodes are similar because in both instances men are riding horses. They are different in that the first episode depicts high society at the races during peace time, whereas the second describes the dismal experience of the cavalry in war action. Although the link between the episodes is justified thematically, it appears rather contrived on the formal level. "Tribunes" is repeated in negative terms, that is, the significance of the connection is that there are no "tribunes" in Flanders. Due to this negative dimension, the narrative switch is not based on a double meaning or the repetition of a word in different contexts.

The pivot working-on-literal meanings works more successfully in another example. The narrative segments concern a mad prisoner who is locked-up in the Saxon prison camp and the love making between Georges and Corinne: "...il est foutu de brailler comme ça sans arrêt toute la nuit, hurlant sans fin sans but dans les ténèbres, hurlant puis brusquement elle cessa..." (p. 264). Here the narrative switch is almost imperceptible and is recognized only after the reader, having found himself suddenly in new territory, has retraced his steps and ascertained that "hurlant" applies in one instance to the mad prisoner and in the other to Corinne. Compared to the "tribunes" example, this pivot has a more disruptive impact on the structural level and functions more organically on the thematic one.
The second type of pivot forces a narrative transition by using both the literal and the figurative connotation of a word. The transition can be brought about by using first either the literal or the figurative meaning. In the case of a pun, the literal meaning comes first and is then complemented by the figurative one. The pun does not actually repeat a word but compels the reader to read the same word twice. Ricardou draws attention to the pun in an example where Georges comments on de Reixach's aristocratic habits:

...ces réflexes et traditions ancestralement conservées comme qui dirait dans la Saumur et fortifiées par la suite, quoique d'après ce qu'on racontait elle... s'était chargée en seulement quatre ans de mariage de lui faire oublier ou en tout cas mettre en rancart un certain nombre de ces traditionnelles traditions. ... (p. 12).

The word "saumure" and its phonetic equivalent "Saumur" has two meanings: "sens capté: le sel; sens véritable: école militaire." By speaking of "la Saumur", Simon already attracts the reader's attention because the definite article represents, in this case, a transgression against the rules of grammar. Ricardou differentiates between the ordinary pun, where the hidden meaning supports the literal one, and the pivot in Simon's novel, where "Le sens approché et le sens véritable jouissent d'une manière d'équivalence. Le mot Saumur joue dès lors le rôle d'un aiguillage. Instantanément, la phrase bifurque vers une autre voie, l'évocation de Corinne en ce qu'elle fit abandonner à de Reixach le prolongement de Saumur: la carrière." The hidden meaning assumes an importance equal to the surface one. Both meanings of "saumur" suggest the concept of conservation and Corinne

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*This example is not strictly speaking a pun; it is more a far-fetched "à peu près".
represents the erosion and disruption of the stability a de Reixach has traditionally enjoyed. The narrative switch, however, receives its full significance only if we recall that a crudely told story involving sex is called "une histoire salée" in French.* The word "Saumur" therefore functions structurally as a fully motivated pivot.

Ricardou singles out another interesting pivot in La Route which he calls a "metaphore structurelle" because the figurative and the literal meaning of a word form the foundation for a transition. The pivot moves the narrative from de Reixach brandishing his sabre to reflections about Corinne:

...toute la lumière et la gloire, sur l'acier virginal. . .
Seulement, vierge, il y avait belle lurette qu'elle ne l'était plus. . . (p. 13).

The pivot refers to its own inappropriateness by pointing out that "vierge" applies to Corinne only in an ironic sense. But the irony is extremely functional because it comments on the precariousness of an aristocratic code that cherishes the illusion of purity in both military and domestic matters. There are, of course, less complex examples of pivots in La Route and, since this device is relatively new and unusual, they should perhaps be illustrated. Blum's irreverent retelling of de Reixach's struggle to keep his wife, for instance, plays on a symbol of control over both horses and women. Speaking of de Reixach's attempt to rival Iglésia's mastery over horses, Blum's double meanings constantly confuse horse and woman:

...c'est-à-dire qu'il l'amènerait elle aussi au poteau. . . lui ferait passer le goût ou l'envie d'un autre poteau. . .ou si tu préfères d'un autre bâton, c'est-à-dire que s'il réussissait à se servir de son bâton aussi bien que ce jockey qui..." (p. 185).

*Ricardou does not make this last point clear.
"Bâton", literally a stick to tame horses and figuratively the male sex organ, permits Simon to switch back and forth between the horse race and Corinne's infidelities. Comparisons between human beings and animals lend themselves especially to sexual double meanings and represent a fertile ground for switches between war and love scenes. At one point, the narrative moves from Georges as an escaped prisoner to his making love to Corinne. Georges sums up his state of mind by saying: "... je n'étais plus un homme mais un animal" (p. 292). He then qualifies this statement and relates his unfortunate condition to sexual gratification:

... j'étais un chien je galopais à quatre pattes... comme seule une bête pouvait le faire insensible à la fatigue à mes mains déchirées j'étais cet âne de la légende grecque raidi comme un âne idole d'or enfoncée dans sa délicate et tendre chair... (p. 292).

The transition is extremely smooth and again the reader is forced to retrace his steps in order to follow the narrative. A last example of a pivot moving from a literal to a figurative meaning is once more concerned with Georges' war experience and his sexual consciousness. Lying in a ditch in order to escape detection by the Germans, Georges thinks: "... et dans les aubes grises l'herbe aussi était grise couverte de rosée que je buvais la buvant par là tout entière... buvant son ventre les boules de ses seins fuyant sous mes doigts... " (p. 260). Although war, love, and jealousy provide highly emotional contexts, the structural pivots never function to intensify an affective situation. These exclusively structural examples of immediate repetition work against conventional literary technique in that they emphasize formal rather than thematic aspects of transitions.
b. Word games

Word games are again a rather loose form of immediate repetition. The repetition is no longer of entire words but of even smaller units of meaning. In poetry similar repetitions are called alliteration, a poetic device which usually fulfills the reader's expectations of pleasing harmonies and unifying connections. In La Route, however, this kind of repetition has a disruptive, provocative, and disorienting effect because it unexpectedly confronts us in a prose context and because the word combinations are not necessarily compatible. In Blum's description of the ancestor's state of mind when he discovers his wife's infidelity, words are still semantically connected but clearly chosen for their alliterative possibilities: "...et lui se tenant là, dans ce désordre de l'esprit, ce désarroi, ce désespoir: défait, désorienté, désarçonné, dépossédé de tout et peut-être déjà détaché, et peut-être déjà à demi détruit..." (p. 199). This list does not seem to be a serious attempt at recreating the ancestor's feelings. The words obviously generate their own momentum and make descriptive meaning a secondary consideration. A similar word game depicts the frustration Georges experiences when he tries to ride a horse with stirrups that are too short: "...alors que j'avais l'habitude je veux dire j'habitais l'attitude je veux dire j'habitudais de monter long..." (p. 311). Here the momentum of the words transgresses against grammar and creates the word "j'habitudais" which does not exist in French. Twisting language to achieve effects, Simon has Georges wonder about names of villages that may or may not be in German hands. All the soldiers can know is the
"noms énigmatiques sur les plaques indicatrices les bornes, coloriés eux aussi et moyennâgeux Liessies comme liesse kermesse Hénin nennin Hirson hérisson hirsute Fourmies..." (p. 309).* The possibility of combining words in different ways, so as to form heterogeneous series or even nonsense words which are still functional, shows how arbitrary language is. Simon forces the reader out of his automatic responses to the text and makes him think about language and the process of fiction. Immediate repetition has a defamiliarizing effect which heightens our awareness of the technical frontiers Simon is approaching. The new fiction advocated by Simon strives against expectations set up by literary conventions and challenges established fictional forms.

5. Conclusion

A psychological study of rhythm and repetition by Paul Fraisse differentiates between temporal and spatial repetition. Fraisse argues that temporal repetition is more emotive whereas spatial repetition is more intellectual:

Cependant, il n'y a qu'analogie entre répétition de formes spatiales et succession de formes temporelles. Certes on retrouve dans les deux cas des processus perceptifs de même nature, mais une différence essentielle se manifeste: l'exploration de la répétition dans l'espace, même lorsqu'elle exige une succession de fixations oculaires, n'engendre pas l'induction motrice qui caractérise les successions temporelles de stimulations extéroceptives surtout de nature auditive. Il manque au rythme spatial d'être cette expérience originale qui entraîne toute la personnalité dans un mouvement riche de répercussions affectives.18

*Other examples of such word games can be found on pp. 41-42, 296, and 309 of La Route.
Immediate repetition belongs to the temporal category because the proximity of repeated words permits virtually no spatial associations. The high emotive level of immediate repetitions thus coincides with Fraisse's general observations. However, the literary use of immediate repetition does contain a strong current of intellectual manipulation. We have seen that immediate repetitions negotiate between the form (syntax) and meaning (semantics) of words, attract attention to questions of truth and fiction, and contribute to the conflict between conventional and experimental literary techniques. Faulkner and Simon are almost always in control of the results they achieve by means of immediate repetitions. This is perhaps most explicit in Simon's experimentation with structural pivots. The structural pivot works on a linear (temporal) level since it determines bifurcations in the narrative flow. It therefore operates in a technical, intellectual way and hence directs itself against Fraisse's conclusion. Simon in fact succeeds in using immediate repetition in a way that is contrary to its normal functioning. The same point applies, although in different degrees, to the other types of immediate repetition I have discussed.

Immediate repetitions are best understood when the context is taken into consideration. The context mediates the relationship between repeated words because in isolation immediate repetitions would lose their significance. On an informational level, immediate repetitions are tautological because to repeat the same word adds nothing to our understanding of facts. But a tautology is not totally redundant; it carries a different kind of message. Through a simple repetition it is
possible to suggest elaborate meanings, ambiguities, and nuances without resorting to lengthy explanations. On the one hand, immediate repetition is therefore redundant and expansionary and, on the other, it condenses the text and contributes to its economy. It is of course obvious that immediate repetitions do not capture the meaning of an event by themselves. They function more as a supporting structure in that they express in a different code what the text has already explained. If we take the example of immediate repetitions punctuating the relationship between Henry and Bon during the war (2.c), it is clear that Faulkner tells us again what he has already told us in other descriptive passages. Immediate repetitions are thus a form of what Riffaterre calls "overdetermination." Riffaterre argues that all literature operates on a multiplicity of codes. His work on "overdetermination" concentrates primarily on metaphor. He speaks, for instance, of a "contextual overdetermination of 'pining'" in Wordsworth's "Yew Trees" and points out that the word tree "is stated again and again in a cumulative sequence." If immediate repetitions are acknowledged as a form of "overdetermination," their active contribution to literary texts can be fully appreciated.
CHAPTER II

Interrupted Repetition of words and sentences

1. Introduction

Interrupted repetition distinguishes itself from immediate repetition in that the repeated words or sentences are separated by other words or sentences. Traditional rhetoric classifies this type of repetition as a diacope. As a stylistic term, a diacope is more or less limited to repetitions on the sentence level. Whenever repeated words punctuate extended passages, paragraphs, or chapters, we no longer speak of diacope but of recurring key-words (or sentences). Both diacope and recurring key-words are instrumental in regulating the pace of the narrative; they are rhythmic devices. Diacope functions almost entirely as a stylistic convenience which permits sentences to expand or contract. Recurring key-words, however, serve not only rhythmic purposes but initiate paradigmatic associations between individual segments in which repeated words appear. Where diacope has a temporal dimension only, recurring key-words operate on both a temporal and a spatial axis.

My discussion of diacope and recurring key-words in Absalom and La Route makes use of two earlier critical studies: Monique Hyde's unpublished dissertation on "William Faulkner and Claude Simon: A Stylistic Study" and Joseph W. Reed's Faulkner's Narrative. Hyde concentrates on "the long sentence, the heavy use of the present participle, the abundance of parenthesis" as the most fruitful "aspects of resemblance" between the two authors. She examines the typical loose sentence in the
works of Faulkner and Simon by focusing on "syntactical structures and atomic components." Her study is thorough, though perhaps a shade tedious because of her tendency to illustrate her points with copious examples in the form of relatively long citations from texts. My own interest in the sentences of Faulkner and Simon is more limited than Hyde's and does not demand the same detailed and comprehensive attention to grammatical and stylistic questions. Hyde's analysis does, however, overlap with my own focus on the subject of parallel constructions, "reprises," and, to a lesser extent, approximations.

Reed's book on Faulkner is one of the best studies of the narrative structure in Faulkner's novels. The chapter on Absalom (chapter 7) offers many significant insights which reinforce my own ideas not only about narrative progression but also about the crucial importance of metaphor. Indeed, Reed's careful analysis of metaphor in Absalom supplies many parallels to the ways in which recurring key-words function. In Reed's opinion, "Absalom is Faulkner's most metaphorical novel, and metaphor is more central to its meaning than to that of any of his other novels." It is therefore not surprising that Reed produces a diagram (in the appendix) which gives detailed information on the frequency and density of metaphor in the novel. From this data, Reed draws conclusions about the "narrative's tempo, pace, and rhythm" and "narrative strategy" in general. Since recurring key-words are quite often metaphors, their distribution coincides more or less with Reed's diagram. Metaphors and recurring key words also work in concert as the "central barrier to a contented and comfortable reading of Absalom," because both devices frustrate reader expectations. As might
be expected, aside from occasional parallels, Reed's study of metaphor does not always move in the same direction as an analysis of recurring key-words. Both Hyde and Reed thus provide me with useful information without necessarily influencing the orientation of my own investigations.

2. Repetition in the sentence

The sentence in the works of Faulkner and Simon has a tendency toward digression, accretion, modification. It often stretches grammar to its limits: occasionally it is even downright ungrammatical. What keeps the sentence together is usually a distinctive rhythm. This rhythm is supported by repetitive patterns in which a key-word reappears several times. Parallel constructions and "reprises" are some landmarks of this pattern. In order to differentiate between parallel constructions and "reprises," it is necessary to give some rather long examples. A typical parallel construction, a device used only by Faulkner, appears in the first chapter of Absalom:* 

... though I defy anyone to blame me, an orphan of twenty, a young woman without resources, who should desire not only to justify her situation but to vindicate the honor of a family the good name of whose women has never been impugned, by accepting the honorable proffer of marriage from the man whose food she was forced to subsist on. And most of all, I do not plead myself: a young woman emerging from a holocaust which had taken parents security and all from her, who had seen all that living meant to her fall into ruins about the feet of a few figures with the shapes of men but with the names and statures of heroes--a young woman, I say, thrown into daily and hourly contact with one of these men... (p. 19; italics mine)

*This example was not used by Hyde; for other examples, see Hyde pp. 94-95.
The repetition of "a young woman" reminds the reader periodically of the subject matter in question. The parallel construction keeps the labyrinthine sentence together and controls its digressive tendency. A "reprise" is a slightly modified form of a parallel construction. The term is borrowed from the field of music where its use is now "restricted to the repetition of or return to the first subject or theme, of a sonata movement, after the development." In short, it is a recapitulation which differs from the parallel construction "in that the word or phrase repeated is not merely a kind of mnemonic device referring back to the same person or action, but resumes the main thread of the sentence, usually after an addition, an explanation or a digression, and helps its progress." Hyde differentiates between "reprises" which concentrate on verbs, present participles, nouns, and conjunctions. As my purpose is not specifically stylistic, this kind of detailed classification seems superfluous. Instead I will select a few good examples to clarify the way in which "reprises" function. In Absalom, the "reprise" frames a digression which is almost always put within a parenthesis:

And so in the next two seconds they would almost catch him (he—the lawyer—would show her the actual letter, the writing in the English she couldn't read, that had just come in, that he had just sent for the nigger to carry to her when she came in, and the lawyer done practised putting the necessary date on the letter until he could do it now while his back would be toward her, in the two seconds it would take him to get the letter out of the file)—catch him, get so close to him as to have ample satisfaction that he was alive; . . . (p. 305; italics mine).

The parenthesis betrays a clinging to the old literary principle of "clarity" and shows a lack of confidence in the reader's ability to understand the text without typographical help. Simon occasionally
submits to the pressures of the "clarity" convention and includes a parenthesis. The death of Wack, for instance, is described in a parenthesis in which the slow-motion quality of the incident is stressed. The last words before the parenthesis are "puis je vis Wack" (p. 158) and the first ones after the parenthesis are "je vis Wack qui venait de me dépasser. . ." (p. 159).* But Simon also experiments with "reprises" that are not reinforced by parentheses. The following passage focuses on George's escape from prison camp and on his making love to Corinne:

. . . toujours courant galopant à quatre pattes j'étais un chien la langue pendante galopant haletant tous deux comme des chiens je pouvais voir sous moi ses reins creuses, râlant, la bouche à moitié étouffée voilant son cri mouillé de salive dans l'oreiller froissé et par delà son-épaule sa joue d'enfant couchee sa bouche d'enfant aux lèvres gonflées meurtries entr'ouvertes exhalant le râle tandis que je m'enfonçais lentement entrant m'engloutissant il me semblait de nouveau que cela n'aurait pas ne pouvait pas avoir de fin mes mains posées, appuyées sur ses hanches écartant je pouvais le voir brun fauve dans la nuit et sa bouche faisant Aaah aaaaaaaaah m'enfonçant tout entier dans cette mousse ces mauves pétale j'étais un chien je galopais à quatre pattes dans les fourrées. . . (pp. 291-92; my italics)

The "reprise" is perhaps not as obvious as in the passages with parenthesis. It is, however, quite evident and the chiasmus (reversed order of phrases) adds still another dimension to the device. The passage is bewildering because the digression concerns the sexual act and has no direct connection with the description of Georges' escape. This bewilderment increases as the material separating the repeated phrases gets longer. Hyde cites an example where the phrase "leurs uniformes raides, conservant" (p. 69) is repeated nineteen lines apart. Moreover,

*For other examples, cf. Hyde pp. 95-100.
the digression makes a comparison between old newsreels and comments on the "stupidity of crowds" and thereby takes us "far away from the description in progress (the soldiers' uniforms)." Indeed, the reader virtually forgets that he is confronted with a digression. The long gap between repeated sentences gives the digression precedence over the main theme so that the return to the main description takes him by surprise. It is in fact sometimes difficult to say whether the "reprise" controls the meandering sentence or contributes to its confusion.

Another rhythmic and repetititve device, used extensively by both Faulkner and Simon, is the use of conjectural terms in order to achieve, in Warren Beck's words, a "statement of alternative suggestions." Two good examples, one from each novel, should demonstrate sufficiently how repetitive this device is:

... this man whom Henry first saw riding perhaps through the grove at the University on one of the two horses which he kept there or perhaps crossing the campus on foot in the slightly Frenchified cloak and hat which he wore, or perhaps (I like to think this) presented formally to the man reclining in a flowered, almost feminized gown, in a sunny window in his chamber... (p. 95; my italics).

Et peut-être n'était-ce même pas le déshonneur, la brusque révélation--et son incapacité (après tout peut-être n'était-il pas absolument imbécile--comment le savoir?--peut-être n'est-il pas interdit d'imaginer que ses ordres étaient non pas stupides mais les meilleurs... (p. 214; my italics).

Similar effects are achieved with words like "doubtless," "probably," "maybe," etc. in Absalom and "sans doute," "probablement," "plutôt," "c'est-à-dire," etc. in La Route. Here, as in the case of parallel constructions and "reprises," repetition reveals itself as a central
component of the long, meandering sentence. Thus, on the sentence level, interrupted repetition establishes a rhythmic pattern, keeps sentences from disintegrating into chaos, and, in some instances, even contributes to the reader's disorientation.

3. **Repetition in the arrangement of recurring key-words**

The combination of confusion and coherence, characteristic of interrupted repetition on the sentence level, can be observed in even larger narrative units. The recurrence of key-words in extended passages, paragraphs, chapters, and the overall text controls a variety of narrative functions. It sets up barriers against expectations, keeps a digressive narrative together, and regulates the novel's pace. In addition to these already familiar functions of interrupted repetition, recurring key-words perform descriptive tasks and manipulate events by making the meaning of certain key-words "slide" or develop. Recurring key-words serve thematic and structural intentions and, although they are usually a clearly visible phenomenon, they can work below the surface and influence the reader's responses in subtle ways. This section investigates the nature and function of recurring key-words and discusses some of their thematic and structural implications.

3. a. **Mood and atmosphere**

Stefan Hock discovers "in gewissen Formen der Wiederholung einen starken Stimmungsgehalt" and thereby points to an area of repetition that is often alluded to. The more a word is repeated, the more loaded it
becomes. The mood in the opening section of Absalom has been often and successfully analyzed as a function of adjectival profusion. Reed, for instance, states that the "first two paragraphs are heavily atmospheric—we are transported to Miss Havisham's chamber—but they are also heavy with adjectives (forty-nine in the first and seventy-six in the second)." What Reed fails to stress is that many of these adjectives (and their noun forms) are repeated. The sterility of Rosa's life is primarily suggested through the reiteration of "hot," "dead," "dark," "dusty," and "dry" in the following variations: "hot weary dead September afternoon," "hot airless room," "moving air carried heat," "dark was always cooler," "dust motes," "dead old dried paint," "dry vivid dusty sound," "in the eternal black," "long-dead objects," "Out of the biding and dreamy and victorious dust," "dim coffin-smelling gloom," "old flesh," "dried sand." In order to complete the picture of a woman existing in arrested time, Faulkner also includes repeated references to time and the seasons: "September afternoon," "forty-three summers," "wistaria vine blooming for the second time that summer," "forty-three years now," "twice-bloomed wistaria," "quiet September sun" (pp. 7-8). Although the opening paragraphs contain the heaviest concentration of repetitions for mood, they appear throughout Absalom. I do not think that this argument needs detailed support; the constant recurrence of key-words like "outrage," "doom," "despair," "fate," "ghost," "ogre," "shadow," "shade," "shape," "phantom," "curse," and "destiny" should be sufficient evidence.

As in Absalom, recurring key-words help to set the atmosphere
in La Route. Since a large part of La Route takes place during the phoney war of September 1939 to May 1940 and the active war of May 10 to June 10, 1940, the atmosphere determining words center around the discomforts soldiers are exposed to. There are frequent allusions to the physical environment of "boue," "pluie," and "nuit" as well as to basic needs like "dormir," "manger," "boire," and "smoking". Depicting the demoralization of the soldiers, Simon resorts to repetitions of "décomposition," "dégradation," "érosion," "désordre," "défaite," "désastre," "pourrir," and "puer." These recurring key-words bring the digressions into Georges' sexual preoccupations back to the physical reality of the war. The mood Simon establishes is thus not merely descriptive but facilitates a juxtaposition of lived experience and imaginary existence.

It is not through a strictly cumulative effect that recurring key-words produce the desired mood. Although repetition imbues words with deeper significance and thereby contributes to their "key-word" status, it leads to another important consequence. Both Absalom and La Route are highly fragmented and digressive texts. Recurring key-words recall thematic issues and tie together narrative fragments. If the context in which recurring key-words appear is taken into consideration, disparate episodes are brought into contact and assume a meaning that is not limited to a cumulative effect alone. Indeed, by virtue of their fragmentation, Absalom and La Route invite a paradigmatic reading along the vertical axis of repeated key-words.
3. b. Characterization

Recurring key-words often function in "leitmotif" fashion. "Leitmotif" is a term borrowed from music where it was first developed by Richard Wagner to apply to a "short musical phrase representing and recurring with a given character, situation, or emotion in an opera." Both Faulkner and Simon use "leitmotif"-type words and phrases for their depiction of characters. Occasionally they do so for comic relief. The fixed figure of speech "They aint whupped us yet, air they" (pp. 184, 187, 278, 280) characterizes Wash, Faulkner's tragicomic conception of a poor white. Simon also resorts to a humorous "leitmotif" when he repeats "... peut-être voulait-il seulement tirer son coup lui aussi" (pp. 123, 276). This ambiguous expression sums up the lame man's love of guns and suspected sexual frustration. But, in general, "leitmotifs" are used more seriously. Some characters in Absalom are consistently referred to by an expression that sums up their traits as the narrators see them. Ellen is a "blooming butterfly" (pp. 69, 72, 74, 75, 78, 80, 85, 97, 126), Bon is a "fatalist" (pp. 105, 108, 120, 123, 132, 270, 318, 335), and Sutpen is alternatively a "demon" (pp. 8, 9, 11, 13, etc.) or a "fine figure" (pp. 184, 271, 282, 287, 288, 304, 363). Similarly, Simon depicts de Reixach's impact on Georges through "leitmotifs" that denote the captain's aristocratic bearing. Many references are made to his impassive facial expression, his "dos raide" in the saddle, and the lifted "sabre" at the moment of his death. De Reixach's ancestor is repeatedly associated with twenty-three volumes of Rousseau and Iglésia is treated to a "visage de Polichinelle" (pp. 124, 151, 165, 172) because of his big
nose. Unlike other recurring key-words, "leitmotifs" do not deepen their meaning through repetition but, because they act as quasi-musical signals, they lose their specific semantic importance. Descriptive aptness makes room for rhythmic quality.

3. c. Association

The "leitmotif" for comic effect and for character identification belongs to a literary convention whose main exponent is Thomas Mann. In early works, the "leitmotif" is limited to external character traits with usually symbolic overtones. The most famous of these appears in Buddenbrooks where Thomas Buddenbrook's rotten teeth suggest the decay of the family dynasty. In later works, especially in Doktor Faustus, "leitmotifs" perform more complex thematic and structural roles. The Esmeralda "leitmotif", for instance, is no longer a stable entity but expands and changes its meaning as it enters into association with other motifs. Simon, too, resorts to similar ambitious "leitmotif" techniques. The recurring key-word is short-hand for an extended incident and, because the incident is now reduced to a small unit, it can enter into associative series. The recurrence of a key-word does not produce emotive intensity or add new information. The "leitmotif" of the lifted "sabre" at the moment of de Reixach's death illustrates this point. "Sabre" is first mentioned in a passage that describes the death scene quite adequately:*

*The only more complete depiction occurs in the long description at the end of La Route which does not mention the word "sabre."
... comme par exemple ce réflexe qu'il a eu de tirer son sabre quand cette rafale lui est partie dans le nez de derrière la haie: un moment j'ai pu le voir ainsi le bras levé brandissant cette arme inutile et dérisoire... comme si son cheval et lui avaient été coulés tout ensemble dans une seule et même matière, un métal gris, le soleil miroitant un instant sur la lame nue puis le tout—homme cheval et sabre—s'écroulant d'une pièce sur le côté comme un cavalier de plomb... (p. 12).

This passage represents the first statement of a theme on which a number of variations are later played. It contains virtually all the information we are likely to glean from this theme. The variations are simply restatements which are occasionally contradictory. In one instance Georges indicates that his first impression was that only the horse had been killed because, with respect to de Reixach, "nous l'avons vu dégainer son sabre..." (p. 47). Another time Georges believes that "le geste absurde et dérisoire de dégainer et brandir ce sabre" came at a point when de Reixach was "déjà complètement mort" (p. 89). Perhaps more important are short references to "sabre" that tend to be intervowen with other events and images. Speaking of the ancestor, Simon unexpectedly switches to "un simple canard sans tête brandissant ce sabre l'élevant étincelant dans la lumière avant de s'écrouler sur le côté..." (p. 90) and, in a passage describing the decomposing dead horse, Georges suddenly asks himself "quand est-ce qu'il se mettrait à puer pour de bon continuant toujours à brandir son sabre..." (p. 117). And, when Georges is particularly conscious of a spring day, he associates "l'aveuglant soleil de mai" with the memory of "un instant [où] avait étincelé l'acier du sabre brandi..." (p. 125). Simon merges de Reixach first with the ancestor and then with the dead horse. The key-word also relates two separate moments in time.

La Route conditions the reader to recognize "sabre" as a signal for de
Reixach's death and the ambiguous circumstances surrounding it. Even when the figure "brandissant le sabre" (p. 234) is mixed in with references to Blum, Iglesia, Corinne, and Sabine, the reader is immediately able to identify the appropriate episode and to establish the necessary associations between de Reixach and the other characters. The various allusions to de Reixach's death certainly go beyond the strict definition of the "leitmotif." This complex technique encourages a paradigmatic reading which is perhaps even more pronounced in the "leitmotif" of the "paon tissé dans le rideau" (p. 122), referring to the woman who hides behind a curtain at the lame man's farm. Although "rideau" or "paon" always points to a specific episode, the motif gradually takes on larger significance. Because it appears repeatedly in conjunction with Corinne and the ancestor's wife, it eventually comes to stand for all real and imagined incidents that involve adulterous love. The "leitmotif" thus turns into a focal point whose resonances extend far beyond the initial situation.

3. d. Instability

The recurring key-words I have associated with the "leitmotif" have a fixed meaning and, although they echo other images, they are always tied to a specific character or episode. Not all recurring key-words work along the lines of simple equivalence. Some develop and proliferate because they change their meaning or because different voices employ them. It is in this area that the studies of metaphor and of recurring key-words coincide to some extent. The correspondence between metaphor and recurring key-word is, of course, only partial.
Metaphors do not necessarily depend on recurrence; many words are
metaphors because they conform to a literary convention. On the other
hand, many recurring key-words have no figurative significance. Never­
theless, some of Reed's observations about metaphor in Absalom run
parallel to my own on recurring key-words. He argues, for instance,
that "one character takes over another character's metaphor and changes
its tone and purpose."18 Words like "demon", "doom," and "fate" are
introduced by Rosa in a highly emotional tone. Mr. Compson then picks
them up in a more descriptive mode so that Rosa's words, when repeated
by Mr. Compson, lose their incantatory power in exchange for a more
detached approach. When Shreve finally resorts to the same words again,
he does so in an exaggerated and ironic way. By the time Rosa's words
are appropriated by Shreve, they have degenerated into parodies of
themselves.

Words that are used by different characters occur often and
therefore attract special attention. In order to increase their visibility
further, Faulkner has chosen words that have been used so much in litera­
ture that they are immediately recognizable as clichés. Usually writers try
to avoid clichés, preferring an original style and vision. But Faulkner is
audacious enough to repeat words that have already been classified as over­
used. He thereby exploits our conditioned uneasiness about clichés and
transforms them into symbols of a psychologically unhealthy attitude towards
the past. Especially Rosa and, to a lesser extent, Quentin betray an obses­
sion with Sutpen's story that manifests itself through an excessive fond­
ness for clichés.
What further complicates the issue of recurring key-words is that they are not only used by different characters but can apply to a variety of situations. Reed states that:

> even the most convenient or frequently repeated metaphors are subject to development. Some begin with one tendency of meaning, evolve through the book, and emerge with quite another meaning.\(^1\)

The word "outrage," for instance, appears in the account of various characters and depicts a number of only loosely related situations. It describes Sutpen's insulting proposal to Rosa (p. 177), alludes to Bon's death (Rosa, p. 140; Shreve, p. 179), indicates Bon's feelings towards Sutpen (Mr. Compson, 96; Shreve 308; Bon, 318), applies to negro women (Shreve, pp. 299, 313; Mr. Compson, p. 269; Bon, p. 116), conveys the town's attitude towards Sutpen (Mr. Compson, p. 46), refers to the death of Rosa's father (Mr. Compson, p. 84), interprets Sutpen's account of his trip to Haiti (Quentin, p. 246), and comments on Quentin's narrative "over-tone... of smoldering outrage" (p. 218) When the word "outrage" is studied in its specific contexts, it reveals itself as a highly unstable element. Superficial statements concerning Faulkner's use of "outrage" generally assume that it stands in a one-step equivalency to Rosa's hatred of Sutpen. However, as the detailed account of the word's use suggests, "outrage" is a favorite term with all the narrators and can occur in descriptions that have nothing to do with either Rosa or Sutpen. The instability characteristic of recurring key-words like "outrage" is partly related to the speculative nature of the narrative. Since different narrators evaluate the same events, it is not surprising that key-words develop their own meaning and appear in changing contexts. But, the word
"outrage" attracts attention also because it is melodramatically colored. This coloring is in itself disturbing and, when it combines with unstable recurrence, the reader becomes disoriented. Faulkner means to shock the reader out of his habitual responses to metaphor and clichés. Through repetition he once again transgresses established literary practice.

3. e. Pace

If the frequency and distribution of recurring key-words are analyzed, some interesting insights about Faulkner's literary technique emerge. Some of these coincide with Reed's remarks about the relationship between pace and metaphor. He argues, for instance, that the high percentage of metaphor in the first two paragraphs of Absalom--paragraphs which also contain a high concentration of recurring key-words--is not "calculated to persuade us to read on." There are too many gaps and holes in these paragraphs to stimulate the reader's curiosity. Instead of postulating a specific enigma, Faulkner simply indicates that mystery in itself is at the core of the narrative we are about to read. This procedure either compels the reader to continue in spite of his bewilderment or to abandon the novel from the start.

