

**The Sites of Uncertainty:  
The Politics and Poetics of Place in Short Fiction by James Joyce, Sherwood  
Anderson and William Faulkner**

ABDALKAREEM ATTEH

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Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies.

University of Essex

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## Abstract

This thesis is a study of the poetics and politics of place in the short stories of James Joyce, Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner. In an introduction, three chapters, each examining the short fiction of a writer, and a conclusion this thesis explores various aspects of understanding and representing place. Focusing on these writers' short story cycles and drawing on short story theories, I argue that the main characteristic of the modernist short story cycle is the creation of interiorly diversified chronotopes. My main argument is that these writers create uncertain fictional places that could be described as dialogic. This representation of place as heterogeneous, conflicting, and uncertain reflects the changed conception of and attitude towards place in modernism.

The introduction contextualizes the discussion and presents some relevant theoretical frameworks. The first chapter concentrates on the representation of place in Joyce's *Dubliners* (including the interior, the exterior, the public place of the street and the space of home and country); it is argued that Joyce's short story cycle generates a polyphonic world. In the second chapter, focusing on Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, I examine Anderson's place, a small Midwestern town in the region of Ohio, USA, and show how an image of heterotopic place is created out of the counterbalance between grand narratives of the pastoral Midwest and the fragmentary form of the short story cycle. The third chapter deals with William Faulkner's fictional place, his imaginary county of Yoknapatawpha and argues that Faulkner's place is heteroglossic. The conclusion summarizes the findings in a comparative fashion, arguing that the meaning of place is not fixed and stable but rather personal and momentary reflected in the writerly texts and that the narratives these writers develop allocate an important role to the reader: to co-construct the text and thus also its image of place.

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## Introduction

“[W]riters have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one in which they live really”.<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Stein’s famous statement could be interpreted in at least two ways, both of which reveal a sense of place shared by many modernist writers of her generation. On the one hand, this pronouncement suggests a latent ambivalence towards the place of one’s birth-belonging place (in her case, the USA) and exultation of a foreign, or different, place (in her case, France).<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it signals a more general unease with, even aversion to actual places. On the last reading, the first is the country to which one belongs by citizenship or dwelling, while the latter is the one that the writers make through their imagination; it is “romantic... it is not real but is really there”.<sup>3</sup> This second place of imagination, the one she prefers, is where the writers “live really”. It is of one’s own choice and even creation. If writers are made by the first country then they can make another. This belief in the possibility of place being created and made (that is, in the fluidity of place) is an important aspect of the modernists’ conception of place. This thesis, drawing on various theories of studying place, will examine how place is created and recreated through an intertwine of poetics and politics in short stories by James Joyce, Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner.

The three writers belong to a specific period in general and cultural history, which was in itself marked by heightened engagement with the matters of space and place. The modernist era witnessed radical social and historical changes that brought about a shift in the way humans

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<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Stein, *France, Paris* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1940), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this tendency in modernist literature is also indicated in the notable number of modernist writers of her generation who lived in exile, imposed or self-imposed.

<sup>3</sup> Stein, *France*, p. 2.

viewed themselves and the world around them. Although critics differ as to when the modernist movement in literature and the arts starts and ends, they agree on the context from which it arose and the circumstances to which it responded.<sup>4</sup> The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed an intensification of the process of industrialisation which led to drastic social and economic changes to the life of people throughout the world, but, most notably and of concern in this thesis, to those in Western Europe and the United States. The increasing force of industrialisation led to the dissolution of the centuries-long agricultural way of living. The emerging new way of living brought about by industrialisation led to the concentration of life in big cities. The machine became a dominant in people's life as much as mechanization of labour and mass production became the features of everyday life. The new modes of transportation brought about by industrialisation such as trains or automobiles made moving between places easier and faster but, more important, they also changed people's perceptions of time and space. New transportation opportunities and their imagining emphasised a sense of movement and flux through space and geography and engendered new perspectives: by doing so, they were also both changing and reflecting human experience of these new times.<sup>5</sup>

This spirit of change was strongly sensed and expressed in cultural texts in different fields of knowledge. Some proto-modernist and modernist thinkers and scientists forever redefined and reshaped our view of the world. Such figures include Karl Marx and his views on economy; Charles Darwin and his views on human evolution; Frederick Nietzsche and his ideas on truth and language; Sigmund Freud and his investigation into human interiority; and, directly relevant for the present thesis, Albert Einstein with his theory of relativity (around 1905) where he has proposed that space and time are not absolute and fixed but are rather relative to motion and speed.

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<sup>4</sup> Some trace its beginning to the 1880s, while others argue that modernism must have begun earlier, in 1870. Some mark its end in 1935 while others mark it as 1950. For a detailed overview of this debate in modernist studies, see Richard Shepard, "The Problematics of European Modernism", in *Theorizing Modernism: Essays in Critical Theory*, Steve Giles, ed., [1993] (New York: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed study of the influence of the new modes of transportation on human perception and on modernist writing see Andrew Thacker, *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

In addition to these developments in intellectual history, the era was marked by a range of global historical commotions that, in retrospect, could be assessed as a turning point for humans' relationships with the world: most notably, the First World War (1914-1918) and the October Revolution (1917). In particular, the amount of violence and the mass slaughter in the First World War trenches left a long-lasting trace on the consciousness and memory of the people who witnessed it or even heard of it.

Marshall Berman argues that the defining characteristic of modernity is a continual feeling and experience of ambivalence.<sup>6</sup> This affect, both generated by and contributing to the substantial transformations in early twentieth century Western society, made many modernist writers feel an overwhelming sense of fragmentation of experience and epistemological anxiety. This situation expressed itself more than anywhere else in modernist writers' attitude towards language. Following in the trace of Friedrich Nietzsche's and Stéphane Mallarmé's respective doubts about the truthfulness of official language, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) discarded the view that language is a neutral medium through which people access reality; instead Saussure conceives of language as a system of signs. Before Saussure, the study of language was restricted to the diachronic aspect of language: how words change and develop through time (philology). Probably the most important aspect of Saussure's approach to the study of language and that of many modernist thinkers and writers is the shift of focus from the diachronic to the synchronic study of language: language as used in a particular time and place. Moreover, Saussure considers that the relationship between the signifier and the signified as arbitrary and conventional. A sign proffers meaning not because of intrinsic characteristics but relationally within the system of language itself.

This view of language has had marked implications for our understanding of the relationship between language and reality, and the way we conceptualise and represent reality, including the

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<sup>6</sup> See Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

reality of places. It is in the wake of de Saussure (and Einstein) that many concepts and ideas started being viewed as contingent phenomena; they were seen as products of a particular time and place. Concepts such as time, space and self that were viewed as stable and universal before modernism were now seen as unstable and contingent. In particular, the old ways of looking at place and geography formulated through what is called Euclidian absolute notions of place were gradually replaced with more fragmentary as well as more site-specific approaches to place—modernist and postmodernist.