The second valuable insight Reed conveys about the first two paragraphs reads as follows: "Just at the point Faulkner might be expected to want to speed us up, to soar and zoom and pull us into the book, verbal excess slows us down." With "verbal excess" Reed means of course metaphor. However, the narrative contains not just a lot of different metaphors but the same metaphors appearing again and again. Metaphor and recurrence often combine to slow down the narrative just when at least a partial resolution appears on
the horizon. In Chapter Five, Rosa's account of her own story, Faulkner moves towards the moment when Rosa is expected to reveal what "bald outrageous words" (p. 168) Sutpen spoke to her when the narrative suddenly switches to a recapitulation of what we know already. This recapitulation is all the more frustrating as it consists of key-words like "doomed," "demon," "shot," "waiting," "dead," "love" (p. 169), key-words that make the reader impatient with Rosa's convoluted style. Faulkner does not place clusters of recurring key-words where the narrative approaches or arrives at a climax. He inserts them instead in those areas where progress must be slowed down. Reed is correct in stating: "If the reader is conscious of any dragging in the pace, he notices metaphor" (p. 151). He notices not only metaphor but also repetition. Suspense cannot operate properly because the "dragging in the pace" impedes the conventional movement towards resolutions. Although ordered progress often seems to be just around the corner, it is inevitably sabotaged by verbal excess. The barriers to stock responses are not just a willful game with literary conventions; they force the reader to complement his habitual horizontal reading with a vertical one. Instead of concentrating on events and resolutions, Absalom moves questions of motivation and narrative process into the foreground. The recurrence of key-words thus draws attention away from representation and towards interpretation.

It is interesting to note that Simon refrains from using recurring key-words for pacing purposes. We find no increase in emotional intensity or narrative speed in La Route that could be traced back to recurring key-words. The reasons for this must be sought in Simon's refusal to give
some themes preference or dominance over others. In accordance with the theoretical presuppositions of the new novel, La Route is supposed to assign more or less equal significance to all themes and to concentrate on their interrelations rather than on their hierarchical arrangements. I have shown, for instance, that the recurrence of "sabre" conforms to an associative rather than a cumulative pattern. Such associative patterns are marked by radical fragmentation so that the kind of suspense structure important in Absalom cannot operate in La Route and recurring key-words can therefore not act as barriers to reader expectation. Since Simon avoids even the illusion of a movement towards resolution, pace in La Route is not determined by the relative presence or absence of verbal excess. Moreover, since the fragmented construction of the novel naturally imposes a predominantly vertical reading, recurring key-words are not needed to draw attention away from the text's horizontal dimension.

4. Repetition in the structural operations of recurring key-words

I have so far discussed recurring key-words of a figurative nature. Although I have emphasized their technical functions, a thematic coloring has nevertheless tenaciously clung to them. However, not all recurrence concerns words with metaphoric significance. Both Faulkner and Simon exploit recurring key-words for predominantly structural purposes. In contrast to the figurative key-words, the structural ones are not associated with central episodes or specific characters. They are more or less picked at random and are used to counteract or sometimes to increase the fragmentation of a text, to perform transitional operations, and to
help the reader unravel complex associative labyrinths. The specific characteristics of these structural manipulations depend on the degree of digression and fragmentation in a narrative. In Absalom, one of the first experimental novels, much care is taken to guide the uninitiated reader. In La Route, on the other hand, the reader's ability to cope with experimental writing is taken for granted, and the main concern is with the surface and geometry of the text. The different attitude towards digression and fragmentation influences the ways in which recurring key-words contribute to structural choices. Digression and fragmentation thus provide the necessary context for this kind of repetition.

4. a. Orientation among narrative voices and strands

Faulkner's effort to make a complex and fragmented novel like Absalom accessible to his readers makes him include a certain amount of reading assistance. Recurring key-words counterbalance the novel's digressive narrative and offer some foothold on both a localized and on a more general level of the text. The first chapter of Absalom, for instance, facilitates orientation among the narrative voices and temporal dislocations by means of certain reiterated phrases. These phrases avert total narrative disintegration by leading the reader periodically back to the main story line. The repeated phrases tend to justify the digressions and thereby give the illusion of some narrative cohesion. When Rosa insists in two places that Sutpen "wasn't a gentleman" (pp. 14, 16), she suggests that Sutpen's disreputable character explains and justifies her digression into his marriage, the fratricide, the war, and his arrival in Jefferson. Rosa's constantly wandering mind needs to be kept in check by such reiterations
as Sutpen's need for "respectability" (pp. 15, 16, 17, 28), Rosa's claim that she "holds no brief" either for herself or Ellen (pp. 15, 17, 18), Ellen's demand that Rosa "protect them" (specifically "Judith") (pp. 15, 18, 21, 22), and the children's need to be protected "only from themselves" (pp. 25, 27). These repetitions establish some minimal narrative order and give the illusion that Rosa pursues a conventional goal as a story teller. The difficulty with Faulkner's footholds is that they are quite unstable and have a tendency to overlap. Their arrangement in the first chapter makes this quite clear:

A  He wasn't even a gentleman  A  A
B  I hold no grief  B  B  B
C  Protect them (or Judith)  C  C  C  C
D  Respectability  D  D  D
E  Protect them from themselves  E  E  E  E

The reader is reassured by the reappearing key-phrases because they suggest that an ordering hand is at work. The established order is of course largely illusory. Not only does the overlapping make any neat linear progression impossible, but the key-phrases are only a surface phenomenon which covers up the real organization of the chapter. The chapter's significance lies not in the story line established through the recurring phrases but in the digressions they justify. Faulkner's narrative progression resembles Simon's sentence "reprises" for they, too, impel us to accept digressions for the main concern.* Recurring key-phrases, then, lure us into a more or less linear approach while the weight of the chapter always pulls us towards a paradigmatic reading.

*See section 2, this chapter.
Recurring key-phrases also help to sort out the many narrator levels in Absalom. The constant criss-crossing of narrative levels would be incomprehensible if certain signals did not clarify their interconnections. Quentin's presence is most prominent in the opening section, where he partially accounts for his role. Faulkner introduces a narrative frame for the Sutpen saga by presenting Quentin in the act of listening to accounts about the past. This frame concentrates on Quentin's puzzlement about Rosa's decision to tell him her story and brackets the digressions dealing with Sutpen and his children. First of all, Quentin introduces and closes his description of Rosa in her tomb-like room by repeating the statement: "It's because she wants it told" (pp. 10, 11). He then anticipates his father's explanations for Rosa's reasons: "It would be three hours yet before he would learn why she had sent for him..." (p. 11). This anticipation is followed by brief allusions to Sutpen's arrival, the children's fate, and Sutpen's death. The frame story has now arrived at a later time that same day when Quentin asks his father: "But why tell me about it?" (p. 12). This question is an invitation to Mr. Compson for his interpretation of Rosa's character and behavior. With Quentin's resolution to continue in his narrator role---"Whatever her reason for choosing him..."(p. 13)---the story of Sutpen's early activities in Jefferson is subsequently resumed. The repeated references to Quentin's puzzlement neatly signal narrative switches between the portraits of Sutpen and Rosa.

The repeated phrases in the first chapter are spaced relatively close together and even quite oblique repetitions are easily recognized.
But when the spaces between repeated segments are larger, the repetitions must be made more visible. Semantic resemblances are consequently reinforced by identical or near-identical syntactical formulations. Faulkner makes particularly effective use of widely spaced repetitions in Chapter III. This chapter belongs to Mr. Compson and is much better focused and organized than the opening section. Indeed, after Rosa's meandering voice, Mr. Compson's account strikes us as connected and logical. We are in fact almost blinded to the still very digressive nature of this part of the novel. This is perhaps because the digressions tend to be confined to the events covered in the chapter and do not introduce radical temporal dislocations. The recurring key-phrases are intended to support the illusion that Mr. Compson offers a reassuringly rational approach to the Sutpen saga. They usually appear at the beginning of paragraphs and force the digressing narrative temporarily back to the main thread. The following examples demonstrate how paragraph openings that echo each other suggest an ordered narrative progression:

"That may have been the last time she saw him [Sutpen]" (p. 66).
"Although she was not to see Sutpen again for years. . ." (p. 68).
"That was the summer following Henry's first year at the University. . ." (p. 70).
"That summer she saw Henry again too" (p. 71).
"Then she stopped seeing Ellen even" (p. 73).
"So Miss Rosa did not see any of them; . . ." (p. 74).
"So she didn't even see Ellen anymore" (p. 78).

Although the material covered in the paragraphs moves back and forth
between events taking place from Sutpen's arrival to Bon's death, the echoing paragraph openings try to deny or counteract this fact. This method permits Faulkner to portray Mr. Compson as a logical, rational man and, at the same time, to continue the novel's associative structure.

4. b. Temporal stratification and ellipses

Recurring key-phrases in *Absalom* tend to emphasize the novel's continuity and coherence; they often cover up or smooth over the digressions in the narrative. But they can also draw explicit attention either to temporal stratifications or to gaps in the story. The chapter concerned with Sutpen's past (Chapter VII) provides illustrations for both possibilities. The initial frame story for the flashback into Sutpen's childhood and youth is the chase and consequent capture of the escaped French architect in 1835. Progress reports on the chase alternate with General Compson's report on Sutpen's confidences. These confidences contain a large ellipse. After General Compson has told of Sutpen's early experiences, the arduous journey to Haiti is summarized in the sentence: "He went to the West Indies" (p. 238). Following a switch to the architect chase, Sutpen's story is resumed with the same sentence (p. 239). General Compson then repeats Sutpen's explanation for going to the West Indies. We learn that the idea was suggested to him in school but the actual journey is again summarily dismissed with: "... and I went to the West Indies" (p. 243). When Sutpen's story is once more taken up, he has already arrived in Haiti. Faulkner draws attention to the ellipse in order to show that Sutpen's exploits were not dictated by love of adventure but by the demands of a design. The same point is made when
Sutpen's journey from Haiti to Jefferson is again lost in an ellipse. His arrival in Jefferson is as sudden as his arrival in Haiti. This time the ellipse occurs in the frame story; it takes thirty years before Sutpen finishes his tale. The architect frame ends with Sutpen's decision to leave Haiti and a new frame, Sutpen's visit to General Compson's office in 1864, forms the background to Sutpen's life in Jefferson. In conclusion, then, the alternations between frame and main story are always abrupt and definite. The narrative can no longer be termed digressive but moves on two distinct temporal levels. And, instead of framing a digression, recurring phrases emphasize ellipses. Repetition in this chapter thus signals temporal dislocations and narrative discontinuities.

4. c. Documentation

Both *Absalom* and *La Route* are narratives about narrative and hence very conscious of the relationship between fiction and reality. Novelists of the past have often tried to give their fiction an illusion of reality by including all sorts of documents which were supposed to vouch for the authenticity of the narrative. Authors were fond of pretending that they had found letters, a diary, a travel log, or other factual sources on which they based their stories. It is surprising that experimental authors like Faulkner and Simon include some documents of this type. In *Absalom* these sources of verisimilitude are not addressed to the reader but to Quentin who needs to convince himself that the people about whom he talks have some reality. In *La Route*, however, these sources undermine conventional gestures towards verisimilitude and
declare their unreliability.

In *Absalom* there are over seventy references to various letters and notes. Many of these letters represent a verifiable link between the past of Sutpen and the present of Quentin; they tend to be tangible objects that Quentin sees or handles in the framing part of the novel. The most remarkable and repeatedly alluded to letters are the note in which Miss Rosa requests Quentin's visit, the letter Quentin receives at Harvard announcing Rosa's death, and the only surviving letter of Bon's correspondence to Judith. The conjectures about Sutpen and his children are periodically punctuated by glances at Quentin in the act of contemplating one of these letters. The letters thereby mediate between the levels of narrator and narrative. Most of the letters are eventually quoted in full so that their physical presence and content revelation amount to formidable proof that their authors had once existed. The gravestones that Quentin visits in Chapter Six function in much the same way as the letters. They form a frame that permits Faulkner to digress into the life story of each of the people buried at Sutpen's Hundred. Most of the life stories take the form of a quick summary of already known facts. But the gravestone of Charles-Etienne Saint-Valéry Bon introduces a character about whom very little has been known before. The gravestones provide physical evidence that the "ghosts" of Quentin's story were at one time living beings. Photographs, especially the family portrait in Sutpen's library, are another form of documentation that suggests that the existence of a story based on fact.

At first glance, similar documents seem to function in much the same
way in *La Route*. Since childhood, for instance, Georges' imagination has been stimulated by the portrait of the ancestor. Especially a crack in the paint, parading as a bullet wound in the man's forehead, has frightened the child and now intrigues the soldier. Georges' conjectures are considerably influenced by the illusory wound, and the reconstruction of the ancestor's death is therefore based on false evidence (pp. 56, 57, 80, 225). Indeed, portraits and other paintings are consistently shown to falsify reality in one way or another. Blum blames "le savoir-faire de l'artiste..." (p. 196) for the appearance of the ancestor and his wife in two small medallion pictures, and Georges has to read the name of the person represented in order to identify the ancestor's wife in one particularly bad portrait. Moreover, Georges occasionally pretends that he bases certain descriptions on paintings he has seen. One such painting concerns the ancestor's war experiences in Spain. But just as Blum is about to believe in the painting, its existence is denied: "Il n'y avait non plus--du moins il n'en avait jamais vu--d'image représentant cette bataille, cette défaite, cette déroute..." (pp. 214, 215). The only picture of the battle Georges is aware of illustrates "la phase victorieuse de la campagne: mais cette victoire n'était arrivée qu'un an plus tard, et c'était environ cent ans plus tard encore qu'un peintre officiel avait été chargé de la représenter..." (p. 215). The retrospective rearrangement of events emphasizes a glorified conception of the historical past and the artist's temporal distance from his subject further distorts the facts. In a similar case, Georges leaves it unclear whether an
etching, on which he apparently relies for the details of the ancestor's story, is actually in his family's possession or not. It is only when Blum challenges him directly that he admits the non-existence of such an etching (pp. 85, 186-87, 202, 214). The documentary evidence in La Route is thus subject to aesthetic conventions or has been constructed retrospectively. It is made to fit historical preconceptions or turns out to be completely imaginary. Simon summarizes the unreliability of such documents by relegating them to a "gravure qui n'existait même pas" and a "portrait peint cent cinquante ans plus tôt..." (p. 231). What served in Absalom as a genuine attempt to give some verisimilitude to the narrative is dismissed in La Route as a highly suspect convention.

4. d. Heterogeneous connections

Recurring key-words or sentences of the non-figurative type lend themselves to associations that differ in some ways from those achieved by means of recurring leitmotifs or metaphors. Recurring leitmotifs and metaphors identify themes which are already given prominence in the novel. De Reixach's "sabre" or the word "outrage" in Absalom connect a central concern with a number of other main focal points. The recurrence of non-figurative key-words supports associations that are not directly related but belong together because of juxtapositional arrangements. Such associations are considerably more arbitrary than metaphoric ones. Simon, for instance, likes to describe phenomena as color blobs, that is, in the way they first reach the senses. The advantage of color blobs is that they can apply to an almost limitless number of things. One of the
most frequently mentioned colors in *La Route* is pink. Pink is above all the color of de Reixach's stable so that both Iglesia and later de Reixach himself appear as a "casaque rose" (pp. 23, 150, 154, 179) or simply as a "tache rose" (pp. 150, 168, 174, 177). The pink racing color is extracted from Georges' description of horses in terms of constantly changing colors against a fixed background of trees:

Jaune, bretelles et toque bleues--le fond vert noir des marronniers--Noire, croix de Saint-André bleue et toque blanche--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Damier bleu et rose toque bleue--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Rayée cerise et bleue, toque bleu ciel--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Jaune, manches cerclées jaune et rouge, toque rouge--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Rouge, coutures grises, toque rouge--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Bleu clair, manches noires, brassard et toque rouges--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Grenat, toque grenat--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Jaune, cercle et brassards verts, toque rouge--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Bleue, manches rouges, brassard et toque verts--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Violette, croix de Lorraine cerise, toque violette--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Rouge, pois bleus, manches et toque rouges--le mur vert noir des marronniers--Marron cerclé bleu ciel, toque noire. . . (pp. 22-23).

The color pink, specifically, permits Simon to carry out a number of interesting operations. Both being under the influence of Corinne, Iglesia and de Reixach are drawn together because they wear a "casaque rose vif. . . qu'elle leur avait en quelque sorte imposée à tous deux" (p. 154).

Corinne herself is identified with pink. Watching the race, she is standing with "une de ces feuilles jaunes ou roses sur lesquelles sont inscrites les dernières cotes. . ." (p. 24). What counts for both de Reixach and Iglesia is the mastery of woman and horse. Simon therefore applies the "taches vives" (including the color pink) to "les robes des chevaux et celles des femmes" (p. 19). These connections are further complicated by the dead horse Georges encounters during the war. The "chiffon rose"
(pp. 29, 251, 308), having escaped from an open suitcase and marking the place where the dead horse is decomposing, juxtaposes the animal with its more fortunate counterparts during peace time.

The insistence on the color pink draws attention to colors in general. The ancestor's bullet wound, for instance, is seen as a "tache rouge" (p. 81) and Corinne wears a "robe rouge" (p. 234) which is all the more appropriate as "'Corinne' faisait penser à 'corail'" (p. 235). There is certainly no direct connection between the ancestor and Corinne. The color "rouge" therefore makes us take background information about the ancestor and de Reixach into account. The recurrence of "rouge" establishes an association between relatively heterogeneous elements which has an even more radical counterpart in references to "taches sombres". These denote the ancestor's genitals (p. 88), a puddle of urine (p. 92), the spilled contents of a broken bottle of wine (p. 211), and Corinne's hair (p. 264). There are no logical connections between these objects and the reader experiences their linkage as disturbing and disorienting.

Although non-figurative key-words lack the specific adherence to themes characteristic of recurring metaphors, they nevertheless tend to reinforce major themes. Most color blobs refer in some way to the novel's central concern about sex and violence. But, unlike metaphoric connections, non-figurative ones are usually quite oblique. They become noticeable only because of repetition and not because of any organic link with a theme in question. The image of "pattes repliées" or "jambes repliées," for instance, recurs in several contexts and thereby invites certain associations. It applies most often to the dead horse Georges keeps passing and to the dying
horse in the stable (pp. 27, 29, 105, 270). It can, however, describe people. The jockey Iglesia rides with his "petites jambes repliées" (p. 24) and a dead soldier in a painting (p. 215) as well as women in the act of making love (p. 191) are represented in the same terms. The recurring image ties together death and sex, human beings and animals. The same network of associations suggests itself throughout La Route, primarily by means of juxtaposed fragments which exemplify this thematic core. Because of their relatively arbitrary status, recurring key-words of the non-figurative type allow for great flexibility and encourage linguistic and compositional experiments.

4. e. Transitions

Simon's experiments with transitions represent an excellent example of how the repetition of more or less arbitrarily selected words can be exploited. These experiments are similar to structural pivots (see Chapter I, Section 4. a.) except that in the present case the repetition is not immediate and therefore often more difficult to spot. The transitions work on an intentional confusion concerning the reference of repeated words. In a description of the sexual act, Georges speaks of the penis as a "gland à cause de la peau qui le recouvre à moitié. . ." (p. 290). Approximately half a page later, he refers to "glands" as the acorns the arab prisoners used to collect. Using the same word in different senses, Simon executes a transition from the sexual relations between Georges and Corinne to Georges' experiences as a prisoner of war. Even more complex is a transition making use of a third-person pronoun.
Here the repeated word does not refer to different things but to different persons. The following passage continues to describe a scene in which de Reixach tries to arbitrate a dispute between the gun-happy lame man and his enemy, the mayor's assessor:

. . . traqué par la honte l'insupportable affront enduré dans la femme de son frère lui dont on n'avait pas voulu pour faire la guerre à qui l'on n'avait pas voulu confier un fusil. Allons dit-il lâchez cette arme c'est comme ça que des accidents arrivent, mais il ne voulait rien entendre, apparemment il tenait à cet attirail de chasseur à ce fusil avec lequel il s'était fait représenter symbole ou quoi. . . (pp. 288-89)

In order to understand this passage, it is necessary to realize that "il" alludes to three different men. The first "il" refers to de Reixach, the second to the lame man, and the third to the ancestor. It is moreover imperative to grasp that more than one gun is in question. Only a thorough knowledge of the novel's larger context permits an intelligent deciphering of this transition from the twentieth to the eighteenth century. A similar operation marks the shift from one location in Georges' war experiences to another:

Pas à quatre heures du matin à cheval sur une carne et sous la pluie
Tu crois qu'il est quatre heures du matin Tu crois qu'il finira tout de même par faire jour? (p. 278)

The allusions to four o'clock in the morning seem to form part of one and the same conversation. But, the context makes it clear that the first allusion is to the soldiers' meandering ride through a rainy night at the front and the second one to Georges and Blum being detained in a dark prison train. Such transitions frustrate our habitual assumptions that shifts between scenes (and hence between different moments in time) correspond to an organic causal order. Instead, we are forced to acknowl-
edge movements from one scene to the next as the result of relatively arbitrary choices on the author's part. By accentuating rather than attempting to disguise transitions, Simon celebrates the process of fiction.

5. Conclusion

Interrupted repetition reveals itself as an important contributor to the patterning and pacing of the narrative. It regulates the rhythm of sentences (diacope) and influences the contraction and expansion of larger narrative units (recurring key-words). It is in digressive and fragmented novels like *Absalom* and *La Route* that these operations are particularly prominent. It seems that repetition goes hand in hand with fragmentation in that it both accentuates and counteracts it. It accentuates it because the recurrence of key-words impedes the linear progression of the text. At the same time, the barriers to a linear reading create a pattern of analogical connections of their own. Recurrence encourages the simultaneous pursuit of different time stratas and permits the coexistence of often highly heterogeneous and even contradictory elements. The frequency, density, and distribution of recurring key-words can thus tell us a lot about the kind of associations we are supposed to trace.

Faulkner and Simon further use recurring key-words in order to perform structural operations in which main narrative and digressions or various episodes and themes are distinguished from each other. In
this context, repetition helps the reader to orient himself in an otherwise confusing narrative maze. Many of these operations have the added intention of frustrating reader habits and expectations. They draw attention to fiction as a process rather than a finished product. By making connections and transitions difficult, the reader must participate in the act of creation. Interrupted repetition thus emphasizes the generative power of language.
CHAPTER III
REPETITIVE PATTERNS IN THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

1. Introduction

The forms of repetition I have discussed so far have taken discrete units of the text for their subject. I have shown that although they often serve structural purposes, they do not belong to the narrative structure proper. By narrative structure I understand those operations which determine the plot arrangement, that is, the "story" as actually told or the way in which the events are linked together."¹ The difference between the earlier chapters and the present one thus centers on a question of hierarchical distinction. Having analyzed repetition on primarily linguistic levels, I now propose to concentrate on the much vaster and more complex level of overall organization. The narrative structure represents the single most important aspect of a novel. It transforms a given subject matter into a work of art and involves important questions like the succession of events, the relationship between characters, and the role of narrators. In standard studies of prose fiction, these questions are usually discussed individually as if they could be separated from each other. Libraries contain many studies that find such separations convenient, although I doubt whether their authors would believe that they correspond to the reality of the work of fiction. Since repetitive patterns cut across episodes, characters, and narrators, their analysis resists standard critical divisions and requires an arrangement that emphasizes different
aspects of episode succession, character behavior; or narrator role. The amount of material to be covered and the resistance to standard divisions thus account for the complexity and length of this chapter on the narrative structure of Absalom and La Route.

Formal criticism tends to emphasize the geometry of narrative structures; it discusses the ways in which structural elements relate to each other and to the text's overall intention. This geometric focus concentrates on the mechanics of a text and generally obscures the interplay of forces and the interdependence of contradictory propositions like stasis and progress. It seems that in recent critical discourse the stress on symmetry has almost entirely neglected the linearity of narrative. However, some critics are challenging the dominance of symmetry as does J. Hillis Miller when he argues that repetition, thought to be a form of symmetry, is intricately related to linearity:

The image of the line cannot, it is easy to see, be detached from the problem of repetition. Repetition might be defined as anything which happens to the line to trouble or even to confound its straightforward linearity: returnings, knottings, recrossings, crinklings to and fro, suspensions, interruptions, fictionalizings. Repetitive patterns in the narrative structure of Absalom and La Route must therefore be studied in the light of both symmetry and linearity. Any duplications in these texts disturb the narrative line without being able to destroy it. Simple duplications often take the form of juxtapositions, superimpositions, and substitutions; they work on a principle of symmetry with variation. In the history of aesthetics, symmetry has enjoyed a reputation for ornamental embellishment which, in the dominant dualistic terminology, enhances the form rather than the content of the
work of art. It is, of course, tacitly understood that form and content complement each other and make equally significant contributions to the meaning and value of art. The kinds of formal connections operative in duplicated episodes, characters, or narrators in fiction, for instance, add at least as much to the total impact of a text as does the subject matter. Form often constitutes a substructure which is not subconscious but uses channels of communication inaccessible to the surface structure. It permits insights that cannot be expressed directly but must be arrived at by decoding the formal connections between narrative elements. What may look like a binary relationship on the surface may in fact reveal itself as a triangular mediation. The focus of mediation stands in a dialectical relationship to the triangle's base configuration and influences the deciphering of the message. If the repetitive patterns in the narrative structure of Absalom and La Route are discussed as both symmetrical and linear manifestations, then duplication of events, characters, and narrators can be seen to release energies that a purely geometric and mechanistic approach could not take into account.

2. **Simple duplication of episodes, characters, narrators**

Repetition in narrative structure is more accurately described as duplication. Duplication itself is a blanket term for juxtapositions (parallels and contrasts), superimpositions, and substitutions. These distinctions matter because they give a more precise idea of the categories involved and because the differences between them influence the ways in which they function. Juxtaposition implies "the act or an instance
of placing two or more objects in a close spatial or ideal relationship."\(^3\) The act of placing objects side by side indicates that they are not in actual contact. Juxtaposition can take the positive form of parallelism or the negative one of contrast. Contrast immediately suggests difference as well as similarity. The same holds true for parallelism, although in less obvious fashion. Webster's speaks of parallelism as "extending in the same direction and everywhere equidistant: forming a line in the same direction but not meeting."\(^4\) The similarity between parallel objects never threatens to become an identity. The same cannot be said with equal force of superimposition and substitution. To superimpose means "to cause to become attached, united, coexistent, or interrelated in the manner of a layer, stratum, or accretion."\(^5\) Although impositions of this type do not integrate attached entities, they are in bodily contact and therefore overlap to some extent. The movement towards identity becomes even more pronounced in the case of substitution which is defined as "something that is put in place of something else." Substitution does of course not mean total identity because the original pattern is still visible underneath its replacement. The degree of contact between duplicated entities undoubtedly contributes to the nature of the relationship between them.

2. a. **Juxtaposition (parallelism and contrast)**

Duplicated events often appear as stories within a story and thereby permit a simultaneous comment on separate incidents. In the case of *Absalom* and *La Route* various private concerns function as a parallel to the American Civil War on the one hand and the Second World War on the
other. The friction between Sutpen and his adversaries, for instance, has quite justly been interpreted as a comment on the Civil War. Indeed, one of the most popular interpretations of *Absalom* argues that Sutpen's whole life functions as a symbol for the Confederate defeat. Faulkner reinforces this overall symbolic pattern by presenting private antagonisms between characters in military terms. Rosa conceives of her relationship with Sutpen as a war and speaks of "alliance," "adversaries," "picquets," "artillery," "citadel," and "armistice" (pp. 63-65). Sutpen himself organizes his life as if it were a military campaign and the courtship between Bon and Judith is planned "like the campaigns of dead generals in the textbooks" (p. 321). Even the actual involvement in the Civil War reveals itself as a private affair. Bon and Henry enlist in the hope that

the War would settle the matter, leave free one of the two irreconcilables, since it would not be the first time that youth has taken catastrophe as a direct act of Providence for the sole purpose of solving a personal problem which youth itself could not solve. (p. 120)

In the same vein, the confederate defeat represents for Bon a chance to meet up once more with Sutpen so that "the whole purpose of the retreat seemed to him to be that of bringing him within reach of his father, to give his father one more chance" (p. 347). Private and public concerns reflect each other without ever affecting the outcome of either.

Simon mirrors the violence of war in a number of vehement disputes and actual bodily threats. The prisoners of war fight among each other for water, food, fresh air, and moving space. Wack and Blum enter into heated discussions about the woman behind the curtain; Corinne argues
first with Reixach and then with Iglésia about Reixach's decision to play jockey; and Georges and Corinne are constantly quarreling. Moreover, the lame man threatens the mayor's assessor with a gun, and Georges and Iglésia almost kill a man while robbing him. Simon makes the connection between private disputes and military aggression explicit when he speaks of "ce furieux et obscur déchaînement de violence au sein de la violence. ..." (p. 24). The private disputes run parallel to the War but never become confused with it. The result is a universalization of violence.

Contrasting episodes are mirror opposites of each other and, like parallel events, they suggest similarities rather than identities. They generally take the form of reverse duplications which have traditionally been associated with a turn of fortune that inverts initial circumstances in order to arrive at poetic justice. Although Faulkner is fond of concepts like "fate" and "destiny," he makes surprisingly little use of the wheel of fortune tradition. However, Sutpen's rise from poverty to riches and his fall back to poverty is a classic example of a wheel of fortune. The change of fortune in Sutpen's life is accentuated by two episodes. The plantation owner treats the young Sutpen with exactly the same disdain as Sutpen later exhibits towards Wash. The price Sutpen pays for his arrogance is death, a fate he had, as a boy, considered inflicting on Pettibone. The reverse duplication is all the more perfect as the earlier incident marks the beginning and the later one the end of Sutpen's life.

Simon, too, resorts to some reverse duplications. He includes
two incidents in which Georges is, figuratively speaking, first on one side of the fence and then on the other. In the first incident, Georges cannot make out what some civilians yell at him but suspects hostility on their part (pp. 91-93). The reverse situation has Georges, dressed in civilian clothes, running after a truck whose driver cannot hear his words and who believes him to be hostile (pp. 210-11). The second incident relates to the animosity of a group towards an individual. A soldier who wishes to join Georges and his companions is pushed back in much the same way as Georges is refused access to the back of a truck by some soldiers (pp. 227, 210-11). Reverse duplications contain of course a strong element of irony. Georges is gradually reduced from a man in control of his circumstances (he is part of a group and owns a horse) to a soldier caught in the progressive disintegration of his world (he is an outcast who has no influence over the truck driver's action). Contrast puts difference into the foreground and conceals similarity, whereas parallelism works in the opposite direction. In both cases, however, separate incidents are juxtaposed so as to suggest connections that are neither causal nor directly stated.

Stories within-a-story and reverse duplications have always been popular devices in prose fiction. Their symmetry has much formal appeal and permits a clear and efficient organization of subject matter. What is perhaps less common is the near-identical repetition of certain passages that we find in *Absalom* and *La Route*. They seem to fall into two general categories. Depending on how exactly the wording corresponds, it is either the extreme similarity or the slight differences between
passages that is significant. Whenever the repetition is virtually exact, the passages denote obsessive preoccupations as in the case of Georges' fascination with death and sex. Georges describes the eye of a dying horse in two places with the same words because the curved surface of the organ seems to conceal a secret understanding of death (pp. 67 and 130). Similarly, Corinne's status as a sex object in Georges' consciousness is affirmed when Corinne identifies herself twice with suggestive graffiti (pp. 96 and 276). In these examples the repetition is primarily emphatic. However, slight differences can play off two nearly identical passages against each other. In Absalom a passage is often first related by a witness of the events and later quoted by one of the narrators while retelling the story. The exchange of words between Sutpen and Judith on the subject of Bon's murder is first reproduced by Rosa and later cited by Quentin (pp. 159 and 277). Sutpen's last dialogue with Wash is presented first through the midwife's eyes and then repeated within a conjectural account from Wash's point of view (pp. 286 and 288). This method of direct and indirect reporting is made possible by Faulkner's complex narrative technique. Since La Route depends on a similar narrator arrangement, it resorts to near-identical repetitions in much the same way as Absalom. The adultery of the ancestor's wife is first described in terms of a "scène gallante" (p. 88) and later told as if it were actually happening (p. 199). The lost soldier's plea to join de Reixach's group is alluded to in an anticipatory summary and later taken up again as a direct account, complete with inverted commas for the dialogue (pp. 46-47 and 228-29).* In addition to these examples, it happens occasionally that

*Cf. also pp. 126 and 131 for a similar example.
a passage spoken by one character is later used by another one as if it were his own. In Absalom, Henry confronts Sutpen with the same words that Bon had addressed to Henry at an earlier date (pp. 349 and 354). Faulkner thereby shows Henry's tendency to ape Bon and, by making Henry's repetition less poetic than Bon's original speech, he points to Bon's innate superiority. Georges, too, comments on the social depravity of the aristocracy in La Route with words that were obviously suggested by his father's philosophical musings (pp. 35 and 152). Differences in wording and context can thus be exploited for narrative distance and nuances of meaning.