In what follows I will provide an overview of some twentieth century theories of place that will be of immediate relevance for this thesis, and will also adumbrate the ways in which this thesis will use each of these conceptualisations. These different theories, which are in turn informed by different philosophies and rationale, will serve me to highlight the various aspects of place in the stories of the three authors.

In a lecture entitled “Of Other Spaces” (1967) Michael Foucault says that “[t]he great obsession of the nineteenth century, as we know, was history: with its themes of development and suspension, of crisis, and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past”. However, according to Foucault, “[t]he present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space”.<sup>7</sup> Foucault dates this change to the post-Second World War period, but it is arguable that this epistemological dominant started being active earlier. More recent scholars of modernism, like Susan Stanford Friedman, argue that literary critics should move beyond over-emphasizing the issues of time in modernism and towards the consideration of space and place in modernist practices.<sup>8</sup> The term “space” and its frequent counterpoint “place” are everything but unproblematic; they continue to be the source of debates. For the purpose of this thesis, I adopt the human geographer Yi-Fu Tuan’s general

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<sup>7</sup> Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”, trans. Jay Miskoieck, *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 1, (Spring, 1986), p.22.

division between space as abstract, a general category, and place as the field of human experience.<sup>9</sup> Other thinkers, like John Agnew, define this difference in less orthodox terms. In the introduction to his book, *American Space/American Place: Geographies of the United States*, John Agnew defines space and place as following:

Space signifies a field of practice or area in which a group of people or organization (such as state) operates, held together in popular consciousness by a map-image and a narrative or a story that represents it as a meaningful whole. Place represents the encounter of people with other people and things in space. It refers to how everyday life is inscribed in space and takes on meaning for specified groups of people and organizations. Space can be considered as “top-down”, defined by powerful actors imposing their control and stories on others. Place can be considered as “bottom-up”, representing the outlooks and actions of more typical people.<sup>10</sup>

Agnew’s specific reflections inform some of my discussion of *place* in the following chapters, insofar as I regard place as the site that hosts both top-bottom (mapping, a narrative) and bottom-top (human reaction) actions.

To be mindful of this general distinction between place and space is useful for exploring the narratives of place represented by imagined communities or national/ regional identity in the stories of the three writers. It fruitfully points to the overarching division in the works of these writers between narratives told and shared about place (space in Agnew’s terms) and the lived place itself (place). For example, the stories of the three writers reveal places in terms that are close to those identified by Agnew; the contradiction between place as imagined and place as it actually is. By making the city the locale of his short story cycle, Joyce is engaged with the abstract ideal image of Ireland with the countryside in Irish culture. Anderson reveals

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<sup>8</sup> See Susan Stanford Friedman, “Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies”, in *Modernism/Modernity*, Vol. 13, No. 3, (September: 2006), pp. 425-443.

<sup>9</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p.6.

<sup>10</sup> John Agnew, “Introduction”, in *American Space/ American Place: Geographies of Contemporary United States*, ed., John A. Agnew and Jonathan M. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), p.5.

contradictions between the myth of the Midwest as a pastoral place and the experience and the sense of place his characters, as well as his textual spaces, show. Faulkner, on his side, never ceases to dramatise, question and investigate the Southerners' shared image of their region and strong sense of history.

Irrespective of the general debate about the differences between space and place, many theorists would agree about the importance of place in the twentieth and twenty-first century. However, when it comes to the definition of place or the ways of studying it, differences among theorists of place come to the surface. In what follows, this introduction will present a literature review of some of the important trends in the twentieth century and contemporary study of place. It should be noted, by way of a preliminary disclaimer, that these theorists have many concepts that will remain untouched and that I will present here and use subsequently only what serves the purposes of this thesis. Most generally, one can group the studies of place under two (to three) approaches: the phenomenological humanistic approach and its extension and recalibration in the discipline of human geography, and the critical, materialist approach, which in itself draws on human geography but most emphatically engages socially-active approaches such as Marxism, feminism, and the like. According to Phil Hubbard, while humanistic approaches “tend to focus on place understood as a distinctive (and bounded) location defined by the lived experience of people”, the socially critical humanist geography approaches “emphasise the importance of space as socially produced and consumed”.<sup>11</sup>

The humanistic approach is principally informed and inspired by the philosophies of phenomenology and existentialism,<sup>12</sup> in particular, the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger influentially shed light on the importance of the dwelling places that people live in. Scholars like Jeff Malpas argue that, prior to Heidegger, the place we live in had been considered as a neutral

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<sup>11</sup> Phil Hubbard, “Space/Place”, in *Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts*, ed., David Sibley, Peter Jackson, David Atkinson and Neil Washbourne (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> Tim Creswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Pub., 2004), p.20.

container within which humans lived. In this case, the relation between humans and the place they inhabit had not been viewed in terms of mutual influence; only humans had been given importance while the place itself had been neglected. Essential to Heidegger's reconceptualisation of place were, however, his notions of "dasein" (dwelling) and "being" (as being in/at a place). For Heidegger, being and place are inextricably bound together, indeed inseparable; place is essential for the very idea of experience and consciousness. Our experience and our consciousness of the world we live in are only possible through our existence in a place. In other words, for him consciousness is not possible without a place to live in. Heidegger articulates this dynamic interaction as "situatedness". To be "situated" means to be placed in relation to other things in that place; it is a temporal dwelling in a site. To be in a place thus is a "happening". Therefore, to be is to be within a structure of belonging that is already in a certain place. It is through "situatedness" or placedness that our existence has its origins and ground. According to Heidegger, human beings are characterised through their "being in the world". In Heidegger's perspective the notions of space and place, while abstract categories, seem to be closely and causally related: space becomes a place by virtue of human existing in it.<sup>13</sup>

Such focus on subjectivity and one's experiences of space is also characteristic of Gaston Bachelard's thought on space/place. In *The Poetics of Space* (1958), Bachelard presents a phenomenological and psychoanalytic approach to the meaning of spaces, or, rather, *places*, that preoccupy poetry. Like Heidegger before him, Bachelard emphasises the importance of a dwelling place, home in this case. For him home is an intimate place within which our psyche and the life of the mind are first given form. Home and other emotionally shaped places influence human thoughts, memories and feelings. Bachelard proposes "topo-analysis" as the "systematic

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<sup>13</sup> For more on the concept of place in Heidegger's work see Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006). For a discussion and an overview of some of the terms mentioned above see especially the first chapter "Introduction: Heidegger, Place Topology", pp. 1- 37. See also "proceeding to Place by Indirection: Heidegger", in Edward S. Casey's *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives”.<sup>14</sup> A “topo-analytic” examination of the relationship of individuals to home informs my reading of the three authors. This is particularly the case in Joyce’s cogitations on the home place in “The Dead” and “Eveline”, revealing that even the home where we are born and brought up in could be alienating and, more generally, that we feel displaced in our childhood homes.<sup>15</sup> Anderson’s final story “Departure” centres on the main character’s ambivalence towards home and his eventual leaving of his town in search of another place. Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” underlines a disturbed relationship to home, both as the literal family home and the larger home of the main character’s town and region of the South, using the gothic and the grotesque.