2. b. Superimposition

The superimpositions in Absalom and La Route derive from the coexistence of several time levels. Although these time levels maintain their autonomy, they always threaten to merge into each other. In Absalom the past and the present comment on each other as distinct entities at the same time as Quentin is unable to separate his own life from events that have happened before he was born. Quentin's sense of the past coexisting with the present establishes him as a credible narrator because he cannot help but become a part of the world he narrates. Faulkner introduces Quentin as a bridge between past and present when he speaks of two separate Quentins now--the Quentin Compson preparing for Harvard in the South, the deep South dead since 1865 and peopled with garrulous outraged baffled ghosts. . . and the Quentin Compson who was still too young to deserve yet to be a ghost, but nevertheless having to be one for all that, since he was born and bred in the deep South. . . (p. 69).
Faulkner repeatedly points out that Quentin "knows" simply because he is a Southerner. This means that Quentin is endowed with the "eighty years' heritage of the same air which the man Sutpen himself had breathed between this September afternoon in 1909 and that Sunday morning in June in 1933 when he first rode into town. . ." (p. 11). Indeed, the past almost obliterates the present with its interchangeable ghosts, so that Faulkner can say of Quentin that "his very body was an empty hall echoing with sonorous defeated names; he was not a being, an entity, he was a commonwealth" (p. 12). Quentin's identification with the past facilitates his role as narrator but imprisons him in a time from which he would like to escape in order to live his present destiny. The narrator's sense of imprisonment is all the more distressing as the Quentin of 1909 cannot measure up to the Supten of 1833. The past seems invariably more glorious than the present because, as Mr. Compson contends, the past was

... integer for integer, larger, more heroic and the figures therefore more heroic too, not dwarfed and involved but distinct, uncomplex who had the gift of loving once or dying once instead of being diffused and scattered creatures drawn blindly limb from limb from a grab bag and assembled, author and victim too of a thousand homicides and a thousand copulations and divorcements (p. 89).

If Quentin's obsession with the Sutpen legend is related to his own life as it is told in The Sound and the Fury, it becomes clear that Quentin's tragedy is his inability to behave in the same uncompromising way in which Henry acts. Henry kills Bon while Quentin fails to protect the honor of his sister by not killing her seducer Dalton Ames. The superimposition of

*Cf. also: "... he already knew, since he had been born in and still breathed the same air in which the church bells had rung on that Sunday morning in 1833. . ." (p. 31).
time levels in *Absalom* asks us to judge the present in terms of the past at the same time as it obliterates their distinction. This is not a paradox but an equivocation in that Quentin could never decide if the past was a blessing or a curse.

The superimpositions in *Absalom* are mainly concerned with the stratification of time. For Simon superimposition is a much more crucial concept as he makes clear when he describes his texts in terms of "metaphoric associations, comparisons, superimpositions, contrasts, oppositions. . ." Simon's use of superimposition strives to achieve the effect of a palimpsest in that an image or a scene remains visible while another one is inscribed on top of it. The result is that the relationship between superimposed elements "functions like a set of mirrors that reflect slightly modified images." On one level, of course, Simon superimposes time stratas in much the same way as Faulkner. On another, however, he further superimposes people, objects, or concepts through linguistic twists. Superimposition thus reveals itself as part of Simon's general method in *La Route*.

The superimposition of the ancestor and de Reixach is relatively systematic and tends to fuse the experiences of the two men. Simon relates the ancestor and de Reixach in most explicit form as the following passages illustrate:

> Comme l'autre homme-cheval, l'autre orgueilleux imbécile déjà, cent cinquante ans plus tôt, mais qui, lui, s'est servi de son propre pistolet pour. . . (p. 73).

> . . . le dos sourd, aveugle et raide qui continuait à s'avancer devant lui parmi les ruines fumantes de la guerre, et l'autre, de face, tout aussi immobile, solennel et raide dans son cadre terni, tel que pendant toute son enfance il avait pu le voir. . . (pp. 73-74).
Almost the same details—the pistol, the immobile back and face, the hint at suicide—characterize these passages. Although the two men have lived 150 years apart, Georges and Blum impute the same defeats in war and bed to their suspected suicides. As the novel progresses, the fate and the personalities of the two men begin to merge more and more into each other. Since little is known about the ancestor's life, the narrators attribute to him some of the events in de Reixach's experience. Initially the ancestor and de Reixach are superimposed because both of them may have committed a veiled suicide. After a while, however, Blum suddenly insinuates that the ancestor is "cet autre cocu" (p. 186) and constructs a whole episode around the hypothetical infidelities of the ancestor's wife. The superimposition becomes still tighter when Blum asks provocatively if the ancestor's wife "avait vingt ans de moins que lui" (p. 195). Blum evidently transposes a fact from de Reixach's life to that of his ancestor. The tendency to mix up facts extends to the story of still another cuckold. The lame man with the rifle is superimposed on the ancestor when Georges speaks of "le boiteux, le disgraciado tenant ce fusil de chasse avec lequel j'avais toujours cru qu' il s'était tué, un accident le coup partant tout seul l'ensanglantant...." (pp. 122-23). The confusion between the ancestor who is dead and the man with the rifle who is still alive is intentional and pushed to further extremes when
Blum asks about the ancestor: "Est-ce qu'il n'était pas aussi boiteux. . ." (p. 282).

The superimposition of the ancestor and de Reixach is later complicated when Georges and Blum resort to their own experiences to complete the picture of their characters. Aside from being cuckolds, the ancestor and de Reixach share the distinction of having fought with a losing army. The ancestor's defeat in Spain is described in terms of de Reixach's circumstances and of Blum's and Georges' adventures. Although the "chemins de la défaite" are in dusty Spain, Blum speaks of the ancestor as if he moved through rainy Flanders and imagines that he, like de Reixach, had a loyal servant with him:

... dans le silence nocturne, des bruits, un piétinement de sabots, car sans doute n'était-il pas seul, avait-il lui aussi auprès de lui, s'était-il fait suivre d'un fidèle valet, comme l'autre a amené avec lui à la guerre pour panser son cheval et fourbir ses bottes le fidèle jockey. . . (p. 197).

Blum suggests that the two Reixachs become more or less one and the same in his mind. Georges is more subtle when he describes the ancestor's return home by including details of his own sensations during the French retreat:

... donc lui laissant là ses troupes défaîtes, la piétaille, les fuyards gueulant sans doute eux aussi à pleins poumons à la trahison, en proie à cette panique, cette espèce de diarrhée morale (as-tu remarqué qu'on appelle cela aussi la courante?) impossible à contenir, irraisonnée. . . (p. 193).

Although Simon does not explicitly say so, the point of view in this passage switches from that of an outside observer to that of an inside
participant.* The connection between the ancestor and de Reixach is not limited to external sensations but extends to the personal consequences the military defeat has on their lives. Having lost their wives to rivals, they hope to regain their self-respect through military success. Although the family legend has it that the ancestor killed himself in order to escape from the guillotine, Georges maintains that he did so because of disillusioned political hopes. De Reixach is subject to a similar disillusionment when he discovers that the war does not conform to the lessons he has learned at the Saumur military academy. This line of argument fits into Georges' suicide theory and finds support if not an actual source in the story of a general who commits suicide because the disintegration of his army does not follow the rules and reasons on which he had based his life. Speaking of de Reixach and echoing the ancestor, Georges maintains that "le général lui aussi s'est tué: non pas seulement lui [de Reixach], cherchant et trouvant sur cette route un suicide décent et maquillé, mais l'autre [le général] aussi dans sa villa, son jardin aux allées de gravier ratissé. . ." (pp. 202-203). The superimposition of various layers of experience provides the separate threads that finally combine into a complete picture of military defeat. Each man's story not only complements but is each other man's story

*Cf. also pp. 215-16 where the ancestor's "retraite par toutes les routes qui descendaient des Pyrénées" is described in terms of modern warfare such as "des fossés bordés de morts, des chevaux crevés, des camions brûlés et des canons abandonnés. . ." (Especially the reference to "camions brûlés" belongs to Georges' own obsessive memories). See also p. 225 where the impression the end of the battle is supposed to leave on the ancestor is imagined through Georges' own experience: "Nous avons vu, connu cela: ce ralentissement, cette progressive immobilisation."
since the superimpositions insure that, as in a palimpsest, all are simultaneously visible. Simon thus enriches and complicates the life story of each character by attributing to one man the traits and circumstances of another. He also comments on the process that goes into the construction of a fictional character. Instead of pretending that a fictional character corresponds to a living person, Simon demonstrates how traits and experiences from different sources combine to give the illusion of unity.

The superimpositions in La Route that do not depend on time stratifications are the result of verbal plays. Two main centers of attention in the novel are women and horses. Although the three men who fascinate Georges have either lived at different times (the ancestor and de Reixach) or come from different social classes (de Reixach and Iglesia), their common interest in horsemanship and sex lends itself to conscious verbal confusion and ambiguity. De Reixach and Iglesia believe that Corinne can be mastered in the same way as a horse because her sexual instincts reduce her to the state of an animal. Suspicious that Corinne betrays him with Iglesia, de Reixach decides to replace Iglesia in a horse race in order to prove his sexual superiority. In describing the scene of the race, Blum imitates and exaggerates Iglesia's tendency to use the same terminology for both Corinne and the mare:

Et alors il... a voulu lui aussi monter cette alezane, c'est-à-dire la mater, sans doute parce qu'à force de voir un vulgaire jockey la faire gagner il pensait que la monter c'était la mater... et que s'il parvenait à monter l'une il materait l'autre, ou vice-versa, c'est-à-dire que s'il matait l'une il monterait l'autre aussi victorieusement, c'est-à-dire qu'il l'amènerait elle aussi au poteau, c'est-à-dire que son poteau à lui l'amènerait
The plays on "mater," "monter," "poteau," and "bâton" establish connections between human and animal categories that are usually distinct. This superimposition is reinforced in other parts of the novel as when Blum refers to an "alezane-femme" (p. 185) or when Iglesia alludes to both Corinne and the mare as being "en chaleur" (p. 154).

All young women in La Route are depicted in ambiguous sexual terms. The equation woman-mare, for instance, functions as the main connection in the superimposition of Corinne and the ancestor's wife: "... pour peu qu'elle ait aussi partagé en matière sexuelle ces goûts plébéiens ou plutôt chevalins, je veux dire les mêmes dispositions pour l'équitation, je veux dire la même tendance à choisir ses amants du côté des écuries..." (p. 190). A play on words is also at the bottom of a complex passage in which the lame man and de Reixach as well as the woman behind the curtain and Corinne are superimposed. This dual superimposition is generated by a description of de Reixach's aloof attitude:

... n'ayant pas même l'idée de mettre son cheval au trot n'entendant même pas ceux qui lui criaient de ne pas continuer ne pensant peut-être même pas à la femme de son frère chevauchée ou plutôt à la femme chevauchée par son frère d'armes ou plutôt son frère en chevalerie puisqu'il le considérerait en cela comme son égal, ou si l'on préfère le contraire puisque c'était elle qui écartait les cuisses chevauchait, tous deux chevauchant (ou plutôt qui avaient été chevauchés par) la même houri... (p. 296).

The allusion to "la femme de son frère chevauchée" aims at the lame man but "son frère d'armes" and "son frère en chevalerie" refer to Iglesia.
The whole passage turns on "cheval" or "chevaucher" and suggests that both Corinne and the woman behind the curtain exhibit the sexual behavior of an animal. Such superimpositions make the women interchangeable. As a consequence, they establish the role women play in a world of men and contribute to an often disorienting layering of the text.

2. c. Substitution

Substitutions in Absalom and La Route are directly related to narrative point of view. The narrator in the two novels finds a double in a friend to whom he relates his story. The friend does not act as a passive listener but as an active participant in the reconstruction of a legend. The doubling of narrators indicates that Faulkner and Simon are constantly struggling with the organization of fictional material. If the fictional material is presented from a subjective point of view, the ensuing novel may be entirely different from one that treats the same material from an objective point of view.* Ideally, a writer should not have to make a choice between points of view since all such choices inevitably distort the facts. Although the dichotomy between subjective and objective narration can never be bridged satisfactorily, Faulkner and Simon try to make their novels both subjective and objective. The subjective element is usually provided by the person speaking and the objective counterpart by the reaction of the listener. This reaction can take the form of silent thoughts or actual rejoinders. Although the listener's presence is often virtually forgotten, Absalom and La Route

*See, for instance, the difference between Proust's Jean Santeuil and A la recherche du temps perdu.
are basically constructed as a collection of conversations which eliminate the need for a narrator in a privileged position of authority. The interplay between an assertive speaker and a sceptical listener invites the reader to participate in the evaluative process that is taking place before his eyes.

Faulkner's Quentin is technically speaking an ideal narrative consciousness. He is the listener who does not need to listen because he has heard it all before, and he is the speaker who is compelled to talk in spite of his reluctance. During approximately the first half of *Absalom*, Quentin functions mostly as a listener. He rarely argues openly with Miss Rosa and Mr. Compson but often reacts sceptically to their tales. In the early parts of the novel, Quentin follows in the footsteps of such narrators as Mr. Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights*, Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut*, and Marlow in the novels of Conrad. His role is that of historian and commentator. In the second half of *Absalom*, however, Quentin meets Shreve McCannon with whose help he reconstructs the Sutpen legend as if he had been a part of it. Quentin is now the assertive voice and Shreve the sceptical listener. But, where Quentin was deferential to his father and Miss Rosa, Shreve openly challenges and disputes Quentin's interpretations of the past. As a narrator, Shreve is at a disadvantage because he has no direct access to facts and because he is geographically far removed from the setting of the scene. But his distance from Jefferson and Sutpen allows Shreve greater objectivity because he is not hampered by Quentin's respect for his elders and for the past. Unlike Quentin, Shreve is therefore in a position to challenge the narrative authority
and to offer his own alternative. From Quentin's point of view, the struggle for narrative dominance becomes a matter of survival. Quentin wants to impose his authority on Shreve in much the same way as his father had imposed his on him. In Quentin's quest for self-assertion, Mr. Compson and Shreve thus appear as a common enemy. This explains why Shreve acts as a substitute for Mr. Compson when Quentin complains: "I didn't need to listen then but I had to hear it and now I am having to hear it all over again because he sounds just like father" (p. 211; cf. also pp. 181, 207, 211). John T. Irwin, author of a Freudian analysis of Absalom and The Sound and the Fury called Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge, describes the relationship between the narrators in oedipal terms and argues: "In terms of a generative sequence of narrators, Mr. Compson, Quentin, and Shreve are father, son and grandson (reincarnation of the father)." In order to establish a clear sense of self, says Irwin, Quentin must revenge himself against his father "through a substitute—his roommate Shreve." But instead of gaining an identity, Quentin seems to lose himself more and more in others:

Maybe we are both Father... Yes, we are both Father. Or maybe Father and I are both Shreve, maybe it took Father and me both to make Shreve or Shreve and me both to make Father or maybe Thomas Sutpen to make all of us. (pp. 261-62)

The extent of Quentin's failure to develop into a mature and self-confident adult is brought home by his suicide in The Sound and the Fury.

The doubling of the narrator is of course a technical success. The dialogue between Shreve and Quentin permits different views to coexist and forestalls any unequivocal conclusions about Sutpen. Open-ended solutions are only a first step towards a gradual erosion of certainties
in fiction. The doubling of the narrator lends itself not only to a division of a traditionally unified entity but also to its opposite. In spite of their rivalry, Quentin and Shreve are often so carried away by the Sutpen legend that they speak as one voice:

> It was Shreve speaking, though... it might have been either of them and was in a sense both: thinking as one, the voice which happened to be speaking the thought only the thinking become audible, vocal; the two of them creating between them, out of the rag-tag and bob-ends of old tales and talking, people who perhaps had never existed... (p. 303).

No clear separation between speaker and listener can be made and the resulting "happy marriage of speaking and hearing" (p. 316) eliminates a stable center of consciousness from which the characters and events in the novel can be evaluated. Faulkner thus exploits both doubling by division and doubling by multiplication.

The doubling of the narrator in _La Route_ has Georges and Blum behave towards each other in much the same way as Quentin and Shreve. Although Georges is the one who has access to information about the de Reixach family, Blum has a tendency to appropriate to himself the act of narration so that their relationship oscillates between conformity and disagreement. Like Faulkner, Simon resorts to dialogue for alternative viewpoints. Doubling by division is thus again used to create a sense of inconclusiveness at the same time as doubling by multiplication challenges the separation between speaking and listening. At the most explicit extreme, Simon doubles his narrator by means of parentheses: "... et Blum (ou Georges): 'C'est fini?', et Georges (ou Blum): 'Je pourrais continuer,' et Blum (ou Georges): 'Alors continue,' et Georges (ou Blum): 'Mais je dois également apporter ma contribution, participer, ajouter au tas..."
(p. 188). At times Georges seems to lose his sense of identity even more profoundly than Quentin. He sees himself as his own double and Blum as a substitute for this double:

\[ \ldots \text{à moins qu'il ne fût pas en train de dialoguer sous la froide pluie saxonne avec un petit juif souffreteux. . . mais avec lui-même, c'est-à-dire son double, tout seul sous la pluie grise, parmi les rails, les wagons de charbon, ou peut-être des années plus tard, toujours seul (quoiqu'il fût maintenant couché à côté d'une tiède chair de femme), toujours en tête-à-tête avec ce double, ou avec Blum, ou avec personne. . . (p. 187).} \]

The impression that Georges is his own double is reinforced by Simon's alternation between a first and a third person narration. Although Georges is clearly both the "je" and the "il" of *La Route*, Simon periodically changes pronoun, even in the middle of a sentence. The segment that starts out with: "Et de nouveau il me semblait voir cela. . ." (p. 22) suddenly switches to: "Georges se demandant. . ." (p. 27) in mid-sentence. Some of the "je" passages are set within inverted commas to indicate a direct dialogue. However, in some instances, the "je" appears without inverted commas (pp. 9-26, 155-169, 225-278, 287-314), that is, in a reported context. There are 17 pronominal switches in *La Route* and, although critics are aware of them, they have not found a satisfactory explanation. The switches do not seem to follow any systematic pattern like a distinction between present and past or actual words and thoughts. It is generally believed that Simon uses both "je" and "il" in order to achieve a close involvement with the story and at the same time suf-

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*I am indebted to Ann Dybikowski for my statistics on pronominal switches. Her unpublished manuscript goes into greater detail on the nature and function of these switches.*
ficient distance from it. Roubichou and Genette further conclude that
switches of this type represent a transgression of the narrative code.*
In addition to these explanations, the pronominal switches are a form
of narrative doubling and help to weaken the stability of the control-
ing consciousness.

The simple doubling of narrators moves a step further when the nar-
rators act as doubles for characters. The result is a doubling of doubles
in which Quentin identifies primarily with Henry and Shreve with Bon.
Faulkner argues repeatedly that "there was now not two of them but four"
(p. 294); cf. also p. 334) in Mississippi because Quentin and Shreve become
so involved with their story that they forget their own environment.
The doubling of the doubles works mostly from the present back to the
past but can in fact also move in the other direction: "Four of them
there, in that room in New Orleans in 1860, just as in a sense there were
four of them here in this tomblike room in Massachusetts in 1910" (p. 336).
Through the act of narration, the past and the present are no longer locked
into themselves but interact freely with each other. The "two of them, then
four; now two again" (p. 345, cf. also p. 346) pattern becomes even more
complicated when Quentin is not just Henry and Shreve not just Bon but
Quentin also Bon and Shreve also Henry:

Shreve ceased again. It was just as well, since he had no
listener. Perhaps he was aware of it. Then suddenly he had
no talker either, though possibly he was not aware of this.
Because now neither of them were there. They were both in
Carolina and the time was forty-six years ago, and it was
not even four now but compounded still further, since now

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*Genette, pp. 253-54, 256-57; Roubichou, pp. 289-290.
both of them were Henry Sutpen and both of them were Bon, compounded each of both yet either neither, smelling the very smoke which had blown and faded away forty-six years ago. . . (p. 351).

The doubling of doubles challenges the familiar boundaries between the story and its telling. Once the separation between narrators and characters breaks down, the act of narration itself becomes part of the story. Narrators and characters lose their autonomy and exist only in relation to each other. This is of course true of all fiction but the doubling of narrator and character brings it out into the open. Faulkner thereby invites a reinterpretation of some traditional assumptions about fiction.

Simon seems more fascinated with the simple doubling of narrators than with the doubling of doubles. His variation on doubling concerns not the relationship between narrator and character but that between narrator and listener. Georges is not always certain who he is speaking to because the people that matter in his life tend to get confused in his mind. Once in a while Georges asks himself where he is and realizes "que ce n'étaient pas à Blum qu'il était en train d'essayer d'expliquer tout ça en chuchotant dans le noir, et pas le wagon non plus. . . mais une seule tête maintenant, qu'il pouvait toucher en levant simplement la main. . ." (p. 95). Like Quentin and Shreve, Georges loses his sense of the present and moves freely into the past. Corinne acts merely as a substitute for Blum who himself occasionally loses all clear features: "Ce n'était pas à son père qu'il voulait parler. Ce n'était même pas à la femme couchée invisible à côté de lui, ce n'était peut-être même pas à
Blum qu'il était en train d'expliquer en chuchotant dans le noir. . ." (p. 100). In the final analysis, Georges always addresses himself so that his father, Corinne, and Blum become surrogate selves. The narrator addressing himself suggests the narcissistic nature of the narrative act; that is, the author addressing himself. Simon thereby intimates that fiction is ultimately not written for a public but for its own sake.

3. Repetition in the Overall Structure

A novel is an artifact that follows an overall plan. It has a beginning that stands in some relation to the end and a middle that supports this relation and, at the same time, postpones its revelation. A popular maxim has it that each part of a novel participates in the whole and is in turn determined by this whole. The aesthetic value of a novel seems to be in direct proportion to its overall composition. The simplest organization is a chronological account of causal connections between events. Deviations from this simple pattern often leave holes in the story or replace chronological sequence with symmetrical arrangement. The straight line of the narrative is disturbed and repetition may or may not intrude. According to Roland Barthes, the narrative generally maintains suspense by addressing an enigma whose solution is withheld until the end. The text progresses at the same time as it does everything in its power to frustrate that progress:

La dynamique du texte. . . est donc paradoxale: c'est une dynamique statique: le problème est de maintenir l'énigme dans le vide initial de sa réponse; alors que les phrases
Barthes refers to the kind of text that describes *Absalom* more accurately than *La Route*. The structure of Faulkner's novel is related to the detective mystery whose main interest concerns the suspended solution to an enigma. However, unlike the conventional detective story, *Absalom* provides information about the novel's outcome right from the beginning. It concentrates on a process of discovery that fills in connections and motivations about initially stated facts. The solution to the enigma is thus anticipated from the start but can only be fully understood in retrospect. Repetition functions as one form of retardation and manipulates the interplay of fact and interpretation. The same facts surface again and again in order to be analyzed in the light of new information. *Absalom* therefore presents itself as an excellent illustration of the relationship between suspense and repetition.

The many similarities between *Absalom* and *La Route* tend to obscure the radical differences in their composition. Although *La Route* posits an enigma not unlike the one in *Absalom*, it never attempts to explain it. Stating the enigma appears to be the sole interest in *La Route*. The desire for knowledge is inevitably neutralized by the realization that knowledge is impossible. *La Route* is therefore not built on suspense but on sym-
metry. Barthes's "dynamique statique" still applies but, rather than to slow down progress, the forms of retardation become the main focus of the narrative so that progress becomes tolerated as a necessary evil. Repetition is, of course, an integral part of symmetry. According to Webster's, symmetry "implies correspondence in the form, size, arrangement, etc. of parts on either side of a median line or plane." Symmetrically opposed parts can thus never be contiguous and must be separated by an intermediary term which implies narrative progress. In order to understand the symmetrical structure of La Route, its relationship with narrative progress must be analyzed.

3. a. Repetition and suspense (Faulkner)

Suspense operates on a principle of "retardation," the intentional withholding of pertinent information. The reader may be made aware of withheld information through anticipatory allusions or he may, with a shock of sudden recognition, become conscious of it only after the missing facts have been provided. Gérard Genette, in Figures III, characterizes gaps in the narrative and the ways in which they may or may not be filled in later as "anachronies." Genette specifies that "anachronies narratives" touch on the various "formes de discordance entre l'ordre de l'histoire et celui du récit." He describes the various categories of "anachronies" in great detail, but for the present purposes only his more general points need to be stressed. "Anachronies" are divided into "analepses" (retrospections) and "prolepses" (anticipations). An "analepse" often fills in either an ellipse or a "prolepse." Ellipses
are gaps in the narrative which may be simply implied or stated explicitly. Implied ellipses leave out a narrative segment without saying so, whereas explicit ellipses specify that a gap has occurred at a given point in the text. Both ellipse types refuse to supply any information about the content of the left out segment and thereby tease the reader's curiosity. Aware that a suspense narrative usually contains a number of ellipses—the most important one in the traditional detective story being the killer's identity—the reader is impatient to discover what they conceal. Once a gap indication includes an allusion to the content that will be filled in later, it is no longer an ellipse but a "prolepsie."

In the course of the narrative, most "prolepses" will eventually be completed either by the main narrative or by an "analepsie." The relationships between ellipses, "prolepses," "analepses," and the main narrative can become extremely complicated. One of the most complicated possibilities concerns "anachronies doubles" whose explicit formulation would read:

"'Il devait arriver plus tard, comme nous l'avons déjà vu...', ou: 'Il était déjà arrivé, comme nous le verrons plus tard...'." In Genette's system, "anachronies doubles" fall between "prolepses" and "analepses" because they answer simultaneously to two questions: "Annonces rétrospectives? Rappels anticipatoires?" Since "anachronies doubles" are indefinite, Genette calls them "achronies." Suspense in fiction is often the result of "achronies" which partially fill in an initial prolepsie but do not complete it until the narrative segment in question meets up with the main narrative line. "Achronies" depend heavily on repetition. The relationship between repeated and new information in a text built on
"achronies" represents an important control mechanism for narrative progress. "Retardation" in suspense fiction is thus a question of how much information the text supplies at any given time and how much it conceals.

3. a. i. The role of repetition in a proleptic opening

Absalom is a brilliant example of sophisticated suspense fiction. Faulkner handles retardation skillfully and makes particularly clever use of "achronies." The opening pages of Absalom indicate already that Faulkner's method of presentation will tax both the reader's concentration and patience. They introduce a number of narrators, refer to different time levels within the Sutpen legend, and make many ambiguous allusions to mysterious characters and events. In retrospect the reader realizes that the opening pages contain an advance summary of all the major crises and situations later elaborated on. Dällenbach, speaking specifically about the practice of placing a "mise en abyme" at the beginning of a novel, makes a point that applies to all proleptic openings: "Pré-posée à l'ouverture de ce récit, la mise en abyme prospective 'double' la fiction afin de la prendre de vitesse et de ne lui laisser pour avenir que son passé."¹⁷ The opening of Absalom plunges the reader immediately into the thick of things, enlightening him only gradually about the significance of Rosa's cryptic ramblings. These pages not only anticipate an enormous amount of information but the criss-crossing of Quentin's narration level and of the narrative about Sutpen makes orientation more difficult still. Dällenbach argues that the advantages of an abrupt proleptic initiation include the following:
Toutefois, il faut voir que cette fonction révélatrice et matricielle en emporte d'autres avec elle. Pour nous en tenir aux plus importantes, rappelons qu'en exposant la fiction en raccourci la réflexion rassemble des épisodes et des traits épars dont la perception quasi simultanée, au seuil du livre, n'est pas sans influer sur son mode de déchiffrement: averti d'un parcours dont il a une connaissance synthétique, le lecteur sait au-devant de quoi il va et peut sans hésitation imposer des scansions à son itinéraire, reconnaître des temps forts dans sa marche, rester maître de son avancée.18

An advance summary of the novel thus contains both thematic and structural implications. Aside from arousing interest and curiosity, it suggests how the narrative should be approached and interpreted.

The opening of Absalom anticipates how different time levels interact with each other. The distinction between Quentin's and Sutpen's time marks the largest time gap. However, the most confusing time shifts occur within the story of Sutpen. Faulkner introduces Sutpen's life in a fragmented and remarkably repetitive form. With only an unspecified "he" as a transition, the reader falls, virtually without a warning, from Rosa's "dim hot airless room" (p. 7) in 1909 into an account of Sutpen's arrival in Jefferson around 1833: "Out of quiet thunderclap he would abrupt (man-horse-demon) upon a scene peaceful and decorous..." (p. 8). Rosa follows up her ominous introduction of the main character by dwelling on certain key events associated with Sutpen's early years in Jefferson. We learn that Sutpen arrived with a "band of wild niggers" and a French architect in order to "drag house and formal gardens violently out of the soundless Nothing..." (p. 8). After a short digression, Rosa returns to Sutpen's sudden appearance and obscure activities. This time we are told Sutpen's name and reminded that he "came out of nowhere." At the same time the
construction of the mansion is mentioned again and we are informed that he married Ellen who had a "son and a daughter." This new information is all the more intriguing as we are given two important hints about the family's future: "Only they destroyed him or something or he destroyed them or something. And died" (p. 9). Approximately two pages later the same biography is offered again but in more elaborate terms:

... that Sunday morning in June in 1833 when he first rode into town out of no discernible past and acquired his land no one knew how and built his house, his mansion, apparently out of nothing and married Ellen Coldfield and begot his two children—the son who widowed the daughter who had not yet been a bride—and so accomplished his allotted course to its violent... end. (p. 11)

The date of Sutpen's arrival, the family name of the wife, and the violent nature of his death are the only new facts, and the rest of the passage either duplicates what we know already about Sutpen's establishment in Jefferson or increases the mystery surrounding the children's fate. The chapter repeats several more times that Sutpen "came out of nowhere" and built his house "out of nothing." It also supplies two more important insights into the children's fate. The first states bluntly that Henry "would return but once more before disappearing for good, and that as a murderer and almost a fratricide..." (p. 15). The second one has Rosa explain: "... I saw Henry repudiate his home and birthright and then return and practically fling the bloody corpse of his sister's sweetheart at the hem of her wedding gown..." (p. 18). The scattered facts about the children only intensify the mystery surrounding them. Although it becomes reasonably clear that the brother has killed the sister's fiancé, the circumstances and motivations concerning the murder are intentionally withheld.
The remaining pages of the opening chapter elaborate on Sutpen's arrival, the construction of the plantation, the marriage, Sutpen's early influence on his children, and his fights with the negroes. Sutpen's early years in Jefferson are thus described in some detail, although the second chapter is needed to complete the picture. The "retardation" effect is strongest in the opening pages and in the passages concerned with the central episode of the fratricide. Lammert summarizes the method Faulkner employs as follows:

Zur konsekutiven Verknüpfung gehört es, dass vor Auflösung aller Rätsel zahlreiche Einzelereignisse zunächst in einer geheimnisvollen Korrelation zu stehen scheinen, ehe sich ihre kausale Abhängigkeit herausstellt. 

Faulkner makes entry into Absalom difficult in order to discourage the lazy and to promise those who persevere an often frustrating but ultimately rewarding passage through the novel.

3. a. ii. The role of repetition in misleading information

The misleading information we find particularly in the early parts of Absalom is quite often qualified as such. In Roland Barthes' terms, we are dealing more with "leursres" than with "fausses réponses." Barthes describes the "leursre" as a "sorte de dévoiement délibéré de la vérité" which is related to "l'équivoque," this "mélange de vérité et de leurre qui, bien souvent, en cernant l'énigme, contribue à l'épaissir." The reader knows that he is not always being told the truth or at least not the whole truth. Mr. Compson assumes that Henry's disapproval of Bon's octoroon wife motivated the fratricide. It later becomes clear that this is not so and Mr. Compson himself is aware that his facts do
not always add up:

It's just incredible. It just does not explain. Or perhaps that's it: they don't explain and we are not supposed to know. . . They are there, yet something is missing; they are like a chemical formula exhumed along with the letters from that forgotten chest. . . you bring them together in the proportions called for, but nothing happens; you re-read, tedious and intent, poring, making sure that you have forgotten nothing, made no miscalculation; you bring them together again and again nothing happens. . . (pp. 100-101).

In Barthes' terms, Mr. Compson's admission constitutes a "blocage (constat d'insolubilité)." However, in spite of "leurre" and blocage," Mr. Compson's narration contains enough truth to deepen the reader's understanding of the society and circumstances in which the events in Absalom took place. It is for this reason that Quentin and Shreve, offering what seems a more accurate reconstruction of the story, resort to Mr. Compson's interpretation whenever it is suitable.

Mr. Compson's false lead represents the most conspicuous example of "leurre" and "équivoque." Other isolated instances resort to the same method in less systematic ways. It happens occasionally that facts are interpreted in a way that is later contradicted. The argument that Sutpen built his mansion "apparently out of nothing" is a good case in point. The qualification "apparently" already alerts us to the possibility of a "leurre." Indeed, Rosa's claim seems highly exaggerated when we consider that Faulkner describes in great detail how Sutpen forced the French architect and the negroes to work for him. Equally equivocal is the statement that Sutpen "acquired his land no one knew how" (p. 11). Rosa herself indicates a little later in the same chapter that Sutpen took his land "from a tribe of ignorant Indians" (p. 16) and Mr. Compson adds
that "the Chickasaw Indian agent" (p. 34) oversaw the transaction. The retrospective nature of the narrative permits Faulkner to manipulate the level of knowledge his narrators impart. By never clearly differentiating between Rosa's knowledge of 1833 and her fuller understanding in 1909, Faulkner maintains Rosa's supernatural explanations at the same time as he accounts for the same events in logical terms. Misleading information slows down the narrative by forcing the text to return to the same facts in always slightly altered form.

3. a. iii. **The role of repetition in the overall narrative progression**

Absalom turns around a number of mysterious events whose level of enlightenment is carefully controlled. The central enigma concerns the fratricide because structurally everything else is either leading up to it or is a consequence of it. The fratricide is the hole that each narrator tries to fill according to his or her own knowledge and temperament. Faulkner delays revelations to such an extent that the reader feels that nothing ever happened. Guetti, for instance, concludes his study of Absalom with the suspicion that there was perhaps never a story to be told in the first place. The oscillation between what is known and unknown in Absalom creates a complicated and forbidding structure in which everything seems to overlap without ever filling in any holes satisfactorily. Joseph W. Reed describes the overall structure in the novel with great accuracy, and I therefore base my own analysis on his work, supplementing it only when necessary. Chapter One, as I have shown already, concentrates on Sutpen's arrival and early years in Jefferson. Chapter Two then goes over Sutpen's arrival again but focuses primarily on the marriage between
Sutpen and Ellen Coldfield. Chapter Three covers all the major events in Sutpen's life, from his arrival in Jefferson to his death. Chapter Four discusses the events that lead up to the fratricide, that is, the friendship between Bon and Henry as well as Sutpen's conflict with his two sons. Chapter Five takes up Sutpen's marriage once more, focuses on his relationship with Rosa Coldfield, and ends with his death. Chapter Six alludes to some of the main events in Sutpen's life but emphasizes the fate of the Sutpen descendants after his death. Chapter Seven delves into Sutpen's past before his arrival in Jefferson and then touches again on some special points of interest like the Christmas events of 1859 and Sutpen's proposal to Rosa. Chapter Eight turns once more to spots of interest, especially Bon's background, the relationship between Bon and Henry after Henry leaves his home, and Sutpen's death. Chapter Nine brings the story up to 1910, the time of narration, and depicts the burning of Sutpen's Hundred, Rosa's death, and the survival of the idiot Jim Bond. By Chapter Three, then, the core events of Absalom are firmly established. If the overlapping structure of the novel is represented in diagram form, Faulkner's halting and repetitive method reveals itself clearly:
The events the narrative comes back to most often are those that were established in the early chapters (B). Sutpen's arrival in Jefferson affects the whole town and disturbs the lives of those closest associated with him. This, combined with the fascination of Quentin and Shreve with Sutpen's disruptive intrusion, accounts for the prominence of Sutpen's early years in Jefferson. Another area of interest that is discussed repeatedly centers around the events leading up to and growing out of the murder of Bon (C and D). The mystery enveloping the fratricide invites various explanations because each participant and spectator sees it differently. The more puzzling an event is, the more it is discussed. Sutpen's death (E), an event of relative clarity, therefore receives proportionately less attention than the actions of the living man. The least repetitive and most straightforward sections of *Absalom* lie outside the core situation. They concern mainly Sutpen's past (A) and the fate of his descendants (F). The time of narration, stretching roughly from September 1909 to the winter
of 1910, rounds out the chronology. It is interesting to note that Sutpen's past, explaining the motivation for many apparently irrational acts later in his life, is withheld as long as possible. It is not introduced until Chapter Seven and, in violation of normal chronology, it comes after the fate of Sutpen's descendants has been discussed. Faulkner delays motivational information in order to keep the central enigma alive. The narrative flow is impeded by the repeated tracing of the same situations and strategically placed partial answers.

Although the narrative seems to jump from place to place, it nevertheless follows a carefully worked out plan. When a question is raised and then answered, a new question is immediately introduced to engage the reader's attention. Answers are rarely given in one concentrated effort but are extended over several chapters. Some chapters provide information about different questions simultaneously. Although holes in the narrative are not filled in at expected places and in linear succession, they follow a logic of timed revelations which Reed describes as follows:

Chapter 2 fills in one hole of 1 (how Sutpen got Mr. Coldfield's daughter), 3 creates new ellipses (the Christmas interview, the death of Henry, Sutpen's proposal to Rosa). Chapter 4 takes off on one of these traces (Bon's miscegenation), 5 takes another (the proposal). Chapters 6 and 7 provide endings for these which embody some new questions and some new beginnings—-including one very big suspended question (Bon's parentage), to be puzzled over and resolved in 8 (the incest). Chapter 8 also takes up all the unresolved ellipses of 3, 4, 5, and 6. Chapter 9 moves the basic action of 1910 to its climax in the discovery of Henry and beyond in the burning of Sutpen's Hundred, Rosa's death, and Shreve's questioning of the whole thing.23

The alternation of holes and repetitions makes us read for solutions.

The final twist of the narrative is, of course, that all solutions reveal
themselves as unsubstantiated hypotheses. The whole novel thus turns out to be a partial answer to a not always clearly stated question.

Faulkner obviously believes that the success of *Absalom* depends on the narrative structure. He therefore takes the "game" with timed revelations very seriously. At the same time, he does occasionally have fun with it. At one point he teases the reader by leaving the last sentence of one chapter open until the end of the following one. Chapter Three ends with Wash riding up to Rosa's gate, shouting to her:

"Hello, Hello," at intervals until she came to the door; whereupon he lowered his voice somewhat, though not much. "Air you Rosie Coldfield?" he said (p. 87).

We are both baffled and intrigued by the obviously incomplete scene and perhaps even midly outraged by Faulkner's violation of sacred chapter unities. It is not until the end of Chapter Four that the scene is completed:

. . . and then Wash Jones sitting that saddleless mule before Miss Rosa's gate, shouting her name into the sunny and peaceful quiet of the street, saying, 'Air you Rosie Coldfield? Then you better come on out yon. Henry has done shot that durn French feller. Kilt him dead as beef.' (p. 133)

The suspended scene is reminiscent of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* where characters are left standing on stairways while the narrative digresses. What Faulkner's joke brings out most clearly is the role of repetition in an interrupted narrative sequence. The repetition of "Air you Rosie Coldfield?" spans and at the same time accentuates the digression that constitutes the narrative between the two chapter endings.

The staggered process of revelation forces the narrative to retrace the same raw material again and again. It thereby disrupts the text's
horizontal movement and gives the impression that the story is not going anywhere. This impression is reinforced by the fact that the most important situations in *Absalom* seem to be simultaneously present from beginning to end. In spite of a strong spatial illusion, the novel nevertheless exhibits an underlying, indirect linearity. Although dislocations and overlappings make the narrative structure difficult to trace, each major situation is treated extensively at some point in the novel. The preceding diagram can be rearranged to reflect the general order in which the major situations are emphasized:

The core events of the Sutpen saga (B-E) are indirectly arranged in chronological succession. The fate of Sutpen's descendants, situating itself outside the core situation, follows logically after Sutpen's death so that the only substantial violation of chronology concerns Sutpen's past (A). Faulkner cleverly overshadows the basic story progression by
means of a complicated interplay of anticipations, retrospections, partial solutions, and main narrative. The narrative progression makes the digressions and fragmentations more disturbing because it always holds the hope for an ultimate meaning or solution.

Why such a complex structure? The answer has to do with the relationship between reality and its representation in art. Every literary movement has always claimed that it corresponds more accurately to reality than its predecessors. This correspondence could take the form of an external copy or an internal analogy. During the height of mimetic art in the nineteenth century, "realism" postulated an "identity between the sense of typical and the sense of accurately reproduced" which is, according to Raymond Williams, not a necessary connection but "a local historical association." Mimetic or representational art is today the butt of polemical arguments for literature as a self-engendering formal process whose connection with a natural or social referent is more or less incidental. In other words, a text's reference to a "réalité extra-linguistique," that is, "un univers réel ou imaginaire" is secondary to its primary "effet de l'agencement scriptural." The dynamism of a text is a question of transformational operations. These operations take place within and between certain codes which Roland Barthes divides into five major categories: "code herméneutique," "code thématique," "code symbolique," "code proairétique," and "code culturel." A text is a pluralistic system which capitalizes on often contradictory tensions:

... un "bon récit" accompli à la fois la pluralité et la circularité des codes; corriger sans cesse les causalités de l'anecdote par la métonymie des symboles, et inversement
Barthes demonstrates that even a story written in the mimetic code (like Balzac's *Sarrasine*) depends far less on an imitation of reality than is generally assumed because formal operations are largely responsible for the illusion of life-like "accuracy." Contemporary fiction, being more conscious of its artificiality, accentuates formal properties. In *Absalom* the tension between continuity and discontinuity is particularly pronounced and repetition serves to impede the forward progression of the narrative at the same time as it suggests layers of understanding that work on an analogical level. The effect of these layers leads less to a deepening than to a broadening of the text's meaning. Repetition appears as a powerful anti-representational device, embracing decentralization, dispersion, and diffusion as well as a challenge to causality and teleology. Guetti, expressing some misgivings about *Absalom*, concludes that:

... as Sutpen's active force and Quentin's imaginative vitality arise from and are exhibited in their failure, the greatest success of language itself is to create a potential of meaning that must remain unrealized, a tension between order and disorder that cannot be resolved but only repeated, and repeated.  

Faulkner's anti-representational stance also explains the refusal of *Absalom* to conform to predictable dramatic expectations:

Narrative intensity, textual density and suspense mechanisms ought to underline crises or lead up to revelations—here they seem to heighten what leads up to crises or, anticlimactically, to draw out what leads away from them. What we expect to take a lot of time takes very little, and what we expect will just go bang, goes on and on. The book's rhythm refuses to be dramatic; indeed, it is almost insistently antidramatic and anticlimactic.  

The complex structure of *Absalom*, with its fragmentations and redundancies, expresses itself against conventional forms of fiction. This hostility to
conventions, in turn, relies heavily on the manipulations that repetitive patterns make possible.

3. a. iv. The role of repetition in point of view

Faulkner lessens the shock of the innovative narrative structure in *Absalom* by justifying its existence psychologically. He intimates that the repetitive structure was necessitated by the fact that numerous narrators give a more or less different version of the same events. The stress here is on the way in which subjective experience inevitably colors objective facts and events. More radically, the multiple points of view eliminate the possibility of shared knowledge and assert the artificiality of fiction. An important precursor to *Absalom*, at least in this respect, is Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*. Marlow collects and interprets what witnesses contribute to the cumulative picture of Jim's character and situation. But no matter how many pieces Marlow adds to the portrait of Jim, he is "fated never to see him clearly" because any final "meaning" of Jim remains elusive. Faulkner adopts a similar witness technique in *Absalom*. Both Marlow and Quentin act as a single consciousness that collects information. But where Marlow is careful not to distort the facts, Quentin often changes them to suit his purposes. Marlow therefore deplores that language can depict the "truth" only inadequately and Quentin uses language freely, believing that fiction has a truth of its own. With this attitude, *Absalom* stands at the threshold of experimental contemporary fiction. In contemporary fiction, contradictory or highly disparate versions of an event are not always distributed among different narrators. Often a single voice presents multiple interpretations, or the narrative voice is dispensed with, so
that contradictory events stand on their own, without being filtered through an identifiable consciousness (cf. Simon's *Tryptique*). The trend in fiction is definitely away from psychological motivation towards autonomous and self-generating texts. If the multiple narrator organization in *Absalom* is viewed more from a structural and less from a psychological point of view, Faulkner's achievement in narrative technique can be more clearly understood.

The narrators in *Absalom* relate differently to each other and to the story they tell. Quentin can be said to be in charge of the narrative, although he gleans his information from other narrators who may temporarily take over from him. The result is a layered narrative which can become as complicated as when "Shreve hears of the architect-hunt from Quentin, he hears him tell what his father told him that *his* father told him that Sutpen told *him.*" The difficulties with point of view arise not only from the layered voices but also from the fact that the time of narration progresses at the same time as the story of Sutpen is moving along. Instead of a relatively stable retrospective point of view, as we find it in *A la recherche*, *Absalom* confounds us with time shifts in the narrative frame. Similarities and differences between *Absalom* and *A la recherche* help to clarify this point. Both novels tell a story retrospectively in such a way as to make the end of the story and the beginning of the narration nearly coincide. At the end of *A la recherche*, Marcel is presumably ready to begin writing the novel we have just finished reading. Similarly, the story of Sutpen eventually brings the events of 1833 up to the time of narration in 1909 and 1910, especially when Quentin's visit to Sutpen's Hundred and Rosa's death are described.
However, there are significant differences between the basic structures of the two novels. Marcel writes retrospectively from one point in time, which lies in an unspecified future. We only know that the narrator is suffering from insomnia and that this insomnia reminds him of the sleepless nights in his childhood which open Du côté de chez Swann. Proust indicates neither when the narrator begins to write nor how long it takes him to accomplish his task. Faulkner, on the other hand, pays much attention to the time of narration. He provides detailed information and actual dates concerning Quentin's temporal movement from September 1909 to the winter of 1910. Quentin is in fact such a pronounced presence that critics have often asked themselves whether Absalom is not the story of Quentin rather than of Sutpen.

The question as to whose story Absalom really is should not be dismissed too easily. The relationship between the story and the narrator or frame level plays a crucial organizing role. Faulkner is too conscious a writer to confuse main story and frame without knowing what he is doing. Basing myself on Genette's analysis of the narrative structure in A la recherche, I intend to decipher Faulkner's reasons for this confusion. Genette's study focuses on "les rapports entre l'ordre temporel de succession des événements dans la diégèse et l'ordre pseudo-temporel de leur disposition dans le récit..." (p. 32) In other words, Genette arrives at some intriguing results by juxtaposing the succession and duration of events as they would appear in clock time and their arrangement and relative expansion and contraction in the novel. One of Genette's important discoveries concerns his interpretation of the famous opening sentence in A la recherche--
"Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure"—as a "position-clé" which mediates between the narrator-Marcel's insomnia and the hero-Marcel's sleeplessness as a child. The "drame du coucher" controls the opening part of *A la recherche* by offering the zig-zag movement of the text a fixed base to which it can periodically return. Quentin's presence as a listener and narrator in *Absalom* fulfills a similar "position-clé" function. But unlike the fixed situation of the "drame du coucher" and the narrator's insomnia, the "position-clé" in *Absalom* is flexible. The first chapter establishes already what the main stages in Quentin's progress will be. We first meet him in Rosa's office, a setting that includes two allusions to the room at Harward (p. 9) which represents the 1910 stage of Quentin's narrative odyssey. The chapter then moves to Mr. Compson's house, where Quentin receives more information about the Sutpen saga in the evening of the same day as his visit to Rosa's office took place. This background appears in parentheses and alludes to still another time of narration. When Quentin speaks of "his promise to return for her in the buggy" (p. 12) and when Mr. Compson hints that "no matter what happens out there tonight..." (p. 13), Faulkner anticipates Quentin's visit to Sutpen's Hundred with Rosa later that same night. Afternoon, evening, and late night of a day in September of 1909 and a day at Harvard in the winter of 1910 are thus singled out as four separate times of narration. The point of view in *A la recherche* permits Proust to present his story simultaneously from Marcel-hero's limited knowledge and from Marcel-narrator's extensive retrospective vision. In *Absalom* narrator and hero are not the same person so that the retrospective pattern is not a question
of memory but only a shared investment in the same past. Quentin's knowledge is therefore always partial and hypothetical. Where Marcel-narrator is always there to interpret the actions of Marcel-hero, Quentin has no such check on his understanding of Sutpen's behavior and motivations. The process of making sense out of information fragments often threatens to usurp the central position of the story. The time of narration is no longer unequivocally subordinate to the time of the story. Although Quentin was not even born by the time Sutpen was killed, Sutpen's present is also Quentin's past just as Quentin's present is in some sense Sutpen's future. The two time levels are continuous at the same time as they have an autonomous existence. The "position-clé" in A la recherche is virtually forgotten after the "drame du coucher" and does not move back into the foreground until Le temps retrouvé. In Absalom, however, the time of narration and the time of the narrative are constantly vying for attention. Genette argues that if the narrator's insomnia can be called the "récit premier," the whole of A la recherche acts as one large "analepse." The story of Sutpen is perhaps a much more obvious "analepse" than the apprenticeship of Marcel, but the "récit premier" reveals itself as a disturbingly unstable entity.

On the vertical axis, the narrative function is distributed among several voices and on the horizontal one, the narrator in charge moves along in time. Instead of unifying the narrative, Faulkner's experiment with point of view provides more evidence for his dissatisfaction with conventional literary devices. His success, of course, depends heavily on repetition

*Certain stylistic and subtle structural patterns do, of course, point to the novel's retrospectiveness and thereby recall the "position-clé."
because the layered narrator arrangement requires that each narrator establish what he knows and how he knows it. Similarly, Quentin's progression through time forces him to specify how much he knew at each point in the narrative. The famous critical controversy about how Quentin learned of Bon's exact parentage testifies to the importance readers attach to sources of information. It is for this reason that Faulkner monitors the tension between what is familiar and what is new with so much care.

3.a.v. The role of repetition within narrative levels

Many temporal dislocations in *Absalom* take place between the levels of the story and the narration. But within both of these levels further dislocations occur. In the early chapters, up to Chapter Five, the most active dislocations happen within the Sutpen story, whereas the narrator level remains relatively stable. After the initial introduction of the various narrators, we find Quentin listening either to Rosa or to Mr. Compson in 1909. In Chapter Six, the story continues to fluctuate but the narrator level also becomes more unstable. Quentin tells Shreve at Harvard in the winter of 1910 what his father had told him earlier. There is thus a constant back and forth movement between the two narrator frames. In Chapter Seven dislocations situate themselves almost entirely within the narrator level. The Sutpen story progresses in relatively linear fashion through Sutpen's youth and life in Jefferson, whereas Quentin tells Shreve what his grandfather had told his father what Sutpen had initially told him. General Compson's conversations with Sutpen take place on two separate occasions: in 1833, during the architect chase, and in 1864, in General Compson's office. Although we hear Sutpen himself speak, the narrator
and his subject are at the greatest distance from each other and com-
municate through two intermediaries. The narrative dislocations in this
chapter force us to pay more attention to the act of narration than in
earlier chapters. In Chapter Eight, the narrator and story levels
virtually merge because Shreve and Quentin identify with Henry and Bon
to the point of turning into a composite "I" or "we": "So that now it
was not two but four of them riding the two horses..." (p. 334). In
the last chapter, the novel turns to Quentin's own reactions to the
burning of Sutpen's Hundred, Rosa's death, and the survival of the idiot
Jim Bond. Absalom gradually moves from the facts of the Sutpen saga to
their effect on Quentin and Shreve until the novel does in fact become
their story. The fratricide acts as a focal point which controls what
happens before and after it. On the one hand, it ends Sutpen's hopes for
a worthy heir and, on the other, it looms as a stumbling block in Quentin's
desperate attempt to escape from the past. Faulkner identifies the fol-
lowing dialogue as the point Quentin "couldn't pass":

    Now you can't marry him.
    Why can't I marry him?
    Because he's dead.
    Dead?
    Yes. I killed him. (p. 172)

It is at this point that the story of the Sutpen children becomes Quentin's
own; his relationship with Caddy and Dalton Ames in The Sound and the Fury
reflects that between Henry, Judith, and Bon. Once Quentin and Shreve become
doubles of Henry and Bon, they obsessively repeat the now familiar facts
about the Sutpen family again and again in order to find reasons and
motivations.
3. a. vi. The role of repetition in the struggle between fact and fiction

It is generally agreed that the version Quentin establishes in collaboration with Shreve is the most believable and complete. In view of the highly hypothetical and often blatantly contradictory nature of the Quentin/Shreve account, this consensus is rather surprising. Shreve, for instance, invents a lawyer who is supposed to have manipulated Bon into the role of Sutpen's adversary, and Quentin moves the Christmas library scene to a spring setting. Shreve even claims that it was Henry rather than Bon who was wounded at Shiloh. Why are we so ready to accept the Quentin/Shreve version? The answer is partially hidden in the way in which Faulkner uses repetition to control reader response. By repeating the same facts from various and often contradictory points of view, Faulkner deprives the reader of any certainty. Certainty, however, is a basic human need. In her article "Risk and Redundancy," Liane Norman makes the following observations:

The reader, deprived of any workable certitude, is, on the one hand, at the disposal of the author and must depend on him; on the other hand, his need for something he can depend on increases as it is withheld.  

In the early parts of the novel, Faulkner withholds and contradicts facts to such an extent that the reader is ready to accept the Quentin/Shreve version not so much because it is innately more plausible but because the need for certainty becomes an overriding desire. Paradoxically, then, the reader embraces the version offered by the narrator team that situates itself at the greatest distance from the story. Indeed, Malcolm Cowley, in one of his earliest statements about Absalom, finds the Quentin/Shreve reconstructions so superior to the others that he suggests:
I would say that "Absalom, Absalom" would be better if cut by about a third, maybe all the early parts of it omitted, leaving only Quentin's story to his roommate.36

Cowley, showing a preference for the least factual version, * indicates that fiction can be more convincing than fact. The redundancies in the early parts of Absalom prepare the way for the reader's almost unquestionable acceptance of a fictional version that never tires of telling us that it is indeed fiction.

3. a. vii. Conclusion to repetition and suspense

Suspense and repetition work hand in hand to control a narrative puzzle which always promises but never completely delivers a final meaning or interpretation. Although repetition destroys many conventional patterns, such as the boundaries between events, characters, and narrators, it offers in return a new kind of narrative space in which complex and even contradictory segments coexist analogically. The reader, accustomed to a stable and unobtrusive narrative voice, finds it difficult at first to concentrate simultaneously on both story and narration. Although critics usually praise the powerful impact of Sutpen's story and compliment Faulkner on his excellent grasp of the narrative process, they tend to voice serious reservations about Absalom as a totality. Slatoff sums up the main impression Absalom conveys in his title a "Quest for Failure."

The failure he attributes to the novel takes two major forms: lack of formal coherence and falling short of showing adequately the deficiencies

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*Cowley later assures us that he would no longer dispense with the earlier sections of Absalom. His initial reaction shows, however, that the Quentin/Shreve part strikes most people as the most intriguing one.
of language. Reed, too, concludes his excellent analysis of the narrative structure in *Absalom* with the qualified assessment:

> The achievement of *Absalom* is better judged in its soaring, its complex ambition and the grand scale of its attempt at a total understanding of the narrative process, than in its emotional impact or formal perfections.  

He also speaks of the novel's "ambition" and "overreaching" as standing alone "in the grandeur of their attempt." Guetti's criticism duplicates Reed's general impression but stresses Faulkner's inability to achieve what he set out to do:

> It is not simply that *Absalom* is possibly one kind of novel or another but that it is possibly no novel at all. Faulkner's insistence that the imagination must fail completely can never be evaluated because it can only remain an insistence. The supposed struggle that it implies could only be revealed metaphorically and thus cannot be revealed--given the insistence--at all.

What Guetti evidently expects of Faulkner is that he "tell" rather than "show" the apparent failure of language. He is in fact saying that rational argument is preferable to imaginative persuasion. Moreover, he assumes that Faulkner's intention was indeed to demonstrate the failure rather than the success of the imagination. It seems to me that Faulkner manipulates the novel's patterns in such a way that fiction will emerge as "a might-have-been which is more true than truth" (p. 143). Unlike Guetti, Faulkner appreciates that language is the only accessible reality and hence represents a much stronger influence on experience than advocates of unmediated sensation are willing to accept.

Guetti may, of course, be correct in speculating that *Absalom* is "possibly no novel at all" if by "novel" he means a coherent (rational) development towards a more or less unequivocal resolution. However, the
novel's repetitive progress aims neither at a clear factual outcome nor at a complete understanding of motivations. Reed touches on at least one effect the repetitive structure in Absalom has on reader response:

Yet the repetition is not primarily to serve rhythmic or revelatory structures but to expose us to a sequence of narrators using the same raw material. The narrative advances (indirectly) in a linear chronology, but at the same time—by its beginning in medias res and by its overlappings—suggests layers of knowledge, of understanding, of meaning.40

Indeed, as we have seen, the facts and motivations for the fratricide are suggested early in the novel so that subsequent discussions of the same material, adding only nuances of meaning, are not really necessary. Aside from adding depth to our knowledge, the repetitive patterns serve still another purpose. Faulkner's emphasis on the narrative process shows a serious concern with epistemological matters. What interests Faulkner beyond the immediate fictive process is the related question of interpretation. The central event in Absalom, the fratricide, assumes a different significance for each narrator. For Rosa it is determined by the same evil force that later inspires Sutpen's proposal, for Mr. Compson it is the tragic outcome of a father/son conflict, for Quentin/Shreve it is a struggle between son and father as well as a question of incest, and for General Compson, whose narrative focuses on Sutpen's past and the social circumstances that have molded his character, it is symptomatic of Southern blindness. With each repetition of the same events, the Sutpen saga becomes at some level a new story. Each interpretation exists on its own and does not only amplify but actually change the original events. Faulkner focuses on the imaginative transformation of events rather than
on their essence. The "meaning" of Absalom thus lies in the oscillation between the facts of Sutpen's life and their impact on other people's consciousness. What Faulkner asserts is that the very attempt to understand Sutpen's life necessarily creates a fiction because all perception (interpretation) is selective and arbitrary. The meaning Rosa and Mr. Compson attribute to Sutpen's story, even if it is often manifestly contrary to later information, is nevertheless as much a part of Absalom as the more convincing Quentin/Shreve version. The reciprocal relationship between what happens and how it is perceived reverberates far beyond immediate witnesses. Faulkner points to this infinite echo effect by saying:

Maybe nothing ever happens once and is finished. Maybe happen is never once but like ripples maybe on water after the pebble sinks, the ripples moving on, spreading, the pool attached by a narrow umbilical water-cord to the next pool which the first pool feeds, has fed, did feed, let this second pool contain a different temperature of water, a different molecularity of having seen, felt, remembered, reflect in a different tone the infinite unchanging sky, it doesn't matter: that pebble's watery echo whose fall it did not even see moves across its surface too at the original ripple-space, to the old ineradicable rhythm. . . (p. 261)

The repetitions in Absalom indicate that the original event continues to exist in always different forms in the minds of others. The narrative structure in Absalom is not so much designed to help us penetrate an incompletely understood event as it represents an affirmation of its many repercussions. The novel never claims directly that one version is more correct than another. Not only could the townspeople of Jefferson add further versions to Absalom, but, beyond the novel, each reader repeats again not only the story of Sutpen but also that of the narrators repeating it. The pebble's reverberations continue infinitely and it is in this act of the
participating imagination that Faulkner celebrates the validity of fiction.

3. b. Repetition and fragmentation (Simon)

*La Route* is in some ways an even more difficult novel than *Absalom*, for where Faulkner's novel is only digressive, Simon's is decidedly fragmentary. Simon dispenses with many of the narrative devices that give *Absalom* its coherence, expecting the reader to supply missing links and to follow circuitous paths. Along with other new novelists, Simon is extremely suspicious of representation (mimesis) in literature and prefers a formal aesthetic which concentrates on language and the fictive process. The narrative appears in the form of fragments which are linked together by formal analogies rather than by causal or mnemonic connections. Narrative fragments relate to each other through formal associations which, in turn, rely heavily on repetition. Indeed, repetition complements fragmentation because it draws attention to discontinuities at the same time as it facilitates a compensatory analogical reading. This analogical reading moves the narrative into symmetry. The primary narrative organization in *La Route* does in fact favor symmetrical patterns. But, because *La Route* was written during Simon's middle or transitional period, it still contains a definite "story line." The result is a strong tension between representational and purely formal devices. Around the time of *La Route*, Simon expressed his aesthetic ambition as follows:

La question n'est plus de décrire successivement des choses qui se produisent successivement dans une durée, mais de décrire un tas de sensations ou d'images simultanées, et cela avec le seul instrument que nous ayons à notre disposition: le language, c'est-à-dire dans une durée.41
This statement contains a fair amount of "psychologizing" which Simon later deplores. It does, however, demonstrate an acute awareness of how Janus-faced the literary medium really is. This awareness inspires many of Simon's experiments with narrative form and leads him to find new uses for literary repetition.

3. b. i. Some basic observations about the narrative structure in "La Route"

Before the tension between symmetrical (static) and temporal (progressive) patterns in La Route can be analyzed, a few remarks about Simon's choice of narrative seem appropriate. La Route turns its back on some conventions in prose fiction which had enjoyed a long period of popularity and which have only recently come under attack. One of these conventions concerns the writer's attempt to imitate the chronological order of "real" events. Strict narrative chronology, of course, has been gradually eroded until the precipitous opening and the flashback have become typical rather than exceptional. What differentiates La Route from the flashback tradition is the extreme to which Simon takes radical violations of chronology. The conventional flashback novel works gradually towards some "present time" which is then either both the beginning and the end of the novel (A la recherche) or constitutes a point from which a "present time" narration continues (Lord Jim). In La Route, however, the narrative moves constantly and quite arbitrarily between various time levels. Different episodes from de-Reixach's life before the war, the ancestor's suspected suicide 150 years earlier, Georges' war experiences and later encounter with Corinne, all intersect and overlap throughout the novel. Although it is possible to work out the
chronological sequence of "real" events, the novel does not privilege any particular time level. Moreover, the narrative units within large time periods are again arranged arbitrarily. Georges' war experience, for instance, alternates freely between the "phony war," the German attack, and the imprisonment. Clock time is thus not so much violated as systematically eliminated.

The organizing power of clock time in fiction was gradually undermined by the emergence of a psychological concept of time. The stream-of-consciousness novel in particular brought with it a revolution in narrative structuring that is continuing to this day. For writers like Proust, Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Faulkner and others, man's perception of himself and the world is controlled by memory. Through memory, widely disparate experiences are evoked simultaneously and fiction is supposed to reflect this mnemonic activity. Simon's own career grows out of this tradition. La Route, for instance, exhibits residual concessions to the organizing capacities of memory. The structure of La Route appears most coherent when the meeting between Georges and Corinne is viewed as a point in time ("récit premier") from which all other episodes are remembered. The novel both invites and rejects this interpretation. In Absalom, Quentin's narrative settings are constantly referred to so that the reader is not allowed to forget that the Sutpen story is told retrospectively. In La Route there are only occasional and often indirect allusions to the "récit premier." Although the reader can work out the retrospective arrangement of the text, most of the time he experiences it as a present-time narration. Moreover, when a story
loses the sense of happening in the present, like the life and death of
the ancestor, it is told by narrators (Georges and Blum) who act as if
they were in charge of the "récit premier" (which actually centers on
Georges and Corinne some years later). Indeed, the conversations between
Georges and Blum make up the most "present" portions of La Route and
function in much the same way as Quentin's conversations with Rosa, Mr.
Compson, and especially Shreve. The Georges/Blum setting overshadows the
Georges/Corinne "récit premier" to such an extent that the "récit premier"
loses most of its authority. This challenge to the "récit premier" is at
the same time a challenge to mnemonic interpretations of La Route.
Georges' consciousness does not lend coherence to the text because it is
not anchored in any definite time and place. Simon himself argues that
La Route "developed in no way as an imitation of memory, but only in:
terms of what Tynianov calls the 'necessities of construction. . .'." 42

The 'necessities of construction' are intricately bound up with
Simon's concept of "simultaneity in duration." In an interview with
Bettina L. Knapp, Simon declares that Flaubert was the one who intro-
duced "pour la première fois dans le roman les notions de simultanéité
et de discontinuité: 'à la fois' et 'par tableaux détachés.'" 43 The
formal decisions growing out of Flaubert's discovery of this paradox
were initially a solution to the problem of how to arrange events that
take place at the same time. If, for instance, the writer describes
a murderer who approaches his victim, he must make a choice between
analyzing first what the murderer sees and what the victim experiences.
In real life the two minds are working at the same time. In fiction
the preference accorded to one or the other point of view is finally a
formal decision. Considered in this light, "simultaneity in duration"
remains a representational problem because fiction is supposed to copy
a real life situation. Flaubert solved the problem with solutions like
the rapid alternation of conversations taking place at the same time
during the famous "comices agricoles" scene. Simon, however, is no
longer concerned with the representational aspects of "simultaneity in
duration." For him the formal decisions take on independent importance
and transcend the mimetic starting point. The representational reasons
for the discontinuities and fragmentations are largely forgotten and
only the formal consequences growing out of them remain.

3. b. ii. The relationship between repetition and fragmentation

Simon identifies repetition and fragmentation as major formal
sources when he maintains that "challenge, fragmentation, repetition. . .
are the characteristics of my texts. . ." Fragmentation defies
traditional forms of fiction but is neither formless nor chaotic. Nar­
rative fragments owe nothing to spontaneous arbitrariness and everything
to careful craftsmanship. Formal discipline prevents La Route from dis­
integrating into incomprehension. A careful balancing of repetition
and fragmentation represents one way of counteracting the risk of
incomprehension. In order for a fragment to be meaningful, it must combine
elements of both known and unknown facts. Since repetition provides an
easy way for making familiar facts available, it produces an imbrication
pattern that helps to relate fragments. Repetition thus introduces
continuities into the text that compensate for the discontinuities of
fragmentation. However, these same discontinuities are accentuated because repetition distorts the narrative progression. As we have seen, a similar principle informs Absalom. The difference La Route introduces is that the repeated narrative segments do not bring a digressing narrative back to a continuous story line. In Absalom the repetitions work towards the gradual emergence of some "meaning" whereas in La Route they force the text into often strange and unexpected associations. Repetition in La Route does not only control but actually transform the text. If fragmentation is seen as a first step in the narrative structure, repetition is its necessary companion.