The key representative of the humanistic approach to the study of place is the Chinese-born American theorist Yi-Fu Tuan. Tuan influentially elaborated his ideas about place and space in the book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977). In this book, Tuan first specifies the comparison/ contrast between place and space. Space is abstract while place is the field of experience. For Tuan, in particular, place is a lived experience to its social extreme; places do not have properties of their own but are rather created through people’s experience such as emotional attachment to places. Therefore, for Tuan, the vital component in thinking about place is the “sense of place”.<sup>16</sup> Tuan writes extensively about the way people feel and think about place and space, and how they form attachments to various places such as home, country or neighbourhood. Furthermore, Tuan has termed the affective bond between people and place “topophilia” and reflected on it extensively in his previous 1974 book, entitled *Topophilia: A Study of*

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<sup>14</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Trans. Maria Golas [1958] (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> More recent theories of place, drawing from phenomenological philosophy, are found in the writings of Edward Casey and Jeff Malpas. While they assert that places are socially constructed they also argue for the importance of physical place. Place is that site upon which culture exists. Casey argues that, as place constructs us we construct place, too. The very idea of experience is only possible within place. Edward Relph’s book *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976) is considered another influential phenomenological approach to the study of place. See Edward Casey, *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1993) and Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place*, pp. 30-138-162-182.

*Environmental Perceptions, Attitudes and Values*. In this book, Tuan interrogates various places (such as the beach, the desert...) and examines what they mean for people. Tuan's ideas of the meaning of places for people are particularly useful for the studying of places in the stories of Joyce, Anderson and Faulkner, as the writerly imagination of all three authors aims towards an exploration of the affective attachments to and emotional metabolising of particular (real or imagined) places.

Another approach to the study of place and space that has recently gained prominence is the materialist approach or critical human geography.<sup>17</sup> Informed by Marxism, feminism and post-structuralism, the main assumption of this approach is that places are socially constructed. As Paul Adams elaborates, critical human geographers pursue what could be termed "a contextualist approach" which "pays explicit attention to place and language" and how these are marked by differences in class, race, gender, sexuality, or nationality.<sup>18</sup> A seminal work that belongs to this approach is *The Production of Space* by the French philosopher Henry Lefebvre. According to Lefebvre, for a long time in Western thought there has been a separation between a few interrelated conceptualisations of space: "physical space" or the space of nature, the Cosmos; the "mental space" or the space of formal abstraction about space (similar to Agnew's notion of space as opposed to place); and, thirdly, "social space" or the space of social interaction. Challenging this artificial separation, Lefebvre nevertheless argues that these are all facets of "social space" or what, in Tuan's view and within the parameters of my study, would be more properly termed "place". In this sense, space, for Lefebvre, is no more a passive surface, a tabula rasa; space is itself produced. To enable the study of its production, Lefebvre suggests a hermeneutic triad through which to approach space/place: "spatial practice", "representations of space" and "representational space". "Spatial practices" is the "perceived" space of the everyday ordinariness,

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<sup>17</sup> Paul C. Adams, Steven Hoelscher and Karen E. Till, ed., *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. xvi.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Adams, et al, *Textures of Place*, p. xvii.

“space” which structures lived reality; it includes routes and networks, patterns and interactions that connect places and people, images with reality, work with leisure. “Representations of space” refers to conceptualised, or “conceived” space, constructed by scientists, urbanists, geographers, and social engineers, a domain, where ideology, power, knowledge, signs and codes interact. “Intimately tied to relations of production”, representations of space manifest themselves through monuments and towers, in factories and office blocks; their objective expression is “architecture, conceived of not as building of a particular structure, a palace or monument, but rather as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture which calls for representations that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realm”.<sup>19</sup> It is this aspect of space that decides the meaning of a place through implementing knowledge and ideology. This space is abstract and absolute. “Representational space”, by contrast, is “lived through its associated [mostly non-verbal] images and symbols”. This space may be likened to underground and clandestine sides of life and it does not obey rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Art belongs to this space. This is the space which imagination seeks to change and appropriate, while making symbolic use of its physical parameters. This space, Lefebvre argues, “is alive: it speaks. It has an effective kernel or centre: square, bedroom, dwelling, house, or: square, church, graveyard”.<sup>20</sup>

It is these last two terms of this triad “representations of space” (which I refer to in subsequent chapters as conceived space) and “representational space” (which I refer to as lived space) that interest me most in this thesis; but I also take on Lefebvre’s lesson that it cannot be conceived without investigating the production of the other third aspect of social space. For, space is not a dead object but rather an organic, alive, and “hyper-complex” entity, as it embraces myriad currents— “individual entities and particularities, relatively fixed points, movements and flows and waves- some interpenetrating, others in conflict and so on”.<sup>21</sup> The relation between the

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<sup>19</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 42

<sup>20</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.42

<sup>21</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 88

perceived-conceived-lived spaces is thus neither stable nor should they be grasped linearly. This thesis draws substantively upon Lefebvre's conceptualisations to study the construction of space/place and division of place in Joyce's, Anderson's, and Faulkner's short stories. His concepts of the "perceived", "conceived" and the "lived" space are crucial for unravelling the contradictions the three writers aim at disclosing within the allegedly homogenous narratives of place. Joyce, Anderson and Faulkner are preoccupied with the national or regional narratives of place ("the collective world-view of a society, a composite of the legendary, religious, political even economic concepts a society shares"<sup>22</sup>) and the contradictions that lie at the core of these narratives, while simultaneously representing them and reconfiguring them in representation. They differentiate between what is imagined and believed in (absolute space) and what is perceived (lived on daily basis) and "lived" (experienced and represented in art) by people. One more term that Lefebvre mentions and which is of interest for my thesis and the discussion of place is "abstract space". This last kind of space is connected to the space of modernism at the turn of the century. Lefebvre argues that capitalism has produced "abstract space". What is important about this kind of space is that from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward the "abstract space" tried to homogenise social space. This term informs my reading of the new status of homogenisation created by capitalism in the stories of Sherwood Anderson and also the common abstract space of the town of Jefferson in my discussion of Faulkner's "Barn Burning" in the third chapter.