3. b. iii. Temporal story progression

The fragmentary structure of La Route immediately draws attention to analogical associations. They do, of course, represent the novel's major organizing principle. However, the presence of spatial patterns alone would be quite meaningless. A successful novel like La Route, integrating formal perfection and exciting story material, depends on tensions between spatial and temporal aspects of the narrative. It is therefore necessary to analyze how fragmentation and repetition work against the background of an underlying story progression. Before concentrating on symmetrical patterns in La Route, I intend to pinpoint the ways in which the narrative moves through time. In order to do so, I propose to reconstruct events in their chronological order, an activity that Simon discourages not only through the novel itself but also in interviews and conferences. Simon opposes chronological reconstructions because they are symptomatic of a representational reading. But, since
it is impossible to analyze the narrative structure without some reconstructions of the actual sequence of events, I will have to apologize to the author and nevertheless proceed with such a plan.

The easiest way to analyze temporal progression is to divide La Route into three major parts. Each of these parts serves an entirely different purpose in the overall structure. The first part consists of Georges' experiences at the Flanders front during the "phoney war" and the German attack. The second concerns the narrative frames of conversations between Georges and Blum in the prisoner train as well as in the prison camp in Saxony and between Georges and Corinne some time after the war. The third part includes the imaginative reconstructions of de Reixach's life before the war and the circumstances that have supposedly led to the ancestor's suicide 150 years earlier. The narrative moves indiscriminately between these three parts and initiates abrupt and noticeable temporal dislocations. Fragments taken from war action, narrative frames, and reconstructions of the past entail compensatory actions by repetition. Negotiating between levels with different structural functions, they show little or no evidence of temporal progression. The relationship between Wack's death (war action) and Georges' fights with Corinne (frame), for instance, is, from a temporal point of view, purely arbitrary. Any progression in the novel would therefore have to be located within each of the three parts rather than in between them.

Each of the three parts exhibits its particular pattern of progression and slowing devices. From a temporal perspective, the reconstructions of the Reixach family legend are perhaps the least significant. Simon draws
a "tableau" in which fragments confront and complement each other in a way that does not make time a strong factor. In other words, the scenes are mostly exemplary (iterative) and refer to an indeterminate past. The temporal relationship between fragments is rarely an issue and what progression we find in the lives of the ancestor and de Reixach is so obvious that it does not merit much discussion. The sequence of events is never in question since it is perfectly clear that the ancestor's exploits in Spain, for instance, must have preceded his return home. Time in the reconstruction part is thus either too vague or too apparent to matter much.

The two frame settings, the conversations Georges holds first with Blum and then with Corinne, raise more complex temporal questions. The mere fact that they are more "present" than the reconstructions makes the passing of time more significant, especially since Simon includes several allusions to time and the changing seasons. During the second encounter with Corinne, for instance, Georges remembers "ce premier jour trois mois plus tôt où j'avais été chez elle et avais posé ma main sur son bras..." (p. 295). At other points we learn that it was "à peine l'automne, celui qui avait suivi le dernier été de paix..." (p. 69), that three days went by in the prisoner train (p. 278) and that one year has passed since Georges' capture the preceding fall (pp. 290-91). Although the sequence of events is never too clear, we have a sense of movement through time. But, in their capacity as background to the reconstructions and the war action, the frame settings hold very little interest in themselves. There is therefore no greater compulsion to work out the temporal progression than there was for the reconstructions of the past.
It is during the war action parts that we feel the need to analyze what happened when. We find it both difficult and essential to understand how Georges moves from the "phoney war" episodes to the arrival of the Germans. This movement is all the more tantalizing as fragments not only are arranged without respect for sequence but also use similar words and images to describe events that take place at different times and under different circumstances. A rough sequence of events could be divided into the following categories:

**Phoney war**
- Rest period at farm house belonging to lame man
- Georges' visit to village café

**Attack of Germans**
- Annihilation of squadron
- Wack's death
- Georges, de Reixach, Iglésia and lieutenant ride through war-torn landscape
- Death of de Reixach

**Arrival of Germans**
- Georges and Iglésia change into civilian clothes and get drunk
- Georges and Iglésia hide from the Germans

The interested reader learns and then "unlearns" this sequence in order to appreciate the complexity and formal achievement of *La Route*. The fragmented structure tends to obscure the progression of events which nevertheless influences our reactions to the text. It is perhaps only after being thoroughly familiar with the sequence of events during the war that the interplay of fragments begins to make sense.

Simon makes us conscious of temporal progression without actually telling us where it is located. Contrary to first impressions, it cannot be found in the interaction of war action, frame, and reconstruction but takes place within each of these. In other words, progression manifests
itself only within the fragments themselves and not in their sequential arrangement. The most obvious examples of progression within individual fragments concern relatively long passages that are devoted to specific episodes like the horse race (pp. 137-155 and 174-183), the ambush (pp. 155-166), the ancestor's story (pp. 186-205), life in the prison camp (pp. 216-222), etc. Such passages organize fragmentary information and permit a more intelligent interpretation of smaller fragments centering around the same events. It would, however, be dangerous to interpret these passages as culminating explanations. Similar passages in Absalom tend to give long-awaited partial answers in order to satisfy some of our curiosity about facts and interpretations. They usually bring some area of interest to a close and do not appear again except as short retrospective allusions. "Explanatory" passages in La Route do not appear in strategic positions where they could enlighten previous confusion. They have no culminating effect and the information they contain crops up again and again in later sections of the novel. Simon seems to place such passages according to formal rather than revelatory considerations. Instead of an accretive deepening of meaning as in Absalom, temporal progression in La Route serves transformational processes and formal balance.

3. b. iv. Formal narrative patterns

The symmetrical narrative pattern of La Route works against the background and in opposition to the story progression. Symmetry operates on a principle of formal balance, a principle Simon singles out as a primary feature of his literary output. Speaking of the difficulties he encountered when organizing La Route, Histoire, La Bataille de Pharsale
he tells an interviewer:

In each of these three cases I was able to solve my problem only by giving each theme and character a color (pink, green, red, blue, etc.) that I colored in opposite the summary of each page. I then tacked these strips to the wall near my desk, trying out various orders, seeing how the various colors (the various themes) alternated, re-appeared or combined together. I was sometimes obliged, therefore, and this is very important, to develop certain themes for no other reason than that I was missing, here or there, a little or a lot of one color or another. Thus, as you can see, certain pages were written for "formal" reasons of balance or composition. More important, and to my mind extremely significant, these new pages—these imposed additions—are among the best passages of the novel.

In Simon's own mind, then, the 'necessities of construction' take precedence over all other considerations. Ideally, the "color" diagram Simon describes should be reproduced if the construction of La Route is to be understood. However, since it is difficult to establish with absolute certainty where Simon would place the boundaries between color strips, such a reproduction could never be accurate. It is nevertheless possible to give some idea of how formal symmetries operate in La Route. If each of the three parts (war action, frame, reconstruction) is given a different color, the novel is put together in roughly the following manner:

**Legend:**

Action part

(phony war, ambush, disorder of retreat, death of de Reixach, etc.)

Frame setting

(prisoner train, prison camp, Corinne and Georges after the war)

Reconstruction of the past

(de Reixach's life with Corinne before the war, the ancestor's suicide)
This diagram shows only the larger narrative sections; it does not include short allusions to themes which may occur within these sections. Moreover, episodes that fall outside the core events, such as Georges' visit to his father, are not taken into consideration. The diagram, although not accurate or complete in every detail, nevertheless demonstrates sufficiently how strongly Simon is committed to principles of formal symmetry.

Asked again and again about the genesis of his novels, Simon never tires of giving the same answer. With reference to La Route, he describes and diagrams a structural design based on geological stratifications. In interviews and especially in the Cerisy presentation "Fiction mot à mot," he stresses that each major episode in La Route is embedded within others in the manner of geological stratas:

Ainsi dans La Route des Flandres, redoublant la composition en forme de trèfle dont j'ai parlé, s'organise un jeu des éléments autour d'un point central: le roman s'ouvre et se ferme sur la chevauchée mortelle de Reixach sur la route, le centre exact du livre étant occupé par l'épisode de l'anéantissement de l'escadron surpris par une embuscade, épisode lui-même "cadre" par le début et la fin de la course d'obstacles que dispute et perd Reixach (s'anéantissant ainsi, ou se perdant, aux yeux de Corinne). Divers épisodes, différents thèmes (comme celui des paysans du cantonnement) apparaissent et réapparaissent de part et d'autre de l'élément central, l'ensemble se présentant en somme un peu comme ces coupes de terrain au centre desquels se trouve un puits artésien et dont les différentes couches superposées (sableuses, argileuses, etc.) décrivant une courbe sous-jacente, toujours présentes, donc, en profondeur, affleurant à la
Simon's diagram refers to the novel's overall pattern; it describes the sequence of events without distinguishing between action, frame, and reconstruction. But the geological metaphor need not end with the overall pattern since it applies equally well to the sequence of events within the war action part. If episodes are arranged according to two focal points, namely the annihilation of the squadron and the death of de Reixach, the following pattern emerges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>death of R</td>
<td>events before ambush</td>
<td>events after ambush</td>
<td>after death of R</td>
<td>before death of R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ride through night, stable and café scenes)</td>
<td>(changing into civilian clothes, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(arrival of Germans, etc.)</td>
<td>(stable scene)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Even the hypothetical reconstruction part exhibits a less complex but nevertheless symmetrical arrangement. If de Reixach's past and the ancestor's story are juxtaposed, they alternate quite regularly:

a) de Reixach's past
b) ancestor's story

a b a b a

The only part of the novel, when taken in isolation, that does not follow

*This diagram focuses again on the novel's larger segments and leaves out short allusions.
a definite symmetrical pattern is the frame. Although the three frame settings (train, camp, Georges/Corinne) alternate constantly, they sometimes merge with each other and thereby eliminate clear boundaries between them. Moreover, the frame segments are of extreme lengths. Almost the whole of the novel's middle section, for instance, makes use of the prison camp whereas the last section depends on rapid alternations between all three settings. Although the frame settings in *La Route* make their presence more felt than is the case with other novels, they remain an adjunct to the main events. They do not only merge with each other but are often totally eclipsed by the events during the phoney war and the German attack as well as by the hypotheses concerning de Reixach and the ancestor. It would therefore be unreasonable to expect the frame settings to conform to a symmetrical formula. The geological metaphor applies to the overall structure of *La Route* at the same time as it describes the organization of smaller structural units. Simon's commitment to formal principles expresses itself in as rigorous an application of symmetrical stratification as his text permits.

Color balance and geological stratification in *La Route* coexist with still another formal pattern: Simon has repeatedly described the composition of *La Route* in terms of a clover leaf. The most detailed description of this structural metaphor appears again in "La Fiction mot à mot":

Cette considération des propriétés d'une figure et de ses dérivés ou subordonnées constitue en somme une exploration du terrain autour d'un camp de base, d'un point de référence permanent, comme, par exemple, dans *La Route des Flandres*, les cavaliers dans leur errance (ou le narrateur errant dans la forêt d'images) repassent par ou reviennent toujours à ces points fixes que sont Corinne ou, topographiquement, le cheval mort au bord de la route, suivant ainsi un trajet fait de boucles qui dessinent un trèfle, semblable
The clover leaf image is an extension of the simpler claim that La Route works like a figure eight. In an interview with Knapp, Simon singles out the obstacle course of Auteuil, where the horses keep passing the same point in a figure eight movement, as a model for the novel's structure. Both the figure eight and the clover metaphor apply to the text's surface (topology) and its deeper structure (network of images). The soldiers are always returning to the same spot just as the text keeps coming back to the same images. Since the maze in which soldiers and writer move has neither purpose nor exit, the value of living and writing must be found within the maze. This explains why Simon makes language and narrative structure in La Route as difficult as possible. Instead of offering a hope beyond the maze, he imbues the maze itself with excitement and significance.

3. b. v. Conclusion to repetition and fragmentation

Simon's amazing capacity for integrating various formal patterns shows a particularly good sense of symmetry and therefore of repetition. Symmetry and repetition have been associated in the aesthetics of art and music for a long time. In The Rise of Romance, Eugène Vinaver makes some particularly pertinent observations about symmetry and repetition in thirteenth-century art and literature. He points out, for instance, that the "poetry of
interlace" and the "ribbon" ornament in art contain "the same seemingly impossible combination of acentricity and cohesion." Supporting his point with a number of illustrations, Vinaver describes the interlace as follows:

The interlace proper consists of threads superimposed upon one another in such a way as to make it impossible to separate them: the onlooker's eye does not normally travel along each thread, but moves either horizontally or vertically—or both—embracing all the threads as they come within the field of vision.

A constant tension between digression and recurrence insures against a center of interest or dominance. Interlace designs use repetition as an energetic force: "A continuously increasing activity without pauses or accents is set up, and repetition aims primarily at giving each particular motive a potential infinity." This potential infinity is part of a medieval epistemology which argues that everything is a reflection of everything else. No limits can therefore curb the field of possible combinations and associations. Recent trends in literature and philosophy, breaking with the causal epistemology of Western civilization since Descartes, are rediscovering analogical interpretations of reality. The French avant-garde of Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze, and others disputes that the notion of essence has any currency. For them even the self lacks an entity (Lacan, Derrida) and can be defined only in terms of its relations with others. It is, however, in language that relational patterns manifest themselves best. Indeed, if there is any one thing that these avant-garde thinkers have in common, it is the contention that all systems are structured like a language. What the French avant-garde offers the world is a methodology, literary in origin, that permits us to read or decipher the world like a text. This analogical orientation is, of course, not without impact on literature itself.
If language is reality, words should not be used as vehicles for referential meaning but as carriers of their own significance. Simon's language and narrative technique certainly reflect this new attitude towards words and text. For him words are interesting because they can be combined with other words. It is therefore not surprising that Simon is particularly fond of quoting a statement by Jacques Lacan: "Le mot n'est pas seulement *signe* mais noeud de *signification*."\(^{52}\) The literary text, as a sort of extended sentence, is composed of units that share this characteristic of words. The image of a "noeud" (knot) is especially appropriate because it expresses the tension between continuity and discontinuity we find in fiction. On the one hand, a knot gathers various thematic threads. On the other, it also represents a point from which different threads venture out towards relatively undetermined destinations. Each thread can either fold back on itself or latch on to other threads. In both instances the knot marks the point at which a line has been disturbed. For Simon, the movement of a narrative "is always a case of metaphoric relationships. The important thing... is for the chain to close back in upon itself, or better still, to intersect itself continuously."\(^{53}\) Although a knot can never escape the line, it can disturb it to such an extent that it virtually destroys it. Simon's bias for knots forces temporal progression to exist underground while a new respect for language elevates formal narrative patterns to special heights and necessitates a relational approach to textual interpretation.
4. **Repetitive Behavioral Patterns**

Structuralism and semiotics are generally more interested in plot than character. They tend to study characters in terms of narrative functions (lines of connections) rather than as psychological entities. Propp's *Morphology*, the prototype for character as a function of plot, has influenced various schematized and often reductionist structural models. More recently these models have come under attack and have been replaced by behavioral systems like Brémond's concentration on "the quasi-behavioral capacity of each function to generate its own subsystem and also to alter the very course of the narrative with each turn of events." But, as Blanchard suggests, narrative structure in general has become "too sophisticated to be coded or pre-coded primarily as a role structure." It seems that the radical anti-psychological stance of structuralism and semiotics distorts the real impact of character behavior on narrative structure. The solution to the structuralist-semiotic impass must take a more flexible approach which includes both psychological and structural methods. In France, the intellectual climate created by works like Kojève's *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, Girard's *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, and Lacan's *Ecrits* is paving the way for such an approach. These French thinkers and the American Gregory Bateson focus on psychoanalytic structures between the self and others. They deny that the self has an essence and postulate that it is the product of the relationships it establishes with other human beings. Unlike Sartre, who argues that alienation is imposed from without, Lacan asserts that the self is alienated within itself because, through identification, it loses itself in others. The "Other" thus acts as an alter ego
or a double of the self. This doubling implies that the relationships a character enters into with other characters reflect on himself. In fiction, these relationships are intriguing not only from a psychological but also from a structural point of view. The behavior of characters often determines how the plot is arranged just as plot requirements may in turn influence how characters decide to act. Some behavior patterns are predominantly synchronic whereas others are more diachronic. This distinction would generally translate itself into either spatial or temporal plot orders. In *Absalom* and *La Route* both types of behavior pattern can be found. It is therefore essential to investigate relationships between the self and others as they manifest themselves both in different character clusters and in the course of an individual's life. My analysis of synchronic and diachronic forms of doubling profit mostly from reinterpretations of Freud and Hegel by the French avant-garde. There is, however, one traditional Freudian approach to Faulkner's works by John T. Irwin called *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge* which deserves attention. Before presenting an interpretation of *Absalom* and *La Route* based on the French intellectual avant-garde, I will quickly summarize Irwin's ingenious blend of structural analysis and traditional Freudian terminology.

4. a. **Doubling as a traditional Freudian phenomenon**

John T. Irwin's *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge* concentrates on the close connection between "incest, narcissism, the Oedipus complex, the castration complex, repetition, sameness and difference, recollection, repression, revenge, substitution, reversal, sacrifice, and mediation." Although, as Malcolm Cowley points out, Irwin's book "is by far the most stimulating of
recent Faulkner studies," it is "the most troubling, too, partly because of its insights, which will persuade many Faulkner students, including myself, to change some of their judgments, and partly because of its omissions and outrageous overstatements." What distinguishes Irwin's study from other Freudian approaches is the attention he pays to structural relationships between characters. He discusses these relationships in terms of doubling and differentiates between two types:

We should at this point make a clear distinction between the spatial aspect of doubling—the way in which one person can be a spatial repetition of another person who is contemporary—and the temporal aspect of doubling—the way in which one person later in time recognizes another person earlier in time as a double of himself and thus sees his own condition as a fated repetition of that earlier life, or the way in which one pair of doubles later in time repeats another pair of doubles earlier in time. Irwin uses "spatial" and "temporal" in a more limited sense than my own references to these terms imply. And, although Irwin pays some tribute to "spatial" doubling, the bulk of his study is dedicated to the temporal aspect which he relates to Nietzsche's concept of "the eternal recurrence of the same." What fascinates Irwin about Nietzsche's position is the paradox that the endless recurrence of difference constitutes sameness, that the ceaselessness of becoming constitutes being, that the continuance of mutability constitutes the immutable, that the endless flux of time constitutes eternity.

As far as temporal doubling applies to Absalom, it does so in terms of generation continuities which lock the individual into "those inevitable repetitions inherent in the cyclic nature of time." Faulkner's tendency to use the same characters in different novels and stories lends itself especially well to a temporal doubling interpretation. These reappearing characters lead Irwin to argue that Absalom can only be understood in connection with
The Sound and the Fury. Irwin consequently interprets Absalom as the story of Quentin and believes the crux of the novel to be Quentin's failure to escape from repeating the fate of Bon and Henry. The feeling that "an ancestor's actions can determine the actions of his descendants for generations to come by compelling them periodically to repeat his deed" must therefore account for Quentin's obsession with the Sutpen legend.

According to Irwin, Quentin is mostly concerned with the danger of incest and the Oedipal struggle between father and son. Henry's incestuous wishes and jealousy parallel Quentin's own feelings towards Candace and Dalton Ames. Within each of the triangular relationships between the young people in Absalom and The Sound and the Fury certain reversals and substitutions do of course complicate matters. Moreover, the incest question already touches on the fear of castration and the Oedipus complex, which are concerns that occupy the major part of Irwin's study. The oedipal struggle for mastery between father and son takes place over several generations and thereby represents an excellent illustration of temporal doubling. The son experiences the father's authority as an affront that must be avenged if the son is to attain an identity of his own. The son must usurp the father's position by becoming a father himself. Sutpen's spiritual father is the plantation owner (Pettibone) who rejects him. In order to avenge himself, Sutpen plans to become a plantation owner and father in his own right. However, as a father he must protect himself against his son who in turn intends to usurp his place: "Sutpen can only prove that he is a better man than his father if he proves that he is a better man than his son, since Sutpen's father would have been defeated by his son in that
very act." In order to triumph, Sutpen must destroy both his father and his son. The defeat of the son accomplishes both tasks at the same time: The son is a substitute for his grandfather so that his subjugation represents Sutpen's revenge against his father and protection against his son. Sutpen's dilemma is thus that he must destroy the offspring which symbolizes his victory over the father in order not to be destroyed himself. Sutpen's son Bon later repeats Sutpen's own struggle against his father. Bon approaches Sutpen in much the same way as Sutpen had approached Pettibone and is similarly rejected. Bon challenges Sutpen's authority by threatening to marry Judith. Sutpen counters this attack by telling Henry the secret that will make the younger son kill the older one. In oedipal terms, then, Bon is not murdered by his brother but by his father. However, as in the biblical account of King David and Absalom, Sutpen's position continues to be in peril since Henry's act of killing usurps the authority of the father:

Absalom kills his brother Amnon because David will not kill him, and this usurpation by Absalom of the father's authority to punish incest is as well the murder of the eldest son by a younger son, the acting out on a substitute of Absalom's death wish against his father.69

The oedipal struggles in Absalom are so fierce that the sons on whom Sutpen has built his hopes for a dynasty destroy each other until only the idiot Jim Bond is left.

Irwin analyzes in oedipal terms not only the stories in the Bible, Absalom, and The Sound and the Fury but also the narrative act in Absalom. He establishes a genealogical order based on narrative authority in which Mr. Compson represents the father, Quentin the son, and Shreve the grand-
son. Since Mr. Compson possesses most facts about Sutpen's life, he is at first in control of the narrative. But Quentin supplants and "takes revenge against his father" when he discovers evidence about Bon's murder that neither his father nor General Compson have known. Through his visit to Sutpen's Hundred with Rosa, Quentin thus establishes himself as a narrative authority. However, his authority is constantly challenged by Shreve who "sounds just like father" (p. 181). Quentin's obsession with the Sutpen legend therefore reveals itself not only as a fascination with the past or an identification with Henry but also as a battle ground on which he usurps his father's narrative authority and defends himself against Shreve's attempt to dethrone him in turn.

Irwin translates most human relationships in Absalom into oedipal terms. He thereby illuminates certain psychological connections and explains the reasons for some structural choices. His analysis does, for instance, provide additional justification for the presence of Shreve and makes clear why Faulkner withholds information concerning Bon's background until Quentin can discover it for himself. However, Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge makes us uneasy because Irwin takes his Freudian approach beyond its limits. At the same time, his interpretation leaves out much that plays a part in the personal relationships between characters. According to Malcolm Cowley, the most serious flaw in Irwin's approach is no doubt the following:

When Irwin "oscillates" to Absalom, Absalom', he makes Quentin, not Colonel Sutpen, the center of the story, and thus transforms it into a private drama of doubling and revenge. It thereby gains something in psychological depth..., but the gain is made at the cost of denying that the novel is also a tragic fable of southern history. That suggests my central grievance against the meta-Freudian method as applied to fiction. It rules out everything historical or regional or communal or merely public;...
It seems that Irwin's flashes of insight as well as his pitfalls are inherent in a method that explains *Absalom* from a limited and very specific point of view. The value of *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge* for a study of repetition lies in its ability to uncover connections between characters that have only too often gone unnoticed. It also suggests just how heavily Faulkner relies on doubling in the form of characters identifying with each other and of similar (triangular) patterns recurring throughout the novel.

4. b. **Doubling as a synchronic phenomenon**

Human behavior, no matter how individual in specific cases, is punctuated by certain patterns that manifest themselves over and over again. Such patterns are usually concealed but, once someone uncovers them, they immediately strike everybody as obvious and true. Kojève's reading of Hegel, Girard's discovery of mimetic rivalry, and Lacan's reinterpretation of Freud all represent visions that bring hidden truths to the surface. Kojève, for instance, stresses the universal struggle for power over others that motivates achievement and change. Girard points to mimetic rivalry as a particularly pernicious influence on all close relationships between people. And Lacan's analysis of the "stade du miroir" describes how each child moves through three major phases before he or she can enter into intersubjective communication. On an intuitive level, literature has of course always understood and exploited the tensions and conflicts arising from such behavior patterns. Among other influential thinkers, Hegel and Freud therefore draw heavily on literary examples for their theories. Similarly, Girard finds the most convincing illustrations of mimetic rivalry in works like *Don Quixote*, Shakespearean drama, *Le Rouge et le noir*,...
A la recherche du temps perdu. The universal nature of some behavior patterns becomes particularly obvious when a writer decides to depict different characters acting in the same basic manner. Instead of concentrating on narrative development, texts of this type tend to proceed in layers. Narrative fragmentation and repetition in Absalom and La Route therefore go hand in hand with behavior that is repeated by different characters. In order to understand how such behavior patterns work, the theoretical positions of Kojève, Girard, and Lacan must be clarified.

4. b. i. Theoretical background

Kojève's section "En guise d'introduction" in his Introduction à la lecture de Hegel discusses the relationship between the self and the other in terms of a master/slave dialectic. Hegel's discussion of this dialectic centers around human consciousness as it expresses itself through human desire. For Kojève, the starting point of Hegel's argument is that

Le Désir humain... diffère... du Désir animal (constituant un être naturel, seulement vivant et n'ayant qu'un sentiment de sa vie) par le fait qu'il port non pas sur un objet réel, 'positif', donné, mais sur un autre Désir.72

What makes us human is thus the ability to desire a desire. Objects are often not desired for their intrinsic value but for the value they represent for another human being:

... le Désir qui porte sur un objet naturel n'est humain que dans la mesure où il est 'médialisé' par le Désir d'un autre portant sur le même objet: il est humain de désirer ce que désirent les autres, parce qu'ils le désirent.73

Kojève argues that the value the self attaches to himself is determined by the coincidence of his desire with that of another. If the self desires an object that is also desired by another, the self believes
that his desire is valid because it is accepted by the other as such. By desiring the same object as another, the self is recognized as a human being. However, the self wants to be recognized by another self who is not in a position to demand the same recognition from him. In order to determine who is the Master—the self who is recognized by another—and who the Slave—the self who recognizes another--, a battle for domination ensues. This battle is a struggle for life and death. However, if one or both subjects are killed, the purpose of the struggle is destroyed. In order for the recognition to have any value for the Master, the Slave must have value in the eyes of the Master. The Master needs the Slave because, if he kills him, there is nobody left to recognize him as Master. The Slave must therefore remain alive but give up his autonomy in order to serve the Master. This new situation now gives rise to a paradox because "l'homme n'est humain que dans la mesure où il veut s'imposer à un autre homme, se faire reconnaitre par lui"\(^7\) but "pour que cette reconnaissance puisse le satisfaire, il faut qu'il sache que l'autre est un être humain."\(^7\) The Master's desire for total recognition can consequently never be satisfied fully. The Slave, on the other hand, desiring to become Master in his own right, can realize his desire. The relationship between Master and Slave is not direct but mediated through objects, that is, the work which the Slave performs for the benefit of the Master. The Slave can actively work to change the conditions that make him a Slave and the other a Master, whereas the Master maintains his position only as long as the status quo is preserved. The master is trapped in a rigid system and cannot actively desire to change it; the Slave transforms the world in
the process of actualizing his desire to become a Master. In conclusion, then, it is the Slave who emerges as the truly self-conscious human being because he continues to desire a desire.

In Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque Girard clearly bases himself on Kojève's elucidation of Hegel's essay. He is particularly intrigued by the idea that human beings desire objects not in themselves but only insofar as they are desired by another. Discussing literary figures like Don Quichotte, Madame Bovary, Julien Sorel, and Proust's Marcel, Girard argues that they are motivated by "un Désir selon l'Autre qui s'oppose au désir selon Soi dont la plupart d'entre nous se targuent de jouir." Speaking of the connection between the desiring subject and the desired object, Girard points to the necessity of a mediation:

La ligne droite est présente, dans le désir de Don Quichotte, mais elle n'est pas l'essentiel. Au-dessus de cette ligne, il y a le médiateur qui rayonne à la fois vers le sujet et vers l'objet. La métaphore spatiale qui exprime cette triple relation est évidemment le triangle. L'objet change avec chaque aventure mais le triangle demeure.

The mediator is incidental and can be replaced by other objects or persons. What remains constant is the desire of the other which functions as a model or ideal for the subject's behavior. In Le rouge et le noir, the women in Julien Sorel's life are not desired for themselves but function as mediators in a triangular relationship:

Tous les désirs intenses de Julien sont des désirs selon l'Autre. Son ambition est un sentiment triangulaire qui se nourrit de haine pour les gens en place. C'est aux maris, aux pères et aux fiancés, c'est-à-dire aux rivaux, que vont les dernières pensées de cet amant lorsqu'il pose son pied sur les échelles; ce n'est jamais à la femme qui l'attend sur le balcon.

The other is always both a model and an obstacle to the subject's own
desire. Girard comments that "on a toujours affaire à deux désirs concurrents. Le médiateur ne peut plus jouer son rôle de modèle sans jouer également, ou paraître jouer, le rôle d'un obstacle." The result is mimetic rivalry:

Pour qu'un vaniteux désire un objet il suffit de le convaincre que cet objet est déjà désiré par un tiers auquel s'attache un certain prestige. Le médiateur est ici un rival que la vanité a d'abord suscité, qu'elle a, pour ainsi dire, appelé à son existence de rival, avant d'en exiger la défaite.

The rivalry will be more or less intense depending on how close the contact between model and subject is. In the case of Don Quichotte, there is no contact because the model is literary (Amadis). Girard would call this a "médiation externe" as opposed to a "médiation interne" where "cette même distance est assez réduite pour que les deux sphères pénètrent plus ou moins profondément l'une dans l'autre." The Age of Romanticism signals a change in attitude towards such mediated relationships. During the Classical period, writers and artists were content to imitate the ancients, but now the "vaniteux romantique ne se veut plus le disciple de personne. Il se persuade qu'il est infiniment original." However, the new and apparently spontaneous individualism of the romantic does in fact only conceal rather than eliminate the process of imitation. The romantic is convinced that he desires an object for its own sake and not because it is desired by another. Consequently he believes that his self is created ex nihilo, without suffering the influence of others. Indeed, the romantic assumes mistakenly that "désirer à partir de l'objet équivaut à désirer à partir de soi-même. . ." The mediator is no longer openly acknowledged but concealed by the cult for the object. In certain works of literature
the concealed mediator is designated as such. Girard therefore differentiates between "oeuvres romantiques," which never openly acknowledge the mediator, and "oeuvres romanesques," which reveal his presence. For Girard, only the "oeuvres romanesques" are interesting, and he concentrates primarily on the way in which love and jealousy in Stendhal and Proust manifest the process of mediation.

Building on the framework of _Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque_, Girard later develops the notion of the mediator as a scapegoat. He stresses that conflict does not arise from difference but from mimetic rivalry. Violence or conflict erupt because differentiation is introduced into a truly undifferentiated relationship: "Myth and ritual tell us that differences are generated from that state of undifferentiation which we now identify with the reciprocal violence of the doubles."\(^84\) The crucial point is that conflict does not arise between people who are so different as to have nothing in common; it arises between those who share the same desires. Girard turns to Shakespeare for his definition of the doubles and, going one step further, argues that "doubles can be reconciled only at the expense of a common victim"\(^85\) or a scapegoat. It is therefore through the expulsion of a randomly chosen victim that the initial state of undifferentiation is restored.

Moving in the same direction as Kojève and Girard, Lacan focuses on the relationship between the self and the other from a psychoanalytical point of view. He argues that the ego is not a source of health, as traditional Freudian interpreters have it, but the seat of neurosis. Lacan reaches this conclusion because for him the ego is the product of
alienating identifications with others rather than an autonomous entity. In his central essay "Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je," Lacan describes how the child moves from an "Imaginary" into a "Symbolic Order." The "Imaginary Order" finds its paradigm in the child's earliest identification with the mother. At this point, "the subject identifies his sentiment of Self in the image of the other." Imaginary relationships are immediate and dual because the child wants to lose himself in the mother and "wants to actually complete" her. As Wilden points out, "Imaginary" in Lacan's terminology is "not in the least imaginary; it is the realm of images, doubles, mirrors and identifications with particular Others." Lacan realizes, as does Girard, that "aggressivity is intimately linked to identifications" since the "dual relationship between moi and the other as a dual relationship of objectification (and, inevitably, of aggression)" takes place "along the lines of Sartre's analysis of our sado-masochistic relationship to the other who is an object for us, or for whom we make ourselves an object." Indeed, Lacan asserts that he shows up "l'aggressivité qui sous-tend l'action du philanthrope, de l'idéaliste, du pédagogue, voir du réformateur." The child is from the beginning an alienated subject. The form of this alienation changes as the child moves from its immediate identification with the mother to the mediated one with the father. When the mother introduces the father, the child becomes aware that what the mother most wants is what she is lacking: the phallus.* The child enters into the

*For Lacan the phallus stands ultimately for any desire that cannot be satisfied.
"Symbolic Order" because its "desire to be its mother's desire gives way to an identification with the father." The father's mediation thus interferes with the mother's immediate relationship, and the child steps into the "Symbolic Order," that is the order of language and society. Imaginary relationships are particularly alienating because the subject is subordinated to the image of others. It is, however, impossible to escape from alienation. Even after making his transition into the "Symbolic Order," the subject continues to enter into the old imaginary identifications of the mirror phase. His experience is always "of 'something missing'" because "the 'absolute desire for the Other'... can never be satisfied." All Imaginary identifications with others are only substitutes for the absolute Other, and the ego or moi is the bearer of neurosis because it is made up of alienating relationships. In other words, entry into the "Symbolic Order" cannot transcend alienation completely because reality (le réel) is irreducible to language so that "knowledge and the absolute, final truth are irrevocably cut off from each other."

Lacan attaches much importance to language. Not only is language the "Symbolic Order" par excellence but one of Lacan's most famous pronouncements maintains that the "unconscious is structured as a language." Like the structuralists, Lacan concentrates on the signifier (signifiant) rather than on the signified (signifié). In his "Le séminaire sur 'La lettre volée'", Lacan discusses the relationship between the compulsion to repeat and the "chaîne signifiante." The "object," that is the letter in Poe's story, is in itself of little importance (as far as the content goes); it is each participant's relationship with the letter that controls the development
of the plot. The letter functions only as a mediator in the power play between the ministers, the police, and the Queen. Possession of a symbolic object would effectively eliminate the subject's participation in the "Symbolic Order": "Since the function of symbolic exchange is not accumulation, but the maintenance of the relation between the exchangers, actual possession of the object would break the circuit." This implies that the letter would lose its symbolic or manipulative power if it were returned to the Queen or if one of the other participants should admit possession and/or reveal its content. In conclusion then, if, as Hegel maintains, the subject is human only insofar as he desires a desire, he must constantly renew triangular relationships in which the mediator can be replaced while the mediation remains constant. In the event that all desire for a desire should cease, either through possession or some other circumstances, the subject would suffer if not a physical then a spiritual death.

4. b. ii. Application to 'Absalom'

The relationships between the self and others, discussed by Kojève, Girard, and Lacan, explain to various degrees why characters behave as they do. The tragedy of Faulkner's characters must be traced back to behavior patterns that leave them no room for adaptation to unforeseen circumstances. What hinders almost all attempts at communication in the novel is the inability of characters to enter into direct, bilateral relationships with each other. Their displaced and mediated associations always exhibit the patterns of attraction and aggression described by Girard. Mediation expresses itself through a complex assortment of
triangular connections between people. These triangles tend to overlap because the same character can participate in several triangles in different capacities. This means that it is sometimes necessary to study the same character as he or she functions as the subject, object, or mediator in separate triangles.

The most important triangles in *Absalom* concern Sutpen, Henry, Judith, and Bon. In the first instance, Quentin and Shreve are particularly intrigued by the relationships between Henry, Judith, and Bon. Faulkner indicates, often through short and cryptic statements, that each of the three young people loves the other two: "Because Henry loved Bon" (p. 89); "Because he [Bon] loved Judith" (p. 94); "... he [Bon] loved Henry too..." (p. 108); and "... between Henry and Judith there had been a relationship closer than the traditional loyalty of brother and sister even..." (p. 79). Judging from these pronouncements, we could conceivably draw a triangle consisting of reciprocal and harmonious affinities:

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    Judith
   /
  /   \
Bon --- Henry
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This type of triangle would be feasible if each character would relate directly to the other two. But, these apparently bilateral relationships are really always mediated by the third person. Faulkner provides a number of hints about the mediated communication patterns between the Sutpen children. Bon functions as the mediator between Judith and Henry because "it was Henry who seduced Judith: not Bon..." (p. 97). Judith,
on the other hand, mediates the association between Henry and Bon in much the same way as Henry occupies the third term in the Bon-Judith connection. Faulkner suggests that Bon, Henry, and Judith cannot relate to each other directly because each identifies with the others to such an extent that they come close to what Shreve calls the "perfect incest":

Henry... may have been conscious that his fierce provincial's pride in his sister's virginity was a false quantity which must incorporate in itself an inability to endure in order to be precious, to exist, and so must depend upon its loss, absence, to have existed at all. In fact, perhaps this is the pure and perfect incest: the brother realizing that the sister's virginity must be destroyed in order to have existed at all, taking that virginity in the person of the brother-in-law, the man whom he would be if he could become, metamorphose into, the lover, the husband; by whom he would be despoiled, choose for despoiler, if he could become, metamorphose into the sister, the mistress, the bride. (p. 96)

In actual fact, then, the real connections between Bon, Henry, and Judith reveal themselves as follows:

The dotted line represents the bilateral surface connection whereas the solid line indicates the concealed mediation. Once the hidden pattern emerges, it becomes clear that the loved one is always loved only because the lover desires what another desires. The one who thinks he/she is loved exists only as an object which fuels the rivalry between the subject and the mediator (model). Faulkner refers to this kind of displacement when he says:

... it was not Judith who was the object of Bon's love or of Henry's solicitude. She was just the blank shape, the empty vessel
in which each of them strove to preserve, not the illusion of himself nor his illusion of the other but what each conceived the other to believe him to be—the man and the youth, seducer and seduced, who had known one another, seduced and been seduced, victimized in turn each by the other, conquerer vanquished by his own strength, vanquished conquering by his own weakness... (pp. 119-20).

Conscious of themselves only in the image of the other, they are hopelessly trapped in the "Imaginary Order."

In his capacity as subject, Henry views Bon as both object and mediator. Bon blocks Henry's desire in two ways. Should Bon marry Judith, Henry would not only lose the sister to the brother-in-law but he would also lose the man he loves to the sister. Henry is confronted with two prohibitions: he cannot marry his sister and he cannot marry someone of his own sex. It is, however, Bon's role as a Girardian model and obstacle that interests Faulkner most. From the earliest stages of his acquaintance with Bon to the moment when he pulls the trigger, Henry tries to emulate the older friend and brother. He "apes his clothing and speech" (p. 102) and admits: "I am trying to make myself into what I think he wants me to be..." (p. 330). Henry makes himself into an object or Slave. But Bon's decision to marry Judith gradually forces Henry to abandon his subordinate role. Struggling to accept Bon's intentions, Henry finds himself being pushed towards a moral impasse that compels him to change his attitude. Once Bon is ready to pass through the gate to Sutpen's Hundred, he transforms himself from ideal model into real obstacle. Henry's decision to kill Bon is perfectly consonant with the oscillation between imitation and aggression in situations of rivalry. Henry and Bon operate within a symbolic circuit as long as neither of them acts out the threat that controls their relationship. But when Bon is about to make the threat real, Henry has to
destroy the rival. At some point, then, the dominance of imitation is broken and replaced by aggression.

Bon, as the perceiving subject, participates in a slightly modified triangle in which Sutpen functions as the mediator and Henry/Judith as the object. Bon is introduced as a fatherless son in search of a father. The success of his search is predicated on the father acknowledging the existence of the son. Bon manipulates the lives of Henry and Judith because he realizes that it is only through them that he can establish contact with Sutpen. When Bon looks at Henry, he does not see the younger brother but "the face of the man who shaped us both. . ." (p. 317). Henry functions as an object that reflects the father and represents a gateway to him.

Bon agrees to visit Sutpen's Hundred because "I shall penetrate. . . and look not on my brother's face whom I did not know I possessed and hence never missed, but my father's. . ." (p. 317). And, contrary to Henry's assumption, Bon accompanies Henry "not to see the sister. . . but thinking 'So at least I shall see him, whom it seems I was bred up never to expect to see, whom I had even learned to live without. . .'" (p. 319). The figure of the father acts as an ideal model which the son must first imitate and then reject in order to mature into an autonomous self. In his capacity as an ideal model, Sutpen is not required to behave as a "real" father; no share of an inheritance or even public acknowledgment is demanded of him. Bon would be satisfied with a private sign of recognition which would in fact have transformed the ideal or symbolic relationship between father and son into a real one. The power of the "Symbolic Order" Lacan discusses in "Le séminaire sur 'la Lettre volée'" would thereby be broken since
"possession" of the father would end the search for an ideal father. However, Sutpen does not allow this transformation to take place. He refuses to admit to a flaw in his design and makes his sons pay for his blindness and obstinacy. Shreve argues that, as a Master, Sutpen depends on the status quo and cannot adapt to an unforeseen situation:

Maybe he [Bon] knew then that whatever the old man had done, whether he meant well or ill by it, it wasn't going to be the old man who would have to pay the check; and now that the old man was bankrupt with the incompetence of age, who should do the paying if not his sons, his get, because wasn't it done that way in the old days? the old Abraham. . . (p. 325).

Bon and Henry agree to be sacrificed to Sutpen's design because neither of them can exist outside Sutpen's presence. Henry's life acquires its meaning from Sutpen's moral system and Bon's survival depends on a sign of acknowledgment from Sutpen. Indeed, Bon is so totally trapped within an Imaginary relationship with Sutpen as the Other that he doesn't hesitate to destroy himself and Henry, in an effort to elicit at least Sutpen's posthumous recognition. Bon realizes that the murder proves to Sutpen that he was his son because otherwise Henry could not have been provoked into killing him.

Mediated relationships, especially when they are not recognized as such, are destructive because one person in the triangle is always treated as an object rather than as a human being. Faulkner makes this point not only with his major actors but also with his supporting cast. Henry's identification with Bon through Judith, for instance, finds its counterpart in Rosa's "vicarious bridal" (p. 77). Rosa loves Bon not because she has been seduced by him but because Judith loves him. In fact, Rosa never even sees Bon alive; he enters into her life only as an abstraction:
"... it would only need vague inference of some walking flesh and blood desired by someone else if only in some shadow-realm of make-believe" (p. 147). Indeed, more than any other character in the novel, Bon appears in other peoples' lives as a mere object. Ellen speaks of him "as if he were three inanimate objects in one," namely a "garment which Judith might wear," "a piece of furniture" attesting to Ellen's social position, and "a mentor and example" for Henry (p. 75). Moreover, in the story Quentin and Shreve construct around him, Bon is manipulated by his mother and her lawyer (p. 306). Sutpen, of course, treats not only his sons as objects but also his women. He discards his first wife, drives his second one into madness, insults Rosa, and indirectly kills Milly. Clytie and Wash finally make themselves into objects and acquiesce to being mistreated by Sutpen. In a rigidly hierarchical and class-conscious society like the South, maintaining the status quo necessarily implies a general acceptance of a Master/Slave division. The mediated relationships between individuals in Absalom is therefore symptomatic of a whole way of life.

4. b. iii. Application to 'La Route'

Patterns of mediated relationships in La Route are less frequent than in Absalom. Nevertheless, the women in Simon's novel function almost entirely as objects desired by two male rivals. The rivals, who in some cases are explicitly portrayed as doubles, exhibit aggressive attitudes ranging from open threats to unacknowledged misgivings. The lame man with the gun and the mayor's assessor he threatens are described as wearing "ces semblables bottes" (p. 124) so that de Reixach seems to stand between twins:
In accordance with Girard's theory, the violence between the two rivals is a direct result of their similarity, a similarity that makes them desire the desire of the other.

A less obvious similarity exists between Iglesia and de Reixach whose rivalry centers on Corinne. The two men manifest the kind of close but unacknowledged interdependence that forces them to conceal their aggression under a constant show of equanimity. Although de Reixach is the Master and Iglesia the Slave, "ils ne pouvaient pas se passer l'un de l'autre, tout autant lui de de Reixach que celui-ci de lui, cet attachement hautain du maître pour son chien et de bas en haut du chien pour son maître..." (p. 46). Since the class difference is tacitly understood but never verbalized, their rivalry exists mostly below the surface. In de Reixach's eyes, then, "la passion ou plutôt la souffrance avait la forme non d'un de ses semblables de ses égaux mais d'un jockey à tête de polichinelle contre lequel nous ne l'avions jamais entendu seulement élever la voix et dont il se faisait suivre comme son ombre..." (p. 124). The rivalry manifests itself primarily in two areas, areas in which de Reixach and Iglesia face each other as equals: horsemanship and sex. Georges singles out the care for horses as "le seul sujet la seule chose peut-être qui en définitive les passionnait tous deux" (p. 125) so that de Reixach and Iglesia not only discuss but also ride horses on equal terms. It is therefore not surprising that the only overt confrontation between the two men concerns a horse race
and, indirectly, Corinne. When de Reixach challenges Iglésia's professional authority by entering a race as jockey, the real object of contention is of course the woman who will presumably give her heart to the winner. The hostility between the rivals manifests itself only indirectly. De Reixach and Iglésia exchange only practical instructions concerning the race and let Corinne mediate the emotional or real meaning of the situation. Corinne argues alternately with de Reixach and with Iglésia about the folly of her husband's action, and it is through her that the reader understands that, for de Reixach at least, losing the race would symbolize losing Corinne. In love and horsemanship, two areas in which social advantage does not protect de Reixach, Iglésia functions as a respected and victorious rival.

Girard's theory of mimetic rivalry explains also why the soldier Georges keeps thinking about a woman he has never even met. Georges obviously desires Corinne primarily because she is desired by both de Reixach and Iglésia. It is her abstract shape that influences the relationships Georges entertains with the captain and the former jockey. Corinne, standing for the desire of a desire, sustains Georges throughout the war years but loses her power when Georges becomes her lover after the war. By possessing her, Georges destroys her symbolic significance. Corinne soon realizes that Georges does not love her but only an image of her. Indeed, Georges himself comes to understand the false hopes he had set on possessing Corinne. Comparing his hopes with his father's faith in the symbolic power of words, Georges asks himself: "... qu'avais-je cherché en elle espéré poursuivi jusque sur son corps dans son corps des mots..."
des sons aussi fou que lui avec ces illusoires feuilles de papier..." (p. 274). Patterns of mediation thus repeat themselves in different relationships between characters in _La Route_. They demonstrate that synchronic doubling represents a pervasive feature of the novel and influences its narrative structure by imposing a repetitive arrangement of material.

4. c. **Doubling as a diachronic phenomenon**

Synchronic doubling acts as a sort of archetypal manifestation of patterns in all human behavior. However, certain patterns also repeat themselves in a single individual's life. Irwin's notion of temporal doubling concentrates on the reappearance of the same situation over several generations. This type of temporal doubling isolates instances in a time spectrum without, however, paying attention to temporal progress or continuity. Instead of showing how the same pattern manifests itself in similar situations, temporal doubling should also demonstrate how a character interprets different situations according to the same preconceptions. Repetitive behavior in the face of changing contexts implies a distorted view of reality and forces an individual to make the wrong decisions. Faulkner and to a lesser degree Simon portray obsessive characters who destroy themselves because they are unable to interpret the world around them correctly. Their behavior corresponds to responses that Gregory Bateson discusses as double bind situations. Bateson adds to the discoveries about relationships between Self and Other by Kojève, Girard, and especially Lacan by studying the accumulative effect of such relationships on the individual. He begins by investigating the child's early relation-
ships within the family and argues that the patterns it learns will
determine the adult's later behavior. Bateson, like Lacan, approaches his
subject matter as a text that needs to be deciphered and sees the value
of his studies in epistemological rather than clinical terms. But the
double bind theory distinguishes itself from Lacan's approach in that it
discusses the process of identification in a more specifically temporal
context.

4. c. i. Theoretical Background

Gregory Bateson\textsuperscript{98} discovered the double bind theory while studying
the family situations of schizophrenic patients. He found that, as a child,
schizophrenic adults were subjected to contradictory messages which offered
no avenues of escape and therefore produced great emotional stress. The
conditions for a double bind situation are usually the following: The child
is trapped within an intense personal relationship with parents or other
persons of authority on whom his survival depends. It is imperative that the
child interpret messages from such persons correctly. However, the child
is confronted with two messages that contradict each other. The contradiction
is not easily recognized because the two messages are of a different logical
type (different level). Bateson illustrates the dilemma this contradiction
creates with an example. The mother feels hostile towards her child but does
not want the child to know "that she is withdrawing"\textsuperscript{99} because
she wants to think of herself as a loving mother. She therefore simulates
"loving behavior" which "is then a comment on (since it is compensatory for)
her hostile behavior and consequently it is of a different order of message
than the hostile behavior. . ." The result is that the child "must not accurately interpret her communication" since she wants him to see her simulated behavior as her true feelings. The child is forced to "distort his perception of metacommunicative signals" in order to reinforce the mother's deception for otherwise he will lose her affection. Bateson summarizes the situation by saying: "The child is punished for discriminating accurately what she is expressing, and he is punished for discriminating inaccurately—he is caught in a double bind." The dilemma of the "you are damned if you do an damned if you don't" situation is aggravated by the child's subordinate position in the family context which does not permit him to metacommunicate (for instance by pointing out to his mother that she is presenting him with a double bind) and thereby neutralize the double binding environment. If the child, and later the adult, is repeatedly subjected to double binding situations, he will learn "to perceive his universe in double bind patterns." Double binds do in fact manipulate the power distribution in all hierarchical relationships. As long as an individual remains within an emotional or otherwise expedient state of dependence, he can neither respond adequately to circumstances nor can he metacommunicate about the conditions that force double binding patterns upon him. Temporal doubling in Absalom and La Route takes the form of accumulative double binds which explain the behavior of character and influences the repetitive nature of the narrative.
In Chapter Eight Faulkner turns to Sutpen's childhood in order to account for the adult's behavior. He has Sutpen grow up in the mountains of West Virginia where life was typified by self-sufficiency rather than surplus value. The land belongs to everybody and "everybody had just what he was strong enough or energetic enough to take and keep" (p. 221). During his adolescence, the family moves into the flat land where Sutpen "falls" into a world of social distinctions. He learns that objects are not measured in terms of their innate quality but according to the value they represent to other people. He didn't know, for instance

that there existed all the objects to be wanted which there were, or that the ones who owned the objects not only could look down on the ones that didn't, but could be supported in the down-looking not only by the others who owned objects too but by the very ones that were looked down on that didn't own objects and knew they never would. (p. 221)

Sutpen assumes that it is luck that determines the social order and cannot conceive of people who look down on others because luck was on their side. This innocent view of reality is one day irrevocably destroyed by a traumatic experience. Sutpen is around fourteen years old but is presented as a man without identity because he "knew neither where he had come from nor where he was nor why" (p. 227). In Lacan's terms, Sutpen is still in a primordial state of self-consciousness. He enters the mirror phase when he is sent to Pettibone's plantation where he identifies with the plantation owner who has the power to send him to the backdoor. Pettibone functions as the "Imaginary Other" who becomes both a model and obstacle to Sutpen's desires. In accordance with Girard's description of mimetic rivalry and Lacan's discovery that "aggressivity is intimately linked to identification,"
Sutpen considers shooting Pettibone. However, in terms of Hegel's concept of the Master/Slave dialectic, the boy realizes that "That wouldn't do no good" (p. 235) because by killing the rival he would eliminate the Other on whose recognition his own self image depends. Sutpen must force the class of plantation owners to acknowledge and respect him. Sutpen reaches this conclusion after deciding that in his present position his actions have no impact on Pettibone's existence. Although Pettibone will not receive the message Sutpen was to deliver, he will not incur any loss on account of it. Sutpen voices his despair in terms of a double bind situation: "I not only wasn't doing any good to him by telling it or any harm to him by not telling it, there aint any good or harm either in the living world that I can do to him" (p. 238). Having accepted Pettibone as an "Imaginary Other," Sutpen has created for himself a state of emotional dependence which does not permit him to move outside the double binding situation. Instead of analyzing and fighting against the social system that gives Pettibone his power, Sutpen decides to remain within the system: "So to combat them you have got to have what they have that made them do what the man did. You got to have land and niggers and a fine house to combat them with" (p. 238). Sutpen does not desire the land and the house he eventually obtains for their intrinsic value but because they represent the desire of the Master class. By desiring a desire, Sutpen condemns himself to "find a hole to fill up a hole." 106

Sutpen encounters a similar double bind when he tries to establish himself in Jefferson. In order to become part of the Southern aristocracy to which Pettibone belongs, Sutpen must create for himself both a past and a future. Choosing an appropriate wife could satisfy both requirements.
Devoid of a respectable past, in Jefferson the equivalent of an established name, Sutpen has to acquire one through marriage. However, this solution presents him with a double bind: by marrying Ellen Coldfield he demonstrates that he has an acceptable past because no father-in-law would otherwise consent to the marriage. At the same time he shows that he has no acceptable past since he has to acquire one by marrying Ellen. No matter what efforts Sutpen puts into turning himself into a respected member of Jefferson, the town "had agreed never to forgive him for not having any past..." (p. 52). By endorsing the status quo, Sutpen automatically excludes himself from the social position he desires.

The stronghold of the Southern aristocracy is of course made up of families whose ancestors had once been in much the same situation as Sutpen. It is only through the power of money that names have become respectable and the past has conveniently been forgotten. Sutpen's only real chance to join the ruling class therefore rests with his descendants. If he can found a dynasty, the future will eventually exonerate the past. Moreover, aside from his "father" Pettibone, a son is the only person who can recognize Sutpen as the Master and still be worthy of respect. Henry fulfills a paradoxical role in that he is both a Slave (he is subordinate to the father) and a potential Master (he is a part and image of the father). Marriage to Ellen thus provides Sutpen not only with an almost acceptable past but also with a son who will ensure a promising future. Sutpen rejects his first son because his black blood makes him socially inferior. Bon could never earn Sutpen's respect, so the son's acknowledgment of the father loses significance. Having discarded Bon, Sutpen puts all his hopes on Henry. But,
at a time when Sutpen has reached the height of his economic position and counts on Henry as his heir, Bon appears as "the face he believed he had paid off and discharged twenty-eight years ago" (p. 265). Bon threatens Sutpen's design because Sutpen accepts the racial values of the social system. It is only within this emotional context that Bon forces another double bind on Sutpen:

Yet I am now faced with a second necessity to choose, the curious factor of which is not, as you pointed out and as first appeared to me, that the necessity for a new choice should have arisen, but that either choice which I might make, either course which I might choose, leads to the same result: either I destroy my design with my own hand, which will happen if I am forced to play my last trump card, or do nothing, let matters take the course which I know they will take and see my design complete itself quite normally and naturally and successfully to the public eye, yet to my own in such fashion as to be a mockery. . . (pp. 273-74).

Sutpen decides to play his "last trump card" and tells Henry that Bon is not only his brother but also part negro. When Henry kills Bon and becomes a fugitive, Sutpen's plan, "to which he had given fifty years of his life" (p. 272), suffers a serious setback and he is forced to "make a third start toward that design" (p. 273).

The third start towards a Sutpen dynasty is first of all frustrated by Rosa's refusal to cooperate with Sutpen's proposed test breeding. By misjudging Rosa's character, Sutpen is betrayed once again by the "old impotent logic and morality which had betrayed him before. . ." (p. 279). Indeed, this logic and morality blind him also to the feelings and possible reactions of Wash Jones. Having seduced Milly, Jones' granddaughter, Sutpen dismisses her as callously as his first wife when she bears him a daughter rather than a son. Jones, until then Sutpen's most loyal admirer, cannot
accept Sutpen's dishonorable action and kills him. Sutpen, of course, could not have treated Jones differently. Once in the shoes of a landowner, Sutpen has to act as a Master: he must treat others as inferiors or Slaves. Sutpen's self-image depends on the system within which he has established himself as a Master. If Sutpen had treated Jones as a human being, he would have indicated that a member of the landowning class could behave differently from Pettibone who has become Sutpen's "Imaginary Other." The affront the fourteen year old Sutpen suffered at the hands of Pettibone should then have been treated as a private rather than a social matter, and the boy should have killed the landowner instead of imitating him. Wash Jones thus symbolizes Sutpen's ultimate double bind. If Jones deserved to be treated as a human being, then the system was wrong and Sutpen's life struggle without meaning.

In rather exaggerated form Sutpen exemplifies behavior patterns that also hold true for other characters in *Absalom*. Certain parallels between these characters focus attention on the fact that their decisions are often constrained by a moral code which traps them in double bind situations. On some levels, Mr. Coldfield, Henry, and Rosa, for instance, clearly act as doubles for each other. Not only do all three of them hide away in their own houses, but Henry is described as "the Coldfield with the Coldfield cluttering of morality and rules of right and wrong..." (p. 120). Mr. Coldfield sins against his moral principles first when he enters into a speculative business proposition with Sutpen, and again when he permits "his daughter to marry this man of whose actions his conscience did not approve" (p. 51). Later on, Mr. Coldfield is opposed to war not so much because it
leads to loss of life but because it is a general waste (p. 83). Since he could not condone war in any circumstances, Mr. Coldfield could fight neither for nor against his country. When the Confederates loot his store, Mr. Coldfield nails himself into his attic because his goods had unwittingly supported the war effort. His death is a comment on the "contemporary scene of folly and outrage" and symbolizes the final expression of his "cold and inflexible disapproval" (p. 84). Similarly, because of her moral rigidity, Rosa attributes inordinate importance to Sutpen's insult. She nurtures her outrage even after Sutpen's death. Indeed, his death leaves the insult all the more alive because, no matter what Rosa does or doesn't do, Sutpen is "the man whom she could neither forgive nor revenge herself upon. . ." (p. 13). In other words, Sutpen acts as an obstacle that gives Rosa's life its meaning; his death removes the tangible obstacle and leaves her nothing but frustrated outrage. Henry's double bind is of course more complex. He cannot accept that what his father tells him about Bon is true because it would mean that he would have to kill the friend. But, Henry knows that what his father tells him is true and "that he was doomed and destined to kill" (p. 91). The probation time, as Henry well knows, could only delay but not avert the inevitable. Bon puts Henry into a position in which he "must either betray himself and his entire upbringing and thinking, or deny the friend for whom he had already repudiated home and kin and all. . ." (p. 114). Since Henry and Bon are motivated by different principles, their behavior towards each other has to be masked by pretense. The result is a rather paradoxical relationship: "Bon who didn't know what he was going to do and had to say, pretend, he did; and Henry who knew what he was going
to do and had to say he didn't" (p. 341). Adherence to principles precludes any pragmatic solutions to the dilemma the brothers face. This is why Henry has to prevent a secret marriage between Bon and Judith, the only possible way out of the dilemma, for otherwise "he (Henry) would have to live for the rest of his life with the knowledge that he was glad he had been so betrayed, with the coward's joy of surrendering without having been vanquished. . ." (p. 119). Rigid codes of behavior thus force Mr. Coldfield to choose death, Rosa to nurture her outrage, and Henry to kill Bon.

The parallels between Mr. Coldfield, Rosa, and Henry, mirroring Sutpen's own obsession with a design which eventually compels him to play his last trump card, are further reinforced by situations in the lives of Bon and Wash Jones. In fact, the situations in which Bon and Jones find themselves repeat Sutpen's own experiences as a young man. Bon, for instance, "came into that isolated puritan country household almost like Sutpen himself came into Jefferson: apparently complete, without background or past or childhood. . ." (p. 93). Moreover, at least in metaphorical terms, Bon is turned away from the front door by Sutpen in much the same way as Sutpen was at Pettibone's plantation. Given this situation, Bon is condemned to remain fatherless whether he simply leaves things as they are or tries to force Sutpen into recognizing him. Like Sutpen, Bon decides to act although he knows that he will destroy himself in the process. Wash Jones is perhaps an even better mirror image of Sutpen. He comes from a poor white background and is satisfied with his lot until Sutpen awakens his social self-consciousness. Throughout the years, Jones speaks of Sutpen as a "fine figure" (p. 282) in spite of the fact that Sutpen's black daughter will not
even let him enter the kitchen door at the back of the house. When Sutpen seduces Milly, Jones is confident that he "will make hit right" (p. 284) in the end. Jones thus subscribes to a morality "that was a good deal like Sutpen's, that told him he was right in the face of all fact and usage. . ." (p. 287). When Sutpen discards Milly with insulting words, Jones can at first not believe that he heard right. But once the truth sinks in, Jones' faith in the established order crumbles with the same suddenness as had Sutpen's at Pettibone's front door. Jones now realizes that the Master/Slave relationship, a relationship Sutpen had dominated and Jones accepted, has lost its validity. Quentin points out that Jones recognized that he could never run "far enough to escape beyond the boundaries of earth where such men lived, set the order and rule of living. . ." (p. 290). Confronted with a similar double bind as Sutpen, Jones decides to act and kills his Master. Where Sutpen had opted for the system, Jones pronounces himself against it: "Better if his kind and mine too had never drawn the breath of life on this earth" (p. 290). Killing Sutpen represents the most radical solution to Jones' dilemma. Indeed, this solution corresponds to the Hegelian murder where the death of either Master or Slave results in the annihilation of both.

4. c. iii. Application to 'La Route'

Temporal doubling plays a relatively limited role in La Route because Simon is hostile to both psychological patterns and narrative continuity. Nevertheless, the superimposition of the ancestor and de Reixach results in a sort of compound character who is repeatedly caught in double binds.
Both the ancestor and de Reixach share a certain amount of idealism and a relatively rigid adherence to social codes. The ancestor's double bind arises from a contradiction between Rousseau's ideas on equality and the established feudal order to which the ancestor belongs. As an aristocrat and a Rousseau sympathizer, the ancestor can neither live within his own cast nor can he transcend it:

Et lui deux foix traître,—d'abord à cette caste dont il était issu et qu'il avait reniée, désavouée, se détruisant, se suicidant en quelque sorte une première fois, pour les beaux yeux (si l'on peut dire) d'une morale larmoyante et suisse dont il n'aurait jamais pu avoir connaissance si sa fortune, son rang ne lui en avait donné les moyens, c'est-à-dire le loisir et le pouvoir de lire,—traître ensuite à la cause qu'il avait embrassée, mais cette fois par incapacité, c'est-à-dire coupable... d'avoir voulu mélanger—ou concilier—courage et pensée, méconnu cet irréductible antagonisme qui oppose toute réflexion à toute action... (pp. 193-94).

The injunction he receives from caste loyalty contradicts the injunction he must follow according to his reading of idealist literature. He will therefore destroy himself whether he acts or does not act. If he does not fight for his ideas, he will lose his self-respect. If he does fight for his ideas, he bites the hand that has fed him and continues to claim him. There is no solution to the conflict between the rigid rules of the aristocracy and the social mobility Rousseau's democratic ideal initiates. The irony of the ancestor's situation is of course that his wife's adultery puts the democratic ideal into action. By having an affair with a servant, she transgresses against the laws of her class and encourages social equality. The ancestor's double bind is thus reinforced by his inability to condone his wife's transgression at the same time as he himself fights a war that advocates the abolishment of his caste. Suicide finally offers itself as the
only solution to a position that becomes increasingly untenable.

De Reixach finds himself in a similarly untenable situation. In the context of the sexual battle for Corinne, de Reixach is faced with two equally undesirable alternatives. His aristocratic code tells him that he must face an adversary in a fair contest at the same time as it does not allow him to recognize a social inferior as his equal. The race thus means that he has to either lower himself to the jockey's position or forego the race and let Iglésia triumph over him in the sexual domain. Moreover, like his ancestor, de Reixach faces not only a sexual but also a military challenge. As a graduate of the Saumur, he is forced to fight a war that will end the world in which the Saumur stands as a symbol for the established order. It follows that, whether he fights or not, he transgresses against his class. Like the ancestor, de Reixach finally opts for suicide as the only way out of his dilemma.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter on narrative structure, I have tried to show how Absalom and La Route turn their back on many conventional narrative devices and replace them as much as possible with innovative formal choices that encourage a pluralistic approach to both fiction and reality. Through juxtapositions, superimpositions, and substitutions the two novels tend to blur distinctions between such conventional entities as character, narrator, listener, main story, frame story, story time, time of narration. Moreover, Faulkner and Simon manipulate the narrative in such a way that it will not lead to traditionally expected factual or motivational solutions.
The suspense mechanism in Absalom, for instance, never delivers an always promised climax; it maintains instead a fruitful tension between the known and the unknown as well as the factual and the imagined. As an open-ended novel, Absalom remains alive and challenging by inviting constant reinterpretations of facts and motivations. Faulkner thereby succeeds in preserving the complexities of perception and experience at the same time as he requires an active participation in the process of fiction on the part of the reader. Simon takes an even more radical stance against conventional fiction. Fragmentation and repetition in La Route prevent dominant themes, time levels, and narrative authorities. Simon's strong commitment to narrative discontinuity expresses his hostility to a causally determined one-directional story line. His narrative structure, based on symmetrical and analogical patterns, conveys a conviction that everything in the world is potentially a reflection of everything else. The metaphor for this type of novel is no longer the grail but the maze. And, as John Barth contends in Chimera, "The key to the treasure is the treasure," that is, the answer to the maze in La Route is the maze. Ideally, then, the significance of Simon's novel should arise from linguistic and structural connections rather than from references to a "world out there."