The permanent potential for change and creativity in place is most notably argued for by the French scholar Michel de Certeau. He writes about practice in relation to place and space. The practices that de Certeau is particularly keen to highlight include walking and journeying through the city. In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau distinguishes between two contrasting views of the city: one is the panoptic God-like perspective from above such as looking at New York City from the top of the World Trade Centre—monolithic, hegemonic,

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<sup>22</sup> Diane Dufva Quantic, *The Nature of the Place: A Study of Great Plains Fiction* [1995] (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. xvii.

presumptuously comprehensive and self-assured—and the other is the street-level perspective of the pedestrian walking the streets.<sup>23</sup> Through walking, argues de Certeau, we defy place and challenge it; we actively participate in modifying and rewriting of places and consequently make them our own. Due to these “spatial practices” place is in a continuous state of becoming. De Certeau’s ideas of “spatial practicing” are useful for exploring this trend especially in Joyce’s stories. However, the Joycean walker does not always succeed in defying and rewriting the city and could be actually consumed by the city, as I shall elaborate on in Chapter One.

I have started this overview of the theories of place with Michel Foucault’s article or lecture “Of Other Spaces”. Foucault’s article blends the visions of space and place, effectively arguing that we live in an interiorly differentiated space, made up of different places: he argues that we do not live in a void (abstract space) but in a range of diverse emplacements. Thus “space” for Foucault is not “homogeneous and empty”; it is rather “heterogeneous space” where “we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another”.<sup>24</sup> Alongside specific sites such as those of transportation (train, the street), relaxation (the cafe, the cinema) and sites of rest (the house, the bedroom), Foucault singles out two spatial constellations which are of interest for him above all other spaces: utopias and heterotopias. These two types of sites are related to other sites, “but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect”. The first of these two spaces, utopias, are “sites with no real place”. Through these spaces people try to represent society in a perfect way; in this world everything is in order. In heterotopias, a concept which is more useful for the purposes of this thesis, real sites or places are “simultaneously represented, contested and inverted.” Heterotopias could apply to creative

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<sup>23</sup> De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall, [1984] (London: University of California Press, 1988), p. 98.

<sup>24</sup> Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”, p. 23.

practices and their products—works of art.<sup>25</sup> These insights will be relevant for my discussion of the short story cycle as a form/genre, and, in particular, my interrogation of Sherwood Anderson's short fiction.

These approaches offer varied perspectives on studying place. This thesis makes use of these various theories to highlight place and space in the stories of these writers. Phenomenologists and humanistic geographers' insights are useful for exploring the phenomenon of place, the way we perceive or experience it and, more generally, the interaction between subjectivity and place. Through this set of approaches my thesis examines the meaning of places. The critical human geographers provide insights into the meaning of place as socially constructed and relatable to each specific context from which and about which Joyce, Anderson, and Faulkner are writing.

In addition to this diversified framework, this thesis will make use of some specific conceptualisations that bridge the reflections on place and issues of literary representation. The most significant of these is Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope (space-time). Bakhtin argues that space and time are inseparable in both everyday life and literary representation. He uses the term chronotope to express this combination of space-time in fiction as well as to acknowledge an indirect link between the chronotope in fiction and our historically moulded attitudes towards the twine of space and time. I use this concept to examine the various forms of the configurations and reconfigurations of space-time in the stories and fictional spaces of the three writers. I find this concept especially useful in the exploration of the existence of and relationship between various chronotopes (time-space configurations) within the same story or a collection of stories. Such interaction of chronotopes, we shall see, sheds special light on the meaning and sense of place as it is reimagined and recreated in Joyce's, Anderson's and Faulkner's collections of stories. There are various chronotopes, according to Bakhtin. In Joyce's stories, the

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<sup>25</sup> See Andrew Thacker, "Theorising Space and Place in Modernism", in *Moving Through Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 27-28-29.

chronotope is used to compress the present and past of Irish politics (as we see in “Ivy Day in the Committee Room”) into one new fictional chronotope that reveals the emotions and affects of characters in this story. In Anderson, the chronotope of the pastoral is used to explore both imagined and lived notions of place. In Faulkner, the chronotope is used to examine configurations of time and space in relation to imagining history. It is also used in Faulkner to highlight the chronotopic nature of certain public as well as private places such as the square and the saloon.

There are other important concepts that Bakhtin uses in his analysis of fiction (in his case, primarily the genre of the novel) and which are directly or indirectly linked to the investigation of place. One of these concepts that I find particularly serviceable for my analysis of modernist short fiction is the category of polyphony. Bakhtin’s description of polyphony as the in-text co-existence of many “voices” - existential-ideological positions - with equal rights is especially useful in my discussion, in the first chapter, of modern experience as flux in Joyce’s city, a flux that characterises both the city (its polyphonic nature) and the (reflecting and thinking, polyphonic) consciousness of the flâneur that meanders the streets of the city. The idea of polyphony is laid onto another, related, Bakhtin’s concept, namely, that of heteroglossia. The last term, also referred to as “differentiated speech”, is often seen as “Bakhtin’s key term for describing the complex stratification of language into genre, gender, register, sociolect, dialect and the mutual inter-animation of these forms”.<sup>26</sup> This concept is used in this thesis to discuss the existence of various discourses or languages (voices) that exist in a certain place and make it what it is. This (heteroglossic) place could be the space/place of one story or of a collection of stories (*Winesburg, Ohio*), or, by implication, a fictional place that stretches across a writer’s oeuvre such as Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha. Closely connected to the concepts I have just mentioned is the overarching category of dialogism which, according to Bakhtin, is the vital component of the genre of the novel but could also be found in short fiction, and which refers to the interaction

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 18.

between the diverse languages or discourses (heteroglossia) within a certain place as well as to the interaction of different ideological-axiological-epistemological positions within the text as embodied different characters (polyphony). This dialogic reshaping of fictional place also makes the meaning of place and its creation a shared work between the reader and the text, as we will see in the third chapter.

This thesis focuses on the short stories of Joyce, Anderson and Faulkner. The three authors are all important contributors to the short story genre, and are selected not only because of their intricate representation of place but also as the masters and innovators of the short fiction in particular. Joyce's *Dubliners* marks a new era in short fiction writing and his influence on the development of the genre in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is widely acknowledged by critics. Anderson, Faulkner himself intimates, is the "father" of his generation of writers in America and it was Anderson who brought a new concept of the short story form in America early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup> Faulkner's stories rank among the best of the kind.<sup>28</sup> This is an appropriate place to contextualise the high assessment of the writers' respective achievements in the context of the history of the genre.