An anti-representational bias, stronger in La Route but nevertheless already present in Absalom, extends also to the psychological treatment of characters. Characters are no longer approached as fixed entities but as links in a network of relations. The theories of Kojève, Girard, Lacan and Bateson help us understand how the individual creates a self-image through various identifications with others. Absalom and La Route exemplify the
pernicious but inevitable effects of mediated relationships and draw attention to the fluidity of the self as it participates, in different capacities, in several triangular configurations. The character loses his stability both from the outside, because his narrative function has been blurred, and from within, because his self dissolves itself in others. If a character functions in mediated terms, he/she inevitably exists as a more or less exact double of other characters. There is always an area in which characters overlap and hence repeat aspects of each other's lives. Faulkner and Simon try to do full justice to complex patterns of behavior and communication at the same time as they exploit these patterns for narrative purposes. The fluidity of character representation corresponds and contributes to the fluidity of the narrative process. Simon sums up the difficulties arising from an ambition to capture a complex and multi-dimensional reality when he commiserates with Georges' need for "une glace à plusieurs faces" (p. 313). Faulkner and Simon share the same aspiration to provide a comprehensive picture of reality and ways to transcend the conventional limitations of language, the fictional process, and human perception in general.
1. Introduction

After the discussion of repetitive patterns on the levels of word arrangement, sentence organization, and narrative structure, there remains one level of repetition to be analyzed: intertextuality. Although literary texts are often regarded as self-contained, autonomous constructs, it is obvious that they share at least their language, themes, and structural devices with a long tradition of other literary texts. The aesthetic criterion of originality compels most texts, especially those written in the mimetic mode, to conceal their debt to their precursors. Before the Age of Romanticism, at a time when literature was constrained by many conventions, imitation of established models (the Classics) was natural, acceptable, and to be encouraged. It was only when literature was supposed to depict reality accurately and from immediate experience that references to models came to denote a lack of imagination, a deplorable borrowing of foreign ideas, or an unnecessary affectation of cultural knowledge. These prejudices are now slowly being eroded. Recent attitudes towards literary references indicate a new awareness of the possibilities inherent in a practice that depends for its effects on a gap between a stable entity (tradition) and its use in different contexts. The semantic component of a literary allusion is always the same, whereas its varying syntactic placements determine its significance in particular instances. Literary allusions are especially popular with
self-conscious texts that like to comment on their own textuality. Since literary allusions are always excessive, in that they have their source outside the author's own style, they draw attention to themselves and to the cultural system to which every written text belongs. It is in this area of intertextuality, the repetition of an already existing system of signs, that the present chapter will concentrate.

The "outside," to which intertextual signals refer, situates itself not in the natural world but in a cultural system. A text touches "reality" only through the mediation of a cultural code made up of other texts, visual representations, and music. Roland Barthes attacks the notion of "realism" as an immediate and original expression in the following terms:

C'est que précisément l'artiste "réaliste" ne place nullement la "réalité" à l'origine de son discours, mais seulement et toujours, si loin qu'on puisse remonter, un réel déjà écrit, un code prospectif, le long duquel on ne saisit jamais, à perte de vue, qu'une enfilade de copies.¹

In his discussion of Balzac's "Sarrasine," an example of mimetic art at its best, Barthes approaches realism not as a "copieur" but rather as a "pasticheur" since "il copie ce qui est déjà copié."² Intertextual references accentuate the copy mechanism that controls all textual productions, making it clear that every text is in some form a repetition of previous texts. Literary references have the power to modify both the text from which they are taken and the one that incorporates them within a new context. The Proust quotations in Simon's La Bataille de Pharsale ³ provide an excellent illustration of this process of modification. The connection between A la recherche and La Bataille de Pharsale is
mediated by the jealousy that haunts the narrator of each novel. Jealousy fills the space of an intermediary reality which determines to what extent *A la recherche* is the same as *La Bataille de Pharsale* and to what extent it differs from it. It is therefore a triangular rather than a bilateral process that characterizes the relationship between *A la recherche* and *La Bataille de Pharsale*:

The intermediary reality, occupied by jealousy in this example, could be replaced by other concepts, objects, or formal properties. What must be remembered is that in all cases the intermediary reality precludes any direct access to the natural world. Simon depicts the narrator's jealousy not as he or a direct acquaintance has experienced it but as Proust has analyzed it in *A la recherche*. The primary emphasis is therefore on the text as text, a point Simon argues to a question posed on realism:

> De même que la seule réalité d'un tableau est la peinture, la seule réalité d'un roman est celle de la chose écrite. L'écriture étant de par sa nature même incapable de reproduire le "réel," toute prétention au réalisme de la part d'un romancier ne peut être le fait que de l'irrégulation ou d'une volonté de tromperie.  

Simon echoes Barthes' argument in that he places the text within a pre-coded cultural system. Allusions in highly self-conscious novels like *Absalom* and *La Route* point not only to the pretext (source of the allusion) and
the primary text (text that "borrows" the allusion) but beyond them towards "literature" as a specific form of discourse. Faulkner and Simon invite us to decipher their works as textual surfaces and not simply as sources of meaning.

2. **Literary allusions and critical attitudes**

Critics enjoy hunting for literary allusions because identifying them and speculating on their relevance or appropriateness appeals to their sense of the text as a unified whole and permits them to discuss literature as an interrelated system of texts. What critics have to say about Faulkner's allusions to literary genres certainly confirms this point. Lind, for instance, picks out detailed references to "the tragedies of the ancients" and the "great myths of the Old Testament." She also mentions that Faulkner "echoes familiar lines of deeply tragic import from *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and from A.E. Housman." Indeed, her treatment of allusions in *Absalom* is perhaps the most complete. Other critics make fleeting references to allusions as do Adamovski, when he refers to Sutpen as "the Jehovah of the Old Testament," Holman, when he points to the "parallels of the House of Sutpen to the House of Atreas," and Meindl, when he comments that "Sutpen wird von Mr. Compson mit dem Abglanz eines antiken Heros versehen." Levins and Vickery approach literary allusions in *Absalom* from a slightly different angle; they argue that Faulkner followed a more or less systematic pattern. Levins suggests that "Faulkner effects a structural differentiation among the viewpoints in the novel by shaping each of the four narrative perspectives after a different literary genre: the Gothic, the Greek tragedy, the chivalric romance, and
the tall tale." Vickery, too, sees Rosa's account as "rank melodrama" full of "Gothic horror and violence" while Mr. Compson's section is "filled with references to staging, to actors and the drama" which imply a parallel with "classical tragedy." Most critics believe, with Lind, that Faulkner uses literary and mythological material in order to "create, through the utilization of all the resources of fiction, a grand tragic vision of historic dimension." Other alternatives to this popular interpretation of how literary allusions function in Absalom are provided by Levins and Vickery. For Levins the significance of the four narrative modes lies in the focus "on the story of Sutpen as it is perceived by the fictional observers," whereas Vickery accounts for them as an investigation into "the relationship between truth and fact and between legend and history." If there is a common denominator to interpretations of literary allusions in Absalom, it is the conclusion that Faulkner draws parallels to literary models in order to emphasize the universal significance of Absalom or to make ironic statements on the impoverished life of man in the present as compared with that of heroic counterparts in literary history. Such readings are of course perfectly justified. At the same time, literary allusions play an additional role in Absalom; they make us aware of the novel's textuality by presupposing the influence of a pre-coded cultural system on the fictional universe of Jefferson. Approaching the question of literary allusions from this point of view makes them active participants in the fictional process rather than passive commentators on content matters. Faulkner anticipates already what becomes a more pronounced and self-consciously used device in Simon's novels. Simon uses allusions in order
to bring out the anti-representational dimensions of La Route. He specifically draws attention to the ways in which a text refers to other texts rather than to life or reality. In order to clarify the connection between literary allusions and repetition, it is necessary to probe into the types of allusions present in Absalom and La Route, to analyze in what capacities they function, and to draw conclusions about their impact and general significance.

3. Literary allusions as inappropriate parallels

Literary allusions usually contribute to a character portrait, the depiction of a situation, or the description of an object. They tend to reinforce or modify a point that was already established through other descriptive means. When Faulkner resorts to literary allusions, he rarely refers directly to their original source but seems to be aware of the fact that other authors before him have used these same allusions. In view of this awareness, the author of Absalom is clearly intent on finding new ways to make use of a worn-out literary device. Whenever Faulkner identifies one of his characters with a mythological or literary model, he modifies this identification either by adding a qualifying component or by situating it within an inappropriate context. Bon, for instance, is called a "silken and tragic Lancelot nearing thirty" (p. 320) and a "cerebral Don Juan" (p. 108). In both instances the qualification indicates that the established parallel is inadequate. Simon resorts to the same practice when he speaks of the lame man as "l'autre Othello bancal de village" (p. 282) and of the Mayor's assessor as "Le Roméo du village" (p. 127).
In another example, Simon combines incongruous elements in the description of the ancestor as "cet Arnoûphe philanthrope, jacobin et guerroyeur" (p. 196) in order to achieve a similar sense of inappropriateness. Faulkner deliberately pokes fun at the practice of calling characters according to literary or mythological models when he plays with the name of Sutpen's negro daughter. Her name is derived from "Clytemnestra" (p. 61) but Mr. Compson, suspecting that Sutpen made a mistake when christening her, consistently calls her "Cassandralike" (p. 22) because Cassandra's fate represents a more fitting parallel to Clytie's. Faulkner also exploited the gap between a glorified mythological past and the mundane present to draw attention to intertextual references. He depicts how Sutpen was "creating the Sutpen's Hundred, the Be Sutpen's Hundred like the oldentime Be Light" (p. 9) and continues to compare Sutpen's mansion with a "Spartan shell" (p. 39) during its construction, to an "edifice like Bluebeard's" (p. 60) during the height of its splendor, and to "coffin walls" which appear to the owner as "fabulous immeasurable Camelots and Carcassones" (p. 160) during its decline. In the same vein, Simon refers to Sabine's gossipy family stories as "ces histoires... cornéliennes" (p. 57). Both Faulkner and Simon also reinforce inadequate comparisons through tone. Speaking of the expectations Rosa invests in Sutpen, Faulkner comments that she finds "instead of a widowed Agamemnon to her Cassandra an ancient stiff-jointed Pyramus to her eager though untried Thisbe" (p. 177). The mythological figures are evoked in a thoroughly mocking spirit just as Blum's allusion to Rousseau in connection with the ancestor's political idealism takes a derogatory form: "A moins que ce ne fût l'effet de ses convictions naturistes? De ses émouvantes lectures genevoises? Est-ce
n'etait pas aussi un petit peu exhibitionniste?" (p. 201). Faulkner and Simon make sure that their allusions draw attention to themselves not only because they belong to a system of signification that lies outside the author's own linguistic traits but also because their stability is undermined through deforming modifications. These modifications metacommunicate about the automatic habit of comparing characters and situations to literary models. Instead of imitating and approving of the values vested in literary traditions, Faulkner and Simon move towards parody and surprise the reader with unexpected substitutions and additions when referring to familiar literary and mythological figures.

4. **Literary allusions and cultural authority**

Allusions to literary works of the past treat these works as authorities against which present literature can be evaluated. Characters often adapt their behavior to fictional models in familiar works by writers like Shakespeare or Racine. The same models permit narrators to interpret the actions of their characters in terms of well-known patterns. The cultural heritage generally functions as an often cited background or authority on basic human emotions, reactions, and situations. This background either reinforces present circumstances or opens up ironic gaps between past and present. Comparisons with exemplary works of the past always provide indirect comments on the essential sameness of the human condition, and on specific instances of men and women struggling to achieve the distinctions which a glorified past bestows on its heroes and heroines. Although the
cultural heritage inevitably reveals itself as a false authority on life, it nevertheless continually influences human behavior. Literary allusions therefore draw attention to certain aspects of the relationship between fact and fiction and demonstrate the tremendous impact the written tradition has on man's everyday existence. In Absalom and La Route literary allusions force us to come to grips with the often unquestioned authority of the past.

Faulkner makes it quite clear that many characters in Absalom model their behavior on mythological and literary archetypes. Although such imitations are often unconscious, Faulkner indicates that some of his characters act consciously in conformity with established roles. Ellen, who "might have risen to actual stardom in the role of the matriarch," purposely speaks "her bright set meaningless phrases out of the part which she had written for herself" (p. 69). Sutpen, too, patterns his life on a mythical notion of the Southern aristocrat and desires nothing more than a repeat performance of the Pettibone scene with himself in the leading role. After finishing Sutpen's Hundred, Sutpen is therefore reputed to have "acted his role too—a role of arrogant ease and leisure" (p. 72). Indeed, Sutpen often watches his own performance, as when the events in Haiti, involving him in a dangerous adventure, appear to him as "a spectacle, something to be watched because he might not have a chance to see it again" (p. 250). A similar detachment from actual experience seems to account for Bon's fatalism. He is depicted as "this miscast for the time and knowing it" (p. 98) and, when Sutpen forbids the marriage to Judith, "he seems to have withdrawn into a mere spectator" (p. 93). The correspondence between
individuals and the models whose behavior they apparently reenact may of course take a less conscious form. It is quite common that someone, often a narrator, imposes a role on another person in the novel. Bon, for instance, is the "man on whom Henry foisted now the role of his sister's intended, as during the fall term Henry and his companions had foisted upon Bon the role of Lothario" (p. 102).* Mr. Compson's narrative is perhaps most influenced by a pre-coded cultural system. He tends to see Sutpen as a classical hero and interprets the momentum of his whole life in terms of a classical tragedy. Speaking of Sutpen at a time when he has established himself as the largest landowner in the neighborhood, Mr. Compson points to an ironic gap that opens up at the moment when the hero is at the height of his powers and does not yet recognize the symptoms spelling his demise:

... he was unaware that his flowering was a forced blooming... and that while he was still playing the scene to the audience, behind him Fate, destiny, retribution, irony--the stage manager, call him what you will--was already striking the set and dragging on the synthetic and spurious shadows and shapes of the next one (pp. 72-73).

Shreve, finally, sums up the South's disposition to see itself only in connection with a glorious past when he exclaims: "Jesus, the South is fine, isn't it. It's better than the theatre, isn't it. It's better than Ben Hur, isn't it" (p. 217). It is of course a fact of human experience to play a chosen or an imposed role. It is virtually impossible to live or create without being conditioned by an environment whose values have been shaped by a long written tradition.

*Cf. also p. 96 where Henry "looked upon Bon as though he were a hero out of some adolescent Arabian Nights."
Faulkner uses literary allusions and imitations of behavior patterns without really evaluating their authority. Simon is much more sceptical and tends to ridicule reliance on literary authorities. In Simon's descriptions, literary stereotypes are always in contradiction with reality. Depicting a landscape first as a pastoral idyll, he then switches, in the same passage, to the scene in which de Reixach finds his death:

...la campagne avait l'air d'un jardin bien émondé... jardins à la française dessinant de savantes courbes enchevêtrées bosquets et rendez-vous d'amour pour marquis et marquises déguisés en bergers et bergères se cherchant à l'aveuglette cherchant trouvant l'amour la mort déguisée elle aussi en bergère dans le dédale des allées... (pp. 78-79).

The pastoral idyll corresponds to an impression formed by reading habits, but the shepherd turns into a sniper as reality gradually displaces the peaceful illusion. Simon is especially hard on the practice of making a point by referring to worn-out literary genres like the fable. Commenting on the ancestor's decision to leave his wife in order to fight in Spain, Blum quotes La Fontaine in the following manner:

Lui qui avait voulu jouer au naturel la fable des deux pigeons, seulement c'était lui le pigeon, c'est-à-dire que de retour au pigeonnier avec son aile cassée, ses rêves boiteux, il s'aperçut qu'il s'était fait pigeonnier, et pas seulement parce qu'il avait eu la malencontreuse idée d'aller, lui, le gentilhomme-farmer, forniquer dans le quartier réservé, les bourbièreux bousbirs de la pensée, mais encore celle de laisser seule derrière lui sa petite poulette ou plutôt sa petite pigeonne adorée qui en avait profité pour forniquer, elle, de la façon la plus naturelle... avec... un garçon... (pp.199-200).

The moralistic intention of the genre in which La Fontaine expresses himself is undermined through crude words ("forniquer"), carefully chosen adjectives ("rêves boiteux"), a play on words ("poulette" and "pigeonne" or "bourbièreux bousbirs"), and the "façon la plus naturelle" to which
his wife reduces the ancestor's Rousseauistic idealism. La Route attacks a number of other genres in much the same way. Simon picks mostly on genres that have exhausted themselves like the horror story (p. 79), the situation comedy (the many references to the "scène gallante"), the fairy tale (p. 267), vaudeville (p. 198), burlesque (p. 209), and classical drama (pp. 30, 129, 186). He also refers to conventions governing the movement of plots when he has Georges comment on his suspicion that the conversations between Corinne and Iglésia may after all not have been of a romantic nature:

... probablement était-ce bien cela: c'est-à-dire pas une idylle, une intrigue se déroulant, verbeuse, convenue, ordonnée, s'engageant, se fortifiant, se développant suivant un harmonieux et raisonnable crescendo coupé par les indispensables arrêts et fausses manœuvres, et un point culminant, et après cela peut-être un palier, et après cela encore l'obligatoire decrescendo... (p. 50).

Simon here draws explicit attention to man's tendency to interpret situations not so much as they really are but as they fit into culturally conditioned expectations.

Whether allusions to literature are serious or parodistic, they always presuppose an automatic recognition of a cultural background the reader shares with the author. The cultural heritage functions as an authority on themes like love and jealousy as in the case of Othello, Romeo, and Arnolphe. Although this authority is based on cultural clichés, it was often invoked in conventional fiction as if it could provide immediate access to life or reality. Roland Barthes comments on this identification of fiction and life specifically in Balzac, although his observations have more general implications:

Quoique d'origine entièrement livresque, ces codes, par un tourniquet propre à l'idéologie bourgeoise, qui inverse la
culture en nature, semblent fonder le réel, la "Vie." La "Vie" devient alors, dans le texte classique, un mélange écoeurant d'opinions courantes, une nappe étouffante d'idées reçues: c'est en effet dans ces codes culturels que se concentre le démodé balzacien, l'essence de ce qui, dans Balzac, ne peut être (ré-)écrit.16

The difference between Balzac and authors like Faulkner and to a greater degree Simon is that Balzac believes in the authorities he invokes whereas the others do not. The more or less parodistic modifications Faulkner and Simon resort to move the cultural code into the foreground and underline that Absalom and La Route are texts growing primarily out of other texts. Since allusions can no longer be considered authorities on life, Faulkner and Simon try to correct the inverted hierarchy between life and culture Barthes discusses. Literary allusions in Absalom and La Route set out to destroy the authoritative stance the cultural code has traditionally assumed towards life and fiction.

Both Faulkner and Simon use literary allusions to comment on the ethical and epistemological positions their characters adopt. Playing on the tension between the Bible (or other sources) and Absalom, Faulkner evaluates the moral standards of Sutpen and those around him. When a modern personage is juxtaposed to a mythological or literary figure, both of them become modified in terms of each other. When Faulkner depicts Sutpen as a "jealous and sadistic Jehovah" (p. 109), he implies that if Sutpen is like Jehovah, then Jehovah must in some ways be like Sutpen. Both the god and the man are thereby forced on our consciousness and need to be re-evaluated. The Bible and Absalom are several times brought into obvious juxtaposition. Faulkner alludes to some well-known Biblical passages in order to comment unfavorably on judeo-christian teachings. In his letter
to Judith, for instance, Bon describes how the Confederates discovered that their Yankee spoils consisted only of stove polish. He explains that the soldiers viewed the U and the S on the boxes as "the symbol of the spoils which belong to the vanquished" as did the "loaves and the fishes" in Biblical times (p. 130). Not only does Bon argue that the defeated soldiers deserve God's mercy but he also demonstrates that Christ's love is impotent since it can only supply what is useless. Faulkner makes a similar point when he has Mr. Compson contend that the popular maxim "Suffer little children to come unto Me" contains semantic ambiguities which destroy its orthodox Christian meaning:

... and what did He mean by that? how, if He meant that little children should need to be suffered to approach Him, what sort of earth had He created; that if they had to suffer in order to approach Him, what sort of Heaven did He have? (p. 198).

Faulkner interprets the Bible's idealistic hopefulness from a modern perspective which tells us that living experience rarely lives up to the expectations established by the Bible. Probing below the surface of Biblical rhetoric, Faulkner points towards the failings of orthodox Christian doctrines. It is to this end that Shreve criticizes Abraham's stature as the Biblical patriarch to whom the world owes its moral framework. Associating Sutpen with Abraham, Shreve takes the side of Abraham's sons and comments:

... who should do the paying if not his sons, his get, because wasn't it done that way in the old days? the old Abraham full of years and weak and incapable now of further harm, caught at last and the captains and the collectors saying, 'Old man, we don't want you' and Abraham would say, 'Praise the Lord, I have raised about me sons to bear the burden of mine iniquities and persecutions; yea, perhaps even to restore my flocks and herds from the hand of the ravisher: that I might rest mine eyes upon my goods and chattels, upon the generations of them and of my descendants increased an hundred fold as my soul goeth out from me' (p. 325).
Imitating Biblical rhetoric in a mocking tone, Shreve formulates what Abraham may really have been like as opposed to the flattering picture the Bible paints of him. Linking Sutpen with an archetypal father figure endows him with depth and universality while associating Abraham with a willful and cruel father gives a negative coloring to the esteem the patriarch has traditionally enjoyed. By bringing the Bible and Absalom into juxtaposition, Faulkner changes the meaning of both texts and also gives priority to intertextual relationships over those between the novel and living reality.

Faulkner exploits gaps between modern experience and traditional attitudes in order to voice bitterness and disappointment in a moral authority that reveals itself as inadequate. Simon uses literary allusions for a similar purpose, except that his frustration directs itself against epistemological rather than moral authorities. La Route represents a modern example of the Bildungsroman with Georges searching for knowledge of the self and the world. His search leads him to ask some basic epistemological questions: How does one know? Is knowledge possible? In classical quest novels like Perceval, Simplicissimus, Wilhelm Meister, Le Père Goriot, the author expresses some confidence that knowledge is attainable. The hero usually finds (self-) knowledge by means of experience and/or through some wise teachers. In the twentieth century the situation is quite different and Simon sums it up by quoting from Olga Bernard: "... si le roman du XIXᵉ siècle était un roman du savoir, le roman moderne est essentiellement un roman du non-savoir." Georges is prepared to follow in Perceval's footsteps but finds that all authorities crumble at his approach. Turning to the cultural heritage for his main source of knowledge, Georges appeals
to everything he has read, seen, and heard in the form of literature, myths, the Bible, history, anthropology, the visual arts, gossip, anecdotes, and the newspapers. Frustrated by the lack of distinction between fact and fiction, Georges tries again and again to make sense out of the Reixach legend in order to prove to himself that knowledge is possible.

The Reixach legend lends itself to an argument about fact and fiction because it manifests the way in which fiction invents, embroiders, and distorts facts. All Georges knows for certain about de Reixach is that he has married a pretty woman who is much younger than himself and that he is killed by a sniper during the French retreat in Flanders. What he knows about the ancestor is even less tangible and rests entirely on dubious portraits and on exaggerated family gossip.* From these meagre facts Georges and Blum create a network of conjectures which owes much of its vividness to the way in which the two young men exploit the conventions of literature, drama, and the visual arts. These conventions are both contributing and undermining the credibility of the Reixach legend. They add verisimilitude because, alluding to familiar structures and explanations, they appeal to our sense of the universal. But, by openly identifying themselves as artificial constructs, they destroy the illusion of immediate reality and assert the legend's fictional origin. Simon reinforces the tension of fact and fiction through the argumentative dialogues between Georges and Blum. Blum often mocks Georges' style of narration as being

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*Cf. p. 90: "... selon la tradition la version flatteuse légende familiale"; p. 289: "... ces sempiternelles histoires de famille, d'ancêtres. ..."
too literary as in the following exchange:

[Georges:] mais il en a assez il l'a chassée Ou plutôt répudiée
[Blum:] ré... comment dis-tu
répudiée
sans blague Comme au théâtre alors Comme
ouï (p. 129).

In Blum's opinion, Georges belongs to those people who "aiment tellement
faire de la tragédie du drame du roman" (p. 278).* Indeed, Blum is constant­
ly accusing Georges of drawing his material from literary rather than
factual sources: "Mais tu parles comme un livre! . . ." (p. 222) and "Ça
n'existe pas. Seulement dans les livres. Tu as trop lu de livres... ." (p. 131). Through the playful conflict between Georges' often.unwitting
literary tendency and Blum's querulous, sceptical attitude, Simon high­
lights the hold the cultural heritage has on the human imagination.

Challenged by Blum's scepticism towards his sources, Georges oc­
casionally tries to support his hypothetical interpretations with references
to the so-called facts of life. He repeatedly mentions news items ("faits
divers") because they are supposedly objective accounts of everyday events.
When Blum contends that the gun with which the lame man threatens the
Mayor's Assessor was perhaps not loaded, Georges counters: "Mais peut-être
était-il chargé quelquefois ça arrive On en voit tous les matins dans les
journaux" (p. 278). Georges relies again on journalistic sensationalism
when he needs to settle his suicide theory with Blum. Having listened to
the suicide arguments Georges uses to explain the deaths of the two Reixach,
Blum contrasts the life of the idle rich with that of the working poor and
concludes that in his family and neighborhood people were too busy working

*Cf. also p. 288: "Du théâtre de la tragédie du roman inventé. . ."
to think about killing themselves. Stubbornly Georges queries Blum's observation by countering: "N'empêche que ça arrive,... Il n'y a qu'à lire les journaux. Il y a tous les jours des choses comme ça dans les journaux" (p. 287). In addition to newspapers, Georges cites anecdotal evidence to support his observations. Anecdotes are items of gossip or narratives of an interesting or striking incident and as such they pretend to originate in experienced or observed reality. Examples of Georges' anecdotal commonplaces include: "Après tout, j'ai bien lu quelque part que des prisonniers avaient bu leur urine..." (p. 72); "on dit que les cadavres sont parfois capables de réflexes" (p. 90); "j'avais lu que les naufragés les ermites se nourrissaient de racines de glands" (p. 259); "Où avais-je lu cette histoire dans Kipling je crois ce conte..." (p. 45); and "pensant à ces récits d'expéditions au pôle où l'on raconte que la peau reste attachée au fer gelé" (p. 31). Although the facts of life Georges gleans from news items and anecdotes no longer derive directly from literature, they are nevertheless evidence of a pre-coded verbal system.

Although Georges tends to defend his use of cultural allusions, he is in fact aware that his observations do not necessarily coincide with a possible reality. His defense is more a reaction to Blum's challenge than an innate belief in his assertions. Simon indicates periodically that Georges is frustrated by the gap between fiction and fact. When Georges meets Corinne after the war, he differentiates clearly between the woman "fabriquée pendant les longs mois de guerre, de captivité" (p. 230) and the one he will be touching in a moment. Georges is also forced to admit that his narrative of the relationship between Corinne and Iglésia is at best suspect since
Corinne now denies all involvement with the jockey. In retrospect, he therefore concludes "qu'il n'y avait peut-être de réel dans tout ceci que de vagues racontars et médisances et les vantardises auxquelles deux adolescents captifs imaginatifs et sevres de femmes le [Iglésia] poussèrent" (p. 304). Instead of providing a portrait corresponding to reality, Georges creates a self-contained fictional universe which can exist and be manipulated without any necessary reference to the outside world. Georges is obsessed with the Reixach legend not because he actually believes he can discover what really happened but because he enjoys reconstructing imaginary events. Imprisoned by the unnatural conditions of war, the act of narration becomes a life-sustaining enterprise in the tradition of Scheherazade who saved her life by entertaining the King with a thousand-and-one stories.* Georges and Blum keep despair and resignation at bay by occupying themselves with elaborations on the Reixach legend:

... ils essayaient de se transporter par procuration (c'est-à-dire au moyen de leur imagination, c'est-à-dire en rassemblant et combinant tout ce qu'ils pouvaient trouver dans leur mémoire en fait de connaissances vues, entendues ou lues de façon... à faire surgir les images chatoyantes et lumineuses au moyen de l'éphémère, l'incantatoire magie du langage, des mots inventés dans l'espoir de rendre comestible... l'innommable réalité... (p. 184).

Although "connaissances vues, entendues ou lues" offer no direct access to experience, they are often the only knowledge available and liberate creative energies or life-sustaining forces unknown to more empirical forms of inquiry.

*See John Barth's Chimera for a modern interpretation of Scheherazade's role.
Literary allusions are usually tautological in that they express in a different code what a narrative has already described. They do not add but qualify or confirm information. Faulkner's use of a pictorial code in *Absalom* illustrates this function of cultural references. The novel never leaves any doubt that the Sutpen family appeals to Quentin's imagination because it is out of the ordinary. Faulkner reinforces this impression when he draws our attention to a family portrait, "a picture, a group which even to Quentin had a quality strange, contradictory and bizarre" (p. 14) and when he indicates that the Sutpen family exhibits the kind of unreality suggesting "a sort of lifeless and perennial bloom like painted portraits hung in a vacuum" (p. 75). The references to paintings imply, in concentrated form, the sense of imprisonment and arrested time the novel develops in other ways. Faulkner also conveys the scene of Henry's visit to New Orleans almost entirely with the help of the pictorial code. He indicates, for instance, that Henry is an uninitiated visitor to the city because the women he sees appear to him "like painted portraits beside men in linen" (p. 110). More importantly, he describes Bon's manipulation of Henry's reactions to moral corruption in terms of an accumulative succession of images which do not at first betray "what the complete picture would show" (p. 111). Later in the novel, when Bon's wife and son visit Sutpen's Hundred, their ephemeral appearance "must have resembled a garden scene by the Irish poet, Wilde" (p. 193). Indeed, the octoroon's delicacy suggests "a woman. . . whom the artist Beardsley might have dressed" and her son resembles a "little boy whom Beardsley might not only have dressed but drawn" (p. 193). Faulkner evokes visually an atmosphere of unreality
he had already advanced through purely verbal (non-visual) descriptions. What is brought in from outside the text serves to reinforce what the text is already saying so that references to the pictorial code work from inside the text outward towards cultural concepts. This means that the reader need not necessarily know what a Beardsley drawing looks like in order to understand the significance of the allusion. The verbal description of Bon's wife and son indicates already what kind of drawing Faulkner had in mind.

Many of Simon's literary allusions are tautological in much the same way as Faulkner's. Georges tends to support descriptions of his own experiences, and of observations about others, with references to cultural commonplaces. He emphasizes, for instance, that Iglésia's face is "parfaitement neutre, absent" and adds that it is like "un de ces masques mortuaires aztèques ou incas..." (p. 137). The verbal portrait is complete in itself so that the death mask image functions primarily as a visual reinforcement. A similar process applies to the account of Wack's death. Georges tells in some detail how a bullet lifts Wack out of his saddle and then contributes the visual complement: "... comme s'il continuait à chevaucher quelque Pégase invisible" (p. 159). In some instances, however, an allusion virtually takes the place of a personal observation. Georges, describing a hotel he came across in Flanders, supplies details not from his own experience but from the conventional depiction of such hotels in "ces réclames pour une marque de bière anglaise" (p. 21). Simon, arguing that writing "happens" only during the process of writing, cites for evidence an incident from Stendhal which demonstrates the influence of cultural preconceptions on perception:
On ne décrit pas des choses qui préexistent à l'écriture mais ce qui se passe au prise de l'écriture. C'est assez passionnant. Il y a un exemple de ceci chez Stendhal dans La Vie d'Henri Brulard, où il essaye de raconter avec exactitude sa vie. Il en arrive au passage du St. Bernard par l'armée Napoléonienne: alors, tandis qu'il décrit cet épisode, il s'aperçoit qu'il ne décrit pas ce qu'il a vu mais une gravure sur le même sujet qu'il a vue après coup et qui, comme il le dit, "a pris la place de la réalité." Il a été témoin de cet événement mais il ne décrit qu'une représentation de cet événement.

When Georges turns to descriptions of more or less imaginary scenes, he relies almost entirely on visual and literary conventions. Trying to capture the nature of the ancestor's wife, Georges speaks of "ce sourire indolent, candide, cruel, que l'on peut voir sur certains portraits des femmes de cette époque. . ." (p. 281). Since Georges cannot provide an exact portrait of the woman as a unique individual, he resorts to visual stereotypes of the period in which she lived. In his imaginary excursions into the past, Georges does not really "invent" people but creates them out of the store of knowledge he owes to his education and family background. The scene of the returning husband who surprises his adulterous wife provides perhaps the best example of how the imagination "copies" what is already familiar. When Georges first alludes to the scene, he indicates that his source could be called "quelque chose dans le style d'une de ces gravures intitulées l'Amant Surpris ou la Fille Séduite" (p. 85). Georges later proceeds to render in vivid detail what Blum (and the reader) assumes to be the account of an existing etching. But, it turns out that there never was such an etching and that Georges models himself on a convention that has been so fully absorbed by his culture that it no longer needs a tangible referent. Indeed, the theme of "l'Amant Surpris ou la Fille Séduite" is so intricately bound up with certain visual conventions that
Georges would make the connection even if he had never seen an etching of the type in question. In other words, Georges uses a visual referent which may have been transmitted to him either visually or indeed only verbally. Simon is dealing here with a reality that is deferred through a series of cultural referents. He thereby exposes the usually hidden tendency of literary texts to base themselves on cultural knowledge rather than on living actuality.