The short story became recognized as a distinct literary genre only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> The earliest reference to the term "short story" dates back to 1877.<sup>30</sup> However, the form itself is much older. These origins can be sought, some short story critics argue, in the era and imaginative expression "as old as the primitive realm of myths".<sup>31</sup> The origin of the modern short story can thus be found in the old tale and its various subgenres of the fable, parable, the Creation myth, novella, fairy tale and art-tale.<sup>32</sup> Rolf Lundén furthermore argues that not only the short story as

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<sup>27</sup> See *Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner 1926-1962*, ed., James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 249-50.

<sup>28</sup> Hans Skei, *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Charles E. May, *The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice* (New York: Twayne, 1995), p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Paul March-Russell, *The Short Story: An Introduction*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Charles E. May, *The Short Story*, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Paul March-Russell, *The Short Story*, p. 2.

we know it today but also its variations such as the short story composite or cycle are not a completely modern form. It is an ancient form that has been in use for a very long time and its prime examples include texts such as the Arabian *A Thousand and One Nights*, Indian *Panchatantra (Kalilah and Dimnah)* and Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron*.<sup>33</sup> One of the earliest *theorists* of the short story genre, however, was Edgar Allan Poe. Poe distinguishes the short story from other longer genres by its length and also by its presentation and writing techniques. He presents what he calls the “single effect” doctrine in which the short story should be arranged around a single impression or effect. Then in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the short story took another turning point with Anton Chekhov whose innovative realistic and impressionistic style influenced much subsequent short story writing—including those of Joyce and Anderson. With Chekhov, the plot (what “actually happens” in a story) became of secondary importance and the focus shifted onto “slices of life” or fragments of everyday reality instead, sometimes lengthily explored, sometimes briefly sketched. He focused less on the development of action than on mood and psychological states. Chekhov's transformation of the genre is vital for what was to become the modernist short story. Adrian Hunter, arguing for a connection between the formal and generic properties of the short story and the ways in which writers portrayed their world, writes that “the short story became a fixture of literary avant-gardism in the 1890s as writers began to explore the aesthetic possibilities of ‘shortness,’ turning away from the plot-oriented populism of detective fiction and the imperial adventure romance to produce disturbingly irresolute, ‘plotless’, open-ended narrative structures”.<sup>34</sup> It is in the further evolution of this particular tradition that we can situate all three writers discussed in this thesis. It should be noted, however, that the modernist short story more generally and the short story as specifically practised by Joyce, Anderson, and Faulkner, has its further particularities, and they are inextricably linked to

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<sup>33</sup> Rolf Lundén, “Centrifugal and Centripetal Narrative Strategies in the Short Story Composite and the Episode Film”, in *Interférences Littéraires/Littéraire Interentives*, Vol. 12 (February, 2014), pp. 49-60.

<sup>34</sup> Adrian Hunter, *The Cambridge Introduction to the short story in English*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). p. 51.

the increased visibility of the genre on the literary market place. In a changing world that became increasingly self-conscious, and almost painfully aware of language and its capacities and incapacities, the use of genre, particularly the short story, got on a new guise and new significance. With the rising of literary modernism the short story gained more and more importance. This is exemplified by its proliferation during the 1880s and 1890s and subsequently in the twentieth century. In 1937, Elizabeth Bowen judged the short story as “the child of this century”.<sup>35</sup> More recently, Heather Ingman writes that “the short story, perhaps more than any other form, has been associated with modernity, both in terms of experimentation and theme”.<sup>36</sup>

The reasons for this rising attention the short story genre received in modernist literary writings could be related to, among other things, people’s changing relationship to the world, to place.<sup>37</sup> As explained earlier in this introduction, the modernist era witnessed drastic change and transformation of our relationship to the world and reality. Commenting more specifically on the relationship between formal experimentation in modernist literature and place, Andrew Thacker argues that “the formal practices and spatial forms of the modernist text should be read in conjunction with a wider understanding of the historical geography of modernity”.<sup>38</sup> In other words, there is a connection between text and context; between these “formal practices”, including the use of genre such as short story, and place. The short story, Dominic Head argues, was a remarkably suitable means “to capture the episodic nature of twentieth-century experience”.<sup>39</sup> Form, I would like to comment in the context of my project, became a means for the expression of place itself as lived, experienced, and imagined. One mode of writing short fiction that served this

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<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Bowen, “The Faber Book of Modern Short Stories”, in *The New Short Story Theories*, ed., Charles E. May (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1994), pp.256-262. This is not to deny the fact that sometimes it is difficult to establish borders between genres, especially in modernist literature in which the traditional borders between genres are sometimes violated.

<sup>36</sup> Heather Ingman, *A History of the Irish Short Story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Other reasons for the proliferation of the short story genre is journalism and the rising number of magazines. The brevity of the short story was suitable to be published in magazines and read in one session.

<sup>38</sup> Andrew Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity*, p. 29.

<sup>39</sup> Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* [1992] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 1.

purpose particularly well, I argue, is the short story cycle (or sequence, or composite), a text which consists of autonomous but interrelated short stories that interconnect and join into a larger whole. The short story cycle offered writers a fertile ground to portray (real and imagined) place across a few narratives that, together, would then produce a richly textured picture of a place. This is especially true when it comes to the ability of the short story cycle to depict an uncertain relationship to place by presenting short narratives that provide diverse angles and perspectives on a certain place. The latter purpose is a common denominator of Joyce's, Anderson's, and Faulkner's short fiction practices.

This connection between the short story genre (and any literary genre for that matter) and place would be more visible if we look at the properties of a certain genre through Bakhtin's notion of chronotope. Bakhtin uses the concept of chronotope (space-time) to distinguish genres; every genre has its own space-time configurations. As such, the short story proffers a particular image of space-time through which place is depicted and one could further argue that genres, including the short story, are a means of mapping place.<sup>40</sup> The modernist short story is also marking and expressing a transition from a literary model in which time was dominant to one in which more emphasis was laid on place. This does not mean that place was not the subject of literature before modernism nor that modernism completely gave up time (if anything, modernists, including the three writers under consideration here, were obsessed with time). The modernist innovation resides, instead, in the different use of time and place and their interaction in literary text. One could argue, together with Joseph Frank, that in its preoccupation with time modernist literature presents another notion of time which draws attention to spatiality.<sup>41</sup> While time remains a central

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<sup>40</sup> Robert T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 55.

<sup>41</sup> This idea of spatiality in modernist literature is mentioned by Joseph Frank in his "Spatial Form in Modern Literature". Although Frank talks about simultaneity, which indicates time and temporality, in this case; nevertheless, what is meant here is spatiality. See Joseph Frank "Spatial Form in Modern Literature: An Essay in Three Parts" in *The Sewanee Review*, Part I: Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring: 1945), pp. 421-440; Part II: Vol.53, No. 3 (Summer: 1945), pp. 433-456; Part III: Vol.53, No.4 (Autumn: 1945), pp. 643-653.

preoccupation of modernist literature, it is mostly to be explored and studied as personal time, or as abstracted history, or fragmented interaction between the chronological time and interior duration. Place is supposed to be a uniting factor in such organisation of chronotope, but the fragmentation of time affects the representation of space, and, its specific figuration as a place. This novel interaction of time and space seems to have found a particularly good expression in the fragmented and short narratives of the short story cycle/collection.

For a long time short story criticism was dominated by certain definitions of the genre. An example of this is Edgar Allan Poe's "single effect" doctrine which informed short story interpretations well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Poe's ideas concerning the short story invite a reading of the short story genre that seeks unifying aspects or elements of the stories. As we will see later in this introduction early readings of Joyce's *Dubliners* and Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* looked for themes and motifs that unified these short story cycles. Such readings tended to ignore some aspects of the short story such as their deliberate use of ellipsis and ambiguity embodied in the narrative modes and interrelationship between various stories of the same cycle/collection. In this thesis I shed more light on these other potentials of the short story as practised by these three writers, for example, their deliberate use of the disunifying effects such as ellipsis and ambiguity. Such narrative strategies of disruption create a special connection between text and context, between genre and place, that is elaborated in the following chapters.

While studying place in the short stories of Joyce, Anderson and Faulkner this thesis takes into consideration the already existing criticism on these writers in general and their short stories and the topic of place in particular. Joyce's fiction in general has attracted an immense amount of scholarship that, in turn, provided a wide range of perspectives on his fiction spanning religious, feminist, historical, sexual and socio-political aspects of his writing. *Dubliners* is Joyce's first major literary work. Some of the early approaches were built on Joyce's comments on *Dubliners* in his letters to his publishers during a span of ten years when publishers rejected to publish

*Dubliners*. Some of Joyce's own comments include his emphasis on the theme of paralysis, the image of the collection as a unified work, his description of the style as "scrupulous meanness" and assertion that the book belongs to the tradition of realism.<sup>42</sup> Criticism of *Dubliners* passed through different periods in which the emphasis was, in its early stages, on naturalism and symbolism<sup>43</sup> and the interrelationship between style and theme<sup>44</sup>, through Hugh Kenner's famous assertion that Joyce's real subject in *Dubliners* was "language, the protean empty language of the dead city".<sup>45</sup> It is in line with the Formalist approach that early studies of *Dubliners* focused not only on the language but also on the form of the collection and tried to read this collection as a unified sequence of stories informed by a consistent and recurrent series of symbols or themes. This is also true in early approaches to Joyce's stories in terms of short story cycle.<sup>46</sup> After the 1970s and 1980s, however, Joyce scholarship became informed by feminist, postcolonial and poststructuralist theories which noticeably focused on style and the relationship between language and reality and the focus on issues of gender, narration and subjectivity.<sup>47</sup>

There has been an interest in the topic of place in Joyce's fiction in general since its beginning, however, this interest was limited to one aspect of place or another. It was only in the last decade or two that some book-length studies or collections of articles were published, dedicated to examining space and place in Joyce's fiction. *Joyce and the City: The Significance of Place* (2002)

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<sup>42</sup> See for example, Hugh Kenner, *Dublin's Joyce* [1955] (Gloucester, Mass: P. Smith, 1969). pp. 48-68.

<sup>43</sup> See Richard Levin and Charles Shattuck, "First Flight to Ithaca", in *Accent*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Winter, 1944), pp. 75-99. See also William York Tindall, *The Literary Symbol* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955) and Brewster Ghiselin, "The Unity of James Joyce's *Dubliners*", in *Accent* (Spring, 1956), pp. 75-88 and (Summer, 1956), pp. 196-213.

<sup>44</sup> Harry Levin, *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* [1941] (London: Faber and Faber, 1960). He focuses on epiphany in Joyce's stories.

<sup>45</sup> Hugh Kenner, *Dublin's Joyce* [1955] (Gloucester, Mass: P. Smith, 1969), p. 17.

<sup>46</sup> See Forrest L. Ingram, *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century* ((The Hague: Mouton, 1971).

<sup>47</sup> For a feminist approach, see Florence Walzl, "Dubliners: Women in Irish Society", in *Women in Joyce*, ed., Suzette Henke and Elaine Unkeless (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982). For a poststructuralist approach, and the combination of the approaches, see Zack Bowen, "Joyce and the Epiphany Concept: A New Approach", *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 9 (1981-82), pp. 103-14; and, influentially, Helen Cixou, "Joyce: The (r)use of Writing", in *Post-Structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French*, ed., Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For, a postcolonial approach see, as a recent example, Allan H. Simmons, "Topography and Transformation: A Postcolonial Reading of *Dubliners*", ed. Leonard Orr (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), pp. 12-40.

is an edited collection of essays that explores urban space in Joyce's works, including the chapters on the city in *Dubliners* and some feminist readings that concentrate on Joyce's use of interior spaces (as female) and exterior spaces (as male).<sup>48</sup> Desmond Harding's *Writing the City: Urban Visions and Literary Modernism* (2003) compares the treatment of the modernist city in Joyce and John Dos Passos.<sup>49</sup> Another collection of essays written by different authors, entitled *Making Space in the Works of James Joyce* (2011) focuses on urban space as an alienating place.<sup>50</sup> It also explores spatiality and urban politics as well as the relationship between language and space and investigates spatiality in relation to language. While my approach to examining place in Joyce is inspired by some insights and views expressed in these scholarly contributions, it also moves beyond them, specifically informed by theories of place and paying particular attention to the importance of the short story form for the creation of Joyce's fictional place in *Dubliners*.

Unlike both Joyce and Faulkner, who are mainly known as novelists, Anderson is chiefly known as a short story writer. Anderson's criticism started and was later shaped by major contribution from critics like Walter B. Rideout,<sup>51</sup> Charles E. Modlin,<sup>52</sup> John Crowley<sup>53</sup> and Robert Allan Papinchak.<sup>54</sup> Similar to Joyce's case, Anderson's scholarship witnessed different phases that coincided with general currents in literary scholarship. Anderson's fiction is mostly centred on the Midwest and its rural and small town parts. Earlier critics of Anderson focus on his treatment of

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<sup>48</sup> See part two entitled "Dear Dirty Dublin", pp. 85-140 and Catherine Whitley, "Gender and Interiority", pp. 35-50 in *Joyce and the City: The Significance of Place*, Michael Begnal, ed., (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002).