5. Literary allusions and arbitrariness

It is usually assumed that literary allusions have some direct connection with the "content" context in which they appear. Although the cultural code can be considered superfluous from an informational viewpoint, the reader expects to find meaningful correspondences between text and pretext. He anticipates, for instance, that allusions add depth to the text and contribute to a complicity between author and reader that is based on a shared cultural background. Moreover, Faulkner obviously takes much pleasure in finding appropriate allusions for Absalom and encourages the reader to appreciate his skill. At the same time, it appears that appropriateness becomes a secondary consideration and that Faulkner has included many allusions for their sound and rhythm. Faulkner is known for using and coining unusual words whose effect depends primarily on formal qualities.* When Faulkner speaks of "Cassandralike" (p. 22), of the "bitter purlieus of Styx" (p. 69), of "sybaritic privacy" (p. 96), of a

* Cf. p. 146: "I became all polymath love's androgynous advocate."
"bucolic maiden" (p. 128), of "some chimaerafoal of nightmare's very self" (p. 141), of "Lothario" (p. 102), "Lancelot" (p. 320), "Guinevere" (p. 174), and of "Camelots and Carcassonnes" (p. 160), he creates the distinct impression that these allusions are included more for their sonorous and rhythmic appeal than for what they denote. The tendency towards formal justification for allusions reflects the relatively arbitrary nature of the connection linking text and pretext. This arbitrary aspect goes hand in hand with the fundamental redundancy Barthes associates with the cultural code, and, in Absalom, it exists more or less in the shadow of interpretations searching for reasons of appropriateness and denotation.

In La Route, literary allusions enjoy a relatively active and independent status and are rarely used to support and comment on the living reality the text is presumably imitating. Intertextual relations rather than thematic appropriateness dictate the process that goes into selecting cultural allusions. If we investigate the kind of connections existing between text and pretext, it becomes obvious that cultural allusions generate certain artificial associations. What, for instance, is the connection between the hole or "wound" on the ancestor's forehand and "ces images ou ces statues de saints dont les yeux ou les stigmates se remettent à pleurer ou à saigner une ou deux fois par siècle. . ." (p. 79)? The hypothetical blood on the ancestor's forehead conjures up other bleeding wounds by means of a metonymic chain mechanism. Georges refers to the legend of the saints not because it offers a comment on the ancestor's situation or because it is analogous to it, but only because of a visual similarity. The comparison between clouds in the sky and "ces orgueilleuses armadas
apparemment posées immobiles sur la mer. . ." (p. 166) bases itself on an even more capricious connection. The analogy is really between clouds in the sky and ships on the sea and, turning the ships into "orgueilleuses armadas," adds a cultural reference to an already conventional image. It seems that Simon refers to "armadas" mainly because he likes the word. The suspicion that allusions are sometimes privileged over the descriptions they supposedly support is reinforced in a scene involving Georges and Corinne. Observing Corinne's arm moving along her thigh, Georges comments that this gesture was "comme un animal comme un col de cygne invertébré se faufilant le long de la hanche de Léda" (p. 262). The momentum of the comparison moves away from the initial gesture and makes Leda the main focus of attention. The connection between the arm movement and the swan's neck acts merely as a background and justification for the main image linking Corinne and Leda. It is, however, in cases where the connection between description and allusion is purely verbal that Simon fully exploits intertextual possibilities. The following passage, referring to the assumption that de Reixach knows that Corinne sleeps with other men, represents a case in point:

. . .sachant sans doute parfaitement dès ce moment ce qui l'attendait, ayant accepté par avance ayant assumé ayant par avance consommé si l'on peut dire cette Passion, avec cette différence que le lieu le centre l'autel n'en était pas une colline chaude, mais ce suave et tendre et vertigineux et brouissailleux et secret repli de la chair. . . (p. 13).

Sexual jealousy and the crucifixion of Christ have only a tenuous thematic connection: the association rests almost purely on the double meaning of
the word "passion."* Although the passage betrays an obvious sacriligious intention, it owes its primary impetus to a linguistic and hence thematically arbitrary connection. Contrary to their conventional role as passive commentators, intertextual references now participate actively in weaving the textual surface.

6. **Literary allusions as structural paradigms**

Most literary allusions in *Absalom* and *La Route* are taken from a wide variety of sources and provide an encyclopaedic dimension in which no one pretext really dominates. It is, however, possible to discover structural paradigms that contribute to the overall significance of the novels. Faulkner's novel, for instance, alludes to the story of King David and his sons in the title *Absalom, Absalom!* Neither Sutpen nor his sons are ever explicitly identified with the Old Testament figures so that the title invites the reader to contemplate the universal implications of Faulkner's story. Another main structural parallel in *Absalom* concentrates on the connections between the House of Sutpen and the House of Atreus. Critics have of course amply documented the presence and significance of biblical and mythological paradigms in the novel. Lind offers perhaps the most inclusive analysis of the similarities between *Absalom* and the two familiar myths. She suspects that "the Oedipus trilogy might have served as a general guide in the drafting of the plot," sees "continuing (though loose) analogies which exist between Sutpen and Oedipus, Sutpen's sons and Eteocles and Polyneices, Judith and Antigone," and believes that the conflict between Absalom and

*Cf. also p. 80 where the choir boy's cross is likened to a penis.
Amnon over their sister must have been on Faulkner's mind during the writing of *Absalom*. Although the structural analogies are indeed loose, they suggest a systematic attention to the cultural heritage on Faulkner's part. The reasons for aligning himself with a long literary tradition are of course complex and to some extent no doubt subconscious. *Absalom* certainly gains greater universality from its association with archetypal themes. At the same time, it sets itself off from the literary tradition in that it treats familiar subjects differently and uniquely. And, finally, it suggests an awareness of literary creation as a textual activity that interacts constantly with other texts.

The structural paradigm for *La Route* does not take the same explicit form as in *Absalom*. Moreover, the paradigm Simon chooses focuses on questions of literary production rather than on subject matter. What fascinates Simon about language is its power to transform reality in a sometimes near-miraculous fashion that calls to mind Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Consciously or unconsciously, Simon's attitude and choice of metaphor correspond to what Edward Said identifies as the structuralists' "faith in the irresistible metamorphic powers of language. For if one text might serve them all as a banner it is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, that celebration of reality as ceaseless transformation and unhindered function for its own sake." *La Route* offers an indirect but unmistakable reference to Ovid's work when Georges argues that the soldiers have been changed into "quelque chose comme des bêtes" and then recalls that he has read "quelque part une histoire comme ça, des types métamorphosés d'un coup de baguette en cochons ou en arbres ou en cailloux, le tout par le moyen de vers latins..." (p. 100). The
concept of metamorphosis aptly reflects Simon's belief that language has the power to change people's perception of reality and hence influence human action. Word games hold a special fascination for Simon because their effect is entirely linguistic. Reminiscent of the kind of transformations depicted in the *Metamorphoses*, Georges links the generative sequence of "moule poulpe pulpe vulve" (pp. 41-42) to a "creuset originel" which is . . .semblable à ces moules dans lesquels enfant il avait appris à estamper soldats et cavaliers, rien qu'un peu de pâte pressée du pouce, l'innombrable engeance sortie toute armée et casquée selon la légende et se multipliant grouillant se répandant sur la surface de la terre. . . (p. 42).

Simon expresses the attraction such transformations inspire by associating the creation of toy soldiers with "la boîte de Pandore" (p. 258). The process of creation we find described in the *Metamorphoses* takes many different forms in *La Route*. In the novel's unstable universe, characters turn into each other, past and present become one, word associations change our reading habits, and the fragmented narrative structure transforms our perceptual preconceptions. Simon realizes that literature has always had the power to bring about the impossible. In *La Route* he occasionally evokes the combination of fascination and horror children enjoy so much in fairy tales. He speaks, for instance, of an old woman who thinks she has hired a woman servant and, in the course of the evening, discovers that the servant is a disguised man who will no doubt assassinate her (p. 79). In another place he resorts to a fairy tale analogy in order to convey Georges' disappointment at finding an old and ugly woman instead of the expected beautiful girl. Georges speaks of himself as:

. . . le cavalier le conquérant botté venu chercher au fond de la nuit au fond du temps séduire enlever la liliale princesse dont j'avais rêvé depuis des années et au moment où je croyais l'at-
teindre, la prendre dans mes bras, les refermant, enserrant, me trouvant face à face avec une horrible et goyesque vieille... (p. 267).

Such transformations of something pleasant into something unpleasant are gratifying because the shock of sudden recognition appeals to our appreciation of reversed expectations. Simon obviously chose the Metamorphoses as a paradigm for the process of fiction because it makes "impossible" transformations believable. Although we know that people do not turn into stones or trees, Ovid convinces us that, within the framework of his work, they do. Similarly, Simon knows that there is no organic connection between "moule" and "poulpe" but within his fictional universe, he too makes us believe that there is. Although fiction is an artifact, with often tenuous connections to reality, it nevertheless influences and perhaps even governs human perception and behavior.

7. Literary allusions as self-quotations

Intertextuality works primarily with references to the cultural heritage as a whole. However, both Faulkner and Simon occasionally resort to more limited categories of literary allusions. In Absalom and La Route, for instance, we find scattered allusions to other works by their authors. Faulkner includes in Absalom characters from Sartoris, The Unvanquished, The Sound and the Fury. These characters play only minor roles or provide a readily recognizable background to the general history of Yoknapatawpha county. There are at least six references to Colonel Sartoris (pp. 80, 121, 124, 126, 152, 189), several to Judge Benbow (pp. 170, 211, 212), two each to Mc Caslin (pp. 152, 275) and
and Bayard (pp. 174, 360), and several to Major De Spain (p. 291). Moreover, in the "Genealogy Annex" to Absalom, the entry on Quentin Compson includes his death in 1910, an event that is not treated in Absalom but forms a major episode in The Sound and the Fury. Faulkner's characters, like those of Balzac, have a tendency to reappear in several novels and give the impression of belonging to a self-enclosed social universe.

Simon's characters manifest similar tendencies. The references in La Route to Simon's other works are mostly to L'Herbe, La Bataille de Pharsale, and Tryptique. Simon mentions a character (Sabine) by describing her (p. 52), refers to Marie and Eugénie (p. 170) by name, and draws attention to Pierre and Sabine by alluding to a situation which is more fully developed in L'Herbe. The reader familiar with L'Herbe is immediately reminded of the evening meal scenes in that novel when La Route describes how "Georges venait s'asseoir à table dans sa salopette souillée, avec ses mains non pas souillées mais pour ainsi dire incrustées de terre et de cambouis" (p. 234).

Simon's self-quotations address themselves not only to characters but also to images. References to a "glace de l'armoire" (p. 42), to "talons couleur d'abricot" (p. 192), to "pilon rouge" (p. 193), and to "j'avais déjà lu en latin ce qui m'est arrivé" (p. 100) evoke key images and themes from Tryptique and La Bataille de Pharsale. La Route distinguishes itself from Absalom in that its self-quotations refer not only to previous texts like L'Herbe but also to later ones like La Bataille de Pharsale and Tryptique.

In a sense, then, La Route can be said to repeat not only a past that has already happened but also a future that is still to come. Although La Bataille de Pharsale repeats images from La Route, the reader experiences
the La Bataille de Pharsale allusions as if they were in fact prior to La Route. What is more important than temporal succession is the closed fictional universe Simon establishes through intertextuality. The self-quotations demonstrate the non-referentiality of fiction in a paradoxical way. The mimetic code specifies that names of people and places increase the sense of reality in a text. The fact that the reader is already thoroughly familiar with characters like Bayard (from Sartoris) or Sabine (from L'Herbe) increases the verisimilitude of Absalom and La Route in much the same way as do references to Napoleon in Le Rouge et le noir. Faulkner and Simon insert an explicitly fictional character into the syntax of the mimetic code. Self-quotations accord priority to intertextual relations and expose the artificiality of conventions governing mimesis.

8. Literary allusions to contemporary authors

A slightly different form of intertextuality concerns La Route's use of explicit references to Absalom. Some of the more obvious examples resort to variations on similar transitional sentences:

Quentin seemed to see them. . . (p. 14).
Quentin seemed to watch. . . (p. 21).
It seemed to Quentin that he could actually see them. . . (p. 132).
It seemed to Quentin that he could actually see them. . . (p. 189).

Et il me semblait y être, voir cela. . . (p. 19).
. . . il lui semblait toujours la voir. . . (p. 41).
. . . il lui semblait toujours voir ce buste raide. . . (p. 72).
. . . il lui sembla qu'il le voyait réellement. . . (p. 79).

Moreover, Sutpen's "fine figure" reappears in La Route as de Reixach's "buste raide." A similar image denotes in both novels aristocratic pride
and stoicism in that both Sutpen and de Réixach exemplify standards of
conduct that are perhaps admirable but also antiquated and faintly
ridiculous:

... watching the proud galloping image merge and pass... to the
fine climax where it galloped without weariness or progress,
forever and forever immortal beneath the brandished saber... (p. 288).

... brandissant cette arme inutile et dérisoire dans un geste
héréditaire de statue équestre que lui avaient probablement
transmis des générations de sabreurs... (p. 12).

The statuesque quality of the two figures on horseback and the gesture of
the lifted sabre in the face of an automated army suggest in both novels
a conflict between old and new values. In another instance, Simon and
Faulkner exploit the double meaning of words in order to imply a close
connection between sex and violence. Speaking of the old Sutpen's desperate
attempt to produce an heir, Faulkner compares him to a cannon with "just one
more shot in its corporeality" (p. 279), that is, a cannon which "can deliver
just one more fierce shot" (p. 181). Simon uses a similar double meaning
when he says of the lame man's sexual jealousy and love of guns: "Après tout
il a bien le droit de tirer son coup lui aussi..." (p. 276). Perhaps
the most deliberate parallel between Absalom and La Route can be found
in two descriptive passages:

... they not progressing parallel in time but descending per-
pendicularly through temperature and climate... an attenuation
from a kind of furious inertness and patient immobility... to
a sort of dreamy and destinationless locomotion... during which
they did not seem to progress at all but just to hang suspended
while the earth itself altered, flattened and broadened out of
the mountain cove... (p. 224-25).

... les quatre cavaliers et les cinq chevaux somnambuliques
et non pas avançant mais levant et reposant les pieds sur
place pratiquement immobiles sur la route, la carte la vaste
Although Simon clearly "borrows" ideas from Faulkner, this "borrowing" is not a case of imitation or influence. When Simon incorporates passages from Faulkner's novel in La Route, he exploits them for his own purposes. Although Simon encourages the reader to recognize and identify "borrowed" material, he also expects him to understand that the new context changes the meaning and significance of this material. In a later novel, La Bataille de Pharsale, Simon cites extensively from Proust's A la recherche. This novel makes it even more obvious than La Route that the quoted material becomes an integral part of the borrowing text.

As van Rossum-Guillon point out, quotations usually refer to peripheral material in A la recherche rather than to crucial and often-cited passages. She argues that the Proust quotations follow "une logique purement associative," which means that the "forme et couleur des mots' et tout ce que ces mots, pris en eux-mêmes, permettent d'évoquer... sont exploités." The Proust fragments in La Bataille de Pharsale establish connections with A la recherche that are formal rather than thematic. Although the initial meaning of the Proust sentence may be preserved, it is dislocated when appropriated by La Bataille de Pharsale. La Route, too, absorbs quotations from Absalom in such a way that Faulkner's meaning is deflected and subordinated to the exigencies of Simon's own text.

In this kind of formal borrowing, the pretext precludes direct contact with reality even more radically than in other forms of intertextuality.


9. **Conclusion**

Cultural allusions in *Absalom* and *La Route* raise the often debated question whether literature has its source in art or in life. Romantic interpretations of the creative process and mimetic ambitions to imitate reality both measure artistic achievements according to how closely a text reproduces immediate sensations and observations. The aim of romantic and mimetic art is thus to become life. It is with this predisposition that Slatoff, for instance, evaluates Faulkner's attitude to language. He argues that Faulkner desires to "transcend the usual rational processes because of "an obvious discontent with the ability of language to convey truth." According to Slatoff, Faulkner views words as "empty substitutes for feeling and experience" and consequently suffers from a disturbing "chasm between life and print." However, language is inadequate as a vehicle for truth only as long as art must serve life. If words are freed from this servitude and granted a reality of their own, they participate in a system of signification which conveys perceptual processes as they really work. Human perception is inevitably influenced by cultural preconceptions which are passed along through oral, written, and visual traditions. Every literary work therefore incorporates traces of other literary works and of other cultural systems. Michael Riffaterre's concentration on intertextuality successfully challenges the myth of the autonomous text. In his analysis of Wordsworth's "Yew Trees," he demonstrates that poems owe their effect to generative chains that duplicate the same facts in constantly changing codes. Arguing that poetic discourse, even in its most descriptive forms, refers always to itself and not to outside reality, he
elaborates:

In a poem, the descriptive sentence is a chain of derivations. Each word is generated by positive or negative conformity with the preceding one—that is, either by synonymy or by antonymy—and the sequence is thus tautological or oxymoric.  

Literary allusions organize generative sequences which are predominantly tautological. In *Absalom* and *La Route*, they repeat the same statements the texts have already established in different codes. To speak of the lame man in *La Route* as Othello simply confirms that the jealous man is indeed a jealous man. This does not mean that the tautology is a gratuitous redundancy on the contrary, it carries several messages. The allusion to Othello deepens the meaning of "jealousy" by linking the lame man's situation with an illustrious and well-documented literary case history. But this link is also ironic because of the discrepancy between the drab little farmer and the heroic Othello. Moreover, the name Othello calls attention not only to a Shakespearean character but, because Othello has become a conventional literary cliché, it also evokes all the other jealous characters in literature who have, at one time or another, been associated with Othello. Indeed, literary clichés are so entrenched in our reading habits that even those who have never read the Shakespeare tragedy are nevertheless capable of identifying Othello with jealousy. And, even if the reader has never heard of Othello, the syntactical placement of the allusion would classify it as an allusion and the context in which it appears would suggest that Othello must have been a jealous man. The importance of literary allusions lies not so much in their appropriateness to a given situation as in their capacity to signal auto-referential dimensions of
literature. Allusions make the reader conscious of a text as text in that they clarify the extent to which our perceptions are influenced by already existing representations of "nature" or "life." Intertextuality therefore illuminates the fact that every literary text repeats, in one form or another, its precursors.

Repetition, as a decentralizing activity, confirms the fundamental non-referentiality of literature. All texts participate in an infinitely regressive chain of pre-existing cultural systems but cannot be traced back to a source or an origin. Is the Sutpen legend, for instance, the imitation or the source of tragic events told in the Bible and Greek tragedy? Gilles Deleuze, basing himself on Péguy, argues that the first occurrence of an event is already a repetition of its future reappearances:

... ce n'est pas la fête de la Fédération qui commémore ou représente la prise de la Bastille, c'est la prise de la Bastille qui fête et qui répète à l'avance toutes les Fédérations; ou c'est le premier nymphaea de Monet qui répète tous les autres.26

Allusions transform both text and pretext so that neither of them can function as an imitation or a source. Intertextual processes expose clearly what Roland Barthes describes as the nature of all reading:

Lire, c'est trouver des sens, et trouver des sens, c'est les nommer; mais ces sens nommés sont emportés vers d'autres noms; les noms s'appellent, se rassemblent et leur groupe-ment veut de nouveau se faire nommer: je nomme, je dénomme, je renomme: ainsi passe le text: c'est une nomination en devenir, une approximation inlassable, un travail mé-tonymique.27

Barthes depicts reading as an activity that moves along by constantly turning back on itself. The history of literature, too, progresses at the same time as it remains essentially the same. Literature succeeds...
not because it reflects reality to a satisfactory degree but because it
organizes elements of pre-existing systems in constantly new arrangements.
Faulkner and Simon consciously manipulate linguistic and cultural elements
in order to achieve a kind of fiction that exists on its own and not as an
imitation of life. Georges' search for meaning reveals that perception is
controlled by cultural conditioning as he inevitably and repeatedly falls
into a narrative that is composed of "des racontars... ou des bribes de
phrases... de confidences ou plutôt de grognements... ou... une
gravure qui n'existait même pas... un portrait peint cent cinquante ans
plus tôt..." (pp. 230-31). Georges, of course, believes in his own
originality and is therefore frustrated by his inability to report even his
own experiences with any kind of immediacy. Simon, however, understands
that all acts of perception are culturally determined and proposes a re-
evaluation of how man knows and communicates. He thereby aligns himself
with Derrida against the dominant epistemology.
Repetition is of great importance in *Absalom* and *La Route* because it touches on most aspects of the literary text. Since repetition contributes to both the continuity and the discontinuity of a narrative, it mediates between contradictory elements and different levels of the text. Although repetition may give the impression that it aims to neutralize difference or to add redundant information, its operations are always far more complex. In experimental texts like *Absalom* and *La Route*, Faulkner and Simon exploit repetition to impose stability on the one hand and to reinforce flux and uncertainty on the other. The immediate repetition of words may simply intensify a situation or it may introduce disconcerting ambiguities and unexpected formal innovations. Faulkner's reiteration of Quentin's "I dont hate it," for instance, ends *Absalom* on a note of unresolved tension, and Simon's structural pivots connect heterogeneous aspects of *La Route* by means of disruptive narrative switches. In many ways Faulkner and Simon tend to destabilize the very devices previously used to counteract discontinuities. Browning, according to Hawthorne, employed repetition in order to "create stability in the world of flux that permeates *Sordello*." And Casey, speaking more generally about repetition and imagination, argues that the "employment of formal redundancies is one effective way of combatting the disintegrative tendency of free imagining" so that the imagination's open-ended field of possibility is "matched by a corresponding definiteness of form" which is "achieved primarily by means of repetition." Although Faulkner and Simon seem to use repetition to bridge gaps between main narrative and digressions, this purpose is never fully achieved. We are
conditioned to expect that digressions are subordinate to the main narrative and find it disconcerting when this hierarchical order is reversed. Moreover, we are not used to texts in which digressions and main narrative have little or no connection because we assume that their subject matter should be in some way related.

Faulkner and Simon are constantly subverting the ordering capacities of repetition. Although recurring key-words usually give a narrative coherence, their proliferation in Absalom and La Route often achieves the opposite effect. Not only do we lose our way in a labyrinth of repeated words, but the words themselves appear in so many different contexts that they forfeit fixed meanings and associations. A similar effect accompanies the main duplications of episodes, characters, and narrators. Duplications have also been used to produce unity and balance, as in the novels of Goethe where "Each character at every moment mirrors the main characters, events, fates." However, the excessive use of juxtapositions, superimpositions, and substitutions in Absalom and La Route destroys the classical ideal of the fully developed character and eliminates a clearly defined narrative voice or stable center of consciousness. By eroding the status and power of the fictional character and narrator, Faulkner and Simon thus weaken some of the conventional foundations of epistemic fiction.

Repetition is also used as a retardation device that helps to control narrative pace. In most novels retardation works as a detour towards a nevertheless clearly anticipated climax and solution. In Absalom, however, repetition forces the narrative to slow down when we count on a fast development and withholds disclosures until we reach an anticlimactic place.
Indeed, the logic of timed revelations operative in the novel does not only delay and finally frustrate a solution but fails to provide any clearly stated questions. Moreover, as Faulkner has narrative and narration overlap and change places, confusion concerning the main center of interest adds to an already complicated presentation of Sutpen's story. Although the main narrative voices constantly reiterate the same basic facts, this reiteration deepens the novel's mystery instead of illuminating it. The novel's repetitive suspense structure demonstrates Faulkner's negative attitude towards conventional narrative patterns. And Simon's attitude is even more negative in that his fragmented text dispenses with most narrative hierarchies and replaces linear arrangements with a network of associations and analogies. Geometrical repetitive patterns therefore compensate for the narrative discontinuities in La Route. Simon's method concentrates on people or objects as they relate to each other and not as they appear as isolated individuals or entities. The narrative is consequently acentrical and in constant motion while still maintaining a cohesive structure. The relational arrangement of La Route puts characters and situations into a new light so that the novel corresponds to Barthes' belief that "toute la tâche de l'art est d'inexprimer l'exprimable."^5

The decentralizing influence of repetition further extends to the human character whose behavior contributes significantly to narrative structure. Moving toward the "subversive" position of current French psychoanalysis, Faulkner and Simon call into question man's individualism and isolation from others. Instead of defining the human being as a self-
contained totality, the two authors stress his profound interdependence and instability. In terms of Lacan's analysis of the "mirror phase," human beings are innately alienated from themselves and create their self-image by means of identifications with "Imaginary Others" who act as models and/or obstacles to their own desires. What may look like a bilateral relationship in *Absalom* and *La Route* invariably turns out to be mediated by a third person. Unable to recognize such concealed mediation patterns, characters are trapped in various triangular relationships as either subjects, objects or models. They are also compelled to repeat the same pernicious identification with an "Imaginary Other" throughout their lives. Thus, since every character exists only through a series of identifications, his often hidden motivations and behavior patterns can become very complex. And this complexity represents a determining factor in the multidimensional structure of *Absalom* and *La Route*.

Novelists have generally assumed that reality can be portrayed mimetically, in a way that is not colored by literary conventions. Through their use of literary allusions, Faulkner and Simon address themselves to the problem of representation in art. The narrators in *Absalom* and *La Route* think that they can find access to the facts about Sutpen or de Reixach, but discover that they are unable to represent even their own experiences without being influenced by what they have previously seen, read or heard. Literary allusions suggest that perception is necessarily affected by previous knowledge so that representation in art is neither original nor spontaneous. It is instead based on an infinite chain of copies or, in Casey's words, on "an unending cycle of repetitions which can never
achieve full perceptual presence." By emphasizing the "copy mechanism" in literary production, Faulkner and Simon also advance interrelationships and analogies as the main principle of creative thought. An act of creation can no longer be considered to proceed ex nihilo but must be likened to Lévi-Strauss' concept of "bricolage." The "bricoleur" achieves "des résultats brillants et imprévus" by means of "résidus de constructions et de destructions antérieures." Within a closed universe of possibilities, he therefore makes do with heterogeneous elements "en vertu du principe que 'ça peut toujours servir.'"

Although repetition often contributes to narrative stability and orthodoxy, this study demonstrates a tendency towards instability and subversion. The larger implications of this tendency endorse the "libération épistémologique" which Derrida analyzes in philosophical terms. Repetition is of crucial importance to Derrida because it touches on central issues like sameness, difference, presence, essence, origin, source, center, linearity. What distinguishes Derrida from other analysts of repetition is that he makes difference rather than sameness the main focus. Difference is generally believed to be derivative of sameness for, as Deleuze points out, we think of "la différence à partir d'une ressemblance et d'une identité supposées préalables" rather than as a series of always deferred differences that cannot be traced back to an origin. Whenever sameness is considered to be the agent of difference, we are dealing with a system of thought that makes definitions of essence its primary concern. But Derrida objects to any search for essence because it has introduced "tous les couples d'opposition sur lesquels est
construite la philosophie et dont vit notre discours." Dualistic approaches divide experience into either-or oppositions—soul and body, subject and object, materialism and idealism—without acknowledging their profound interrelatedness. Derrida claims that dualism assumes a "présence pleine" and overlooks the fact that a trace of each binary opposition can be found in the other. Each term in fact appears as "la différence de l'autre." In Derrida's system, presence is identified with essence and origin at the same time as it is distinguished from repetition. Describing his theory of play ("le jeu") as "la disruption de la présence," Derrida goes on to speak of "le jeu de la répétition et la répétition du jeu." Repetition allows for unlimited substitutions within a closed system:

Si la totalisation alors n'a plus de sens, ce n'est pas parce que l'infini d'un champ ne peut être couverte par un regard ou un discours finis, mais parce que la nature du champ—à savoir le langage est un langage fini—exclut la totalisation: ce champ est en effet celui d'un jeu, c'est-à-dire de substitutions infinies dans la clôture d'un ensemble fini. Ce champ ne permet ces substitutions infinies que parce qu'il est fini, c'est-à-dire parce qu'au lieu d'être un champ inépuisable, comme dans l'hypothèse classique, au lieu d'être trop grand, il lui manque quelque chose, à savoir un centre qui arrête et fonde le jeu des substitutions.

Derrida dismisses the claims of a "phénoménologie transcendantale" and of an "ontologie fondamentale" because they address themselves to the wrong questions. Derrida's play of substitutions has neither beginning nor end and thereby obviates discussions about limits and origins (centers). Unhappy with orthodox philosophy, Derrida finds himself in close sympathy with Lévi-Strauss' methodology because the anthropologist's
concept of "bricolage" represents "l'abandon déclaré de toute référence à un centre, à un sujet, à une référence privilégiée, à une origine ou à une archie absolue." The connection between Derrida's discoveries and the implications of *Absalom* and *La Route* should now be obvious. The use of repetition in the two novels directs itself precisely against a center, a subject, and a privileged reference. Moreover, the two novels exemplify Derrida's play of substitutions to the point where the beginning is already repeating all later repetitions and where the open ending invites further repetitions in the form of interpretations. Through their use of repetition in *Absalom* and *La Route*, Faulkner and Simon thus unsettle the reader's habitual responses to life and art.
FOOTNOTES

Preface


Introduction


3 Ibid., p. 9.

4 Ibid., p. 36.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 38.

7 Ibid., p. 40.

8 Ibid., p. 41.


10 Ibid., p. 141.

11 Ibid., p. 143.

12 Ibid., p. 144.
13 Ibid., p. 143.

14 Ibid., p. 67.


16 Ibid., p. xiii.

17 Ibid., p. ix.

18 Ibid., p. 18.


20 Ibid., p. 90.

21 Ibid., p. 91.


25 Ibid., pp. 10-16.


27 Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 25.

28 Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 252.

29 Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 437.
30 Kawin, p. 85.

31 Brown, pp. 56-57.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., p. 30.

34 Ibid., p. 59.

35 Kawin, p. 7.

36 Ibid., p. 8.


38 Raymond Williams, Keywords (Glasgow: William Collins Sons, 1976).

39 Ibid., p. 172.

40 Ibid., p. 171.

41 Ibid., p. 172.

42 Derrida, L'écriture et la différence, p. 29.

43 Ibid., p. 35.

44 Ibid., p. 31.

45 Liane Norman, "Risk and Redundancy," PMLA, 90, p. 290.
Chapter I


4. Ibid., p. 47.

5. Ibid., p. 57.


9. Ibid., p. 163.


11. Ibid., p. 416.


17 Ibid.


20 Ibid., p. 239.

Chapter II


3 Hyde, p. 5.


5 Reed, p. 151.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p. 288.

8 Ibid., p. 151.

10 Hyde, p. 95

11 Ibid., pp. 98-99.

12 Ibid., p. 99.


14 For further examples and elaborations, see Hyde's section on "Approximations" and chapters VIII and X in Walter J. Slatoff, Quest for Failure (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1960). Notice also that this stylistic device is reminiscent of Proust's "soit que... soit que..." or "ou... ou... ou...".


16 Reed, pp. 149-50.

17 Webster's New World

18 Reed, p. 152.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p. 150.

21 Ibid.

Chapter III


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 DuVerlie, p. 6.

8 Ibid., p. 7.


10 Ibid., p. 120


12 Webster's New World


14 Ibid., p. 79.

15 Ibid., p. 118.

16 Ibid.


18 Ibid.

"Consecutive organization requires that (before solutions to all enigmas are given ) the numerous separate incidents appear in some mysterious correlation to each other until their causal dependence is established" (my own translation).

21. Ibid.

22. Reed, pp. 145-75.

23. Ibid., p. 148.


27. Ibid., p. 84.


29. Reed, p. 149.


31. Reed, p. 164.

32. Genette, p. 78.


34. Genette, p. 87.


37. Reed, p. 175.

38. Ibid.
39 Guetti, p. 108.

40 Reed, p. 148.

41 Knapp, p. 185.

42 DuVerlie, p. 5.

43 Knapp, p. 185.

44 DuVerlie, p. 17.

45 Ibid., p. 11.


47 Ibid., pp. 88–89.


49 Ibid., p. 77.

50 Ibid., p. 78.

51 Ibid.

52 Simon, "La Fiction mot à mot," p. 73.

53 DuVerlie, p. 10.


57 Ibid., p. 11.


61 Irwin, Doubling and Incest, p. 6.


63 Irwin, Doubling and Incest, p. 55.

64 Ibid., p. 81.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid., p. 69.

67 Ibid., p. 61.

68 Ibid., p. 106.

69 Ibid., p. 148.

70 Ibid., p. 120.


73 Ibid.

74 Ibid., p. 19.

75 Ibid., p. 20.
76 Girard, Mensonge romantique, p. 13.

77 Ibid., p. 12.

78 Ibid., p. 28.

79 Ibid., p. 16.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid., p. 18.

82 Ibid., p. 23.

83 Ibid., p. 24.


85 Ibid., p. 37.


92 Turkle, p. 56.

93 Ibid., p. 58.

94 Ibid.
Chapter IV


2. Ibid., p. 61.


4. "Questionnaire," Europe, numéro spécial (October 1968), p. 231. [Interview of Claude Simon]

6 Ibid., p. 285.

7 T.H. Adamowski, "Children of the-Idea: Heroes and Family Romances in Absalom, Absalom!", Mosaic, 10 (Fall 1976), 117.


12 Ibid., p. 90.

13 Lind, p. 272.

14 Levins, p. 47.

15 Vickery, p. 84.

16 Barthes, S/Z, p. 211.

17 Simon, "La fiction mot à mot," p. 84.

18 Knapp, p. 182.

19 Lind, P. 275.


22 Ibid., p. 83.

23 Slatoff, p. 241.

24 Ibid.


26 Deleuze, Différence et répétition, p. 8.


Conclusion


3 Ibid., p. 257.


6 Casey, p. 266.


8 Ibid., p. 27.

9 Ibid.

11 Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 159.


13 Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, p. 104.

14 Derrida, "La différence," p. 56.


16 Ibid., p. 423.

17 Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, p. 35.


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