<sup>49</sup> Desmond Harding, *Writing the City: Urban Visions and Literary Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>50</sup> Valérie Bénéjam and John Bishop, ed., *Making space in the works of James Joyce* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> Walter B. Rideout, *Sherwood Anderson: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs: NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974). As well as his recent two-volume biography of Anderson: *Sherwood Anderson: A Writer in America*, Vol.1 (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006) and Vol.2 (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).

<sup>52</sup> Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism*, ed., Charles E. Modlin and Ray Lewis White (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996). There are also some other earlier contributions by Modlin to Anderson's scholarship.

<sup>53</sup> John W. Crowley, ed., *New Essays on Winesburg, Ohio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>54</sup> Robert Allan Papinchak: *Sherwood Anderson: A Study of the Short Fiction* (New York: Twayne, 1992).

the Midwest small towns and on themes of industrialisation and isolation.<sup>55</sup> Later critics, drawing from poststructuralist theories, explored the relationship between form and content, between Anderson's use of the short story cycle and issues of race, male gender identity and American identity in general.<sup>56</sup> The shifts of literary criticism vogues are also noticeable in the treatment of short fiction as the genre in Anderson scholarship. Early Formalist/New Criticism approaches to Anderson's short stories, especially to *Winesburg, Ohio*, focuses on issues of the unity of form through common setting, mood, feeling, or the motivic occurrence of irony.<sup>57</sup> Later studies of *Winesburg, Ohio*, like Ingram Forrest's discussion, present insightful views on *Winesburg* especially in regard to the interconnectedness and interrelations between the stories within the collection; yet they also continue the earlier Formalist preoccupation with unity.<sup>58</sup> Forrest in particular seems preoccupied more with what united this book into a short story cycle than with Anderson's strategic positioning of stories as contrastive or mutually commenting. Recent Anderson criticism, however, focuses rather on some other aspects of his short story cycle such as its forceful move towards disruption and critique. Thus Gerald Kennedy explores the resemblance between the fragmentary form of *Winesburg, Ohio* and the disappearance and disintegration of tradition and of community in Anderson's town of Winesburg.<sup>59</sup> Rolf Lundén, focusing on the centrifugal and centripetal forces within the fragmentary narrative of the short story cycle, offers

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<sup>55</sup> Early research of Sherwood Anderson placed him within the tradition of "revolt from village" or small town. See in Carl Van Doren, "The Revolt from the Village", in *Contemporary American Novelists 1900-1920* (New York: J. J. Little and Ives Company, 1922), pp. 146-76.

<sup>56</sup> Mark Whalan, *Race, Manhood and Modernism in America: Short Story Cycles of Sherwood Anderson and Jean Toomer* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2007). See also Duane Simolke, *Stein, Gender, Isolation and Industrialisation: New Readings of Winesburg, Ohio* (New York: To Excel, 1999). Simolke discusses the influence of Gertrude Stein and issues of gender in *Winesburg*. Clarence Lindsay presents another post-structuralist approach to Anderson's work. In his book, he argues that Anderson's "novel" focuses on the form of the collection and addresses Anderson's engagement with American identity as fictive. Clarence Lindsay, *Such a Rare Thing: The Art of Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio* (Ohio: Kent University Press, 2009).

<sup>57</sup> See Waldo Frank, "Winesburg, Ohio After Twenty Years", in *Story*, Vol. xix, No. 91 (Sept.- Oct., 1941), pp. 29-33; Irving Howe, "The Book of the Grotesque", in *Partisan Review*, Vol. xviii (Jan.- Feb., 1951), pp. 32-40 and Epifano San Juan, "Vision and Reality: A Reconsideration of Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*", in *American Literature*, Vol. 35 (May, 1963), pp. 137-55.

<sup>58</sup> See Forrest L. Ingram's study of the short story cycle: *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century* (1971). See also similar but earlier approaches: Waldo Frank, "Winesburg, Ohio After Twenty Years", *Story*, Vol. xix, No. 91 (Sept.- Oct., 1941), pp. 29-33.

<sup>59</sup> Gerald Kennedy, "From Anderson's Winesburg to Carver's Cathedral: The Short Story Sequence and the Semblance of Community", in *Modern American Short Story Sequences: Composite Fictions and Fictive Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

yet new insights into *Winesburg, Ohio*.<sup>60</sup> It is in line with this more recent approach that I examine Anderson's short story cycle in relation to place.

Like Joyce, Faulkner's scholarship is vast and it has passed through a variety of stages from the New Criticism approach<sup>61</sup> in its early stages to the post-structuralist and later post-structuralist historicist approaches in which particular issues such as gender and race are explored.<sup>62</sup> Some of recent Faulkner's criticism concentrates on the relationship between language/discourse and, history/region. In particular Richard Gray's investigation of the relationship between language and history in Faulkner has inspired my approach to this aspect of Faulkner's fiction.<sup>63</sup> In fact, much of Faulkner scholarship that focused on place did that by way of comparison/contrast between the real South (Lafayette County, Mississippi or the South) with the fictional Yoknapatawpha County.<sup>64</sup> In a conference held in 1976, whose proceedings were published in a book, participants sought to study the writer in relation with his native place and context, and the ways in which he incorporated the available historical material into his fiction.<sup>65</sup> In a similar vein, Don Doyle chronicles around four centuries of local Southern history which comprise the material from which Faulkner creates Yoknapatawpha.<sup>66</sup> Charles Shelton Aiken,

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<sup>60</sup> Rolf Lundén, *The United Stories of America: Studies in the Short Story Composite* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999).

<sup>61</sup> See Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* [1963] (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

<sup>62</sup> Philip M. Weinstein, *Faulkner's Subject: A Cosmos No One Owns* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). In this book, using post-structural and critical theory Weinstein explores issues of gender, race and subjectivity. See also Richard Godden on race and economy in the South, *William Faulkner: An Economy of Complex Words* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>63</sup> See Richard Gray, *Writing the South: Ideas of an American Region* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997) and see also by the same author: *The Life of William Faulkner: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

<sup>64</sup> See G. T. Buckley, "Is Oxford the Original of Jefferson in William Faulkner's Novels?" in *Modern Language Association*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (Sep., 1961), pp. 447-454; Calvin S. Brown, "Faulkner's Geography and Topography", in *Modern Language Association*, Vol. 77, No. 5 (Dec., 1962), pp. 652-659; Elizabeth M. Kerr, *Yoknapatawpha: Faulkner's "Little Postage Stamp of Land"* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1969).

<sup>65</sup> See Evans Harrington and Ann J. Abadie, *The South and Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha: The Actual and the Apocryphal* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1977).

<sup>66</sup> Don H. Doyle, *Faulkner's County: The Historical Roots of Yoknapatawpha* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

himself a Southerner, makes a comparison between Faulkner's fictional county of Yoknapatawpha and his home county of Lafayette.<sup>67</sup>

Faulkner's short fiction received critical attention much later than his long fiction, and most often alongside, even peripheral to, chapters dedicated to his major novels.<sup>68</sup> The first book length study of Faulkner's short stories appeared in 1981, authored by Hans Skei.<sup>69</sup> Skei, believing that Faulkner is a long fiction writer in the first place, explores the possibilities that the shortness of the short story offers and points out that Faulkner's short fiction is distinctively appropriate for the treatment of some existential issues and a focus on character, especially marginalised figures of young men and women. Hans Skei, and, following him, James Carothers<sup>70</sup> and James Ferguson<sup>71</sup> argue that Faulkner's short stories should be studied on their own as an important part of Faulkner's oeuvre. It is with this argument that my research pursues Faulkner's short stories and the topic of place. While there is much criticism about both the short stories (individual stories) and the topic of place in general, Faulkner's scholarship needs a more studied approach to the conjunction of the two, as well as to the specific merits of the short story collection/s in developing the readerly vision of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha.

This thesis explores Joyce's only short story cycle, *Dubliners*. Both Anderson and Faulkner were prolific short story writers. For reasons pertaining to the lack of space I have chosen one collection from Anderson and one from Faulkner and I make references to other works when relevant. I have selected Anderson's collection of short stories called *Winesburg, Ohio*, which is

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<sup>67</sup> Charles Shelton Aiken, *William Faulkner and the Southern Landscape* (Georgia: the University of Georgia Press, 2009). There has also been some recent ecological criticism that focuses on environment in Faulkner's fiction. See Joseph R. Urgo and Ann J. Abadie, *Faulkner and the Ecology of the South* (Jackson: The University Press of Mississippi, 2005).

<sup>68</sup> Some signature books on Faulkner include individual chapters dedicated to one or two of his short stories. See Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* [1952] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Joseph W. Reed, Jr., *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973) and Michael Millgate, *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (London: Constable, 1966). This last book includes one detailed section on his short fiction.

<sup>69</sup> This was *William Faulkner: The Short Story Career* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1981). Then in 1985 Hans Skei published another book on Faulkner's short stories entitled *William Faulkner: The Novelist as Short Story Writer* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 1985).

<sup>70</sup> James B. Carothers, *William Faulkner's Short Stories* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985).

<sup>71</sup> James Ferguson, *Faulkner's Short Fiction* (Knoxville: the University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

considered to embody Anderson's finest use of the short story genre. It is the engagement of this short story cycle with place (as the title indicates) that makes it most useful for the purpose of my thesis. Faulkner also wrote several collections of stories, some of which were revised for later collections or modified for inclusion in novels.<sup>72</sup> This thesis focuses on the *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*. Diane Brown Jones labels Faulkner's *Collected Stories*, for good reasons, as "the most significant gathering of Faulkner's short pieces."<sup>73</sup> This collection includes the final versions of many stories. More importantly for my present discussion, Faulkner's involvement in the editing of this collection was more direct and stronger than in other cases, and it included his "geographical" division of stories

The first chapter of this thesis examines the politics and poetics of place in James Joyce's *Dubliners*. It focuses on Joyce's perception and depiction of the modernist city, the Irish experience of being caught, or, as Joyce puts it, "paralysed" between past, present and modernity. The chapter starts with exploring interior spaces of houses. These spaces are mainly in a constant process of recreation and reimagining. We enter the consciousness of characters as they recreate interior spaces through their personal narratives and memories. A projected background, Joyce's city also serves as a means to explore the modern urban life and experience through the figure of the flâneur strolling the streets of Dublin. Traditionally, flânerie is seen positively to underscore the momentary, fleeting and polyphonic modern world. However, Joyce's place is one of paralysis and dreams of escape. The modern practice of flânerie, meant to liberate the flâneur from everyday city life, is chastised in Joyce's vision. Likewise, the wanderer's dreams of escape are never realised. This chapter also focuses on the slippage of the notion of home to that of country and nation showing how, in Joyce's texts, the idea of home is measured against other open places.

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<sup>72</sup> For a brief overview of Faulkner's short story collections see the third chapter of this thesis. Some short story studies examine Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* and also *The Unvanquished* as short story cycles. See, for example, *Modern American Short Story Sequences: Composite Fictions and Fictive Communities*, ed., Gerald Kennedy. However, this view is not common in Faulkner's scholarship and most of his critics label these two works as novels.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Hans Skei's *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*, p. 30.

Joyce's place, based on a real city and a real country with its physical geography portrayed through realistic details, is represented as a projection of desires and imagination and, therefore, as the stories proceed, this world is increasingly perceived as vague, unreal picture. What at first gives a sense of a complete and whole place (such as, deceptively, the title of the collection *Dubliners*) is gradually eroded and undermined through the fragmentary form of the short story cycle that unveils the city from diverse perspectives.

The second chapter centres on place in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. Anderson's fictional place is a small Midwestern town in the United States. Anderson's portrayal of his small town is characterised by contradiction: he establishes a contrast between the mythical nature of the narratives of place such as the (unified and homogenous) image of the pastoral America, on the one hand, and the fragmentary form of the short story cycle, on the other. This aspect of Anderson's text is explored in terms of Lefebvre's conceived and lived space as well as Foucault's concept of heterotopias. Like in Joyce's case, what starts as a seemingly realistic depiction of a place, here a small Midwestern town of Winesburg, is gradually revealed as a clash-point of desires and unstable discourses. Anderson's use of the short story cycle, as that form which contains narratives that are independent from each other but also interrelated in a way that draws attention to their interaction, serves as a disruptive means of the possibility of a stable and fixed place.

The third chapter studies place in the short stories of William Faulkner. This chapter studies Faulkner's exploration of place through his creation of the fictional County of Yoknapatawpha, deceptively directly based on his region of the South. This chapter further explores place-as-history and the characters' engagement with the recreation of an image of the past. It moves to argue for the treatment of Faulkner's place as an imagined community and details the strategies for the construction of place through language. There is another kind of community (one that is directly connected to the meaning of place) in Faulkner's world, though: the readers. In closure,

the third chapter highlights that Faulkner's heteroglossic text, through the interaction between the reader and the text, becomes a dialogised heteroglossia in which place is constantly created. As such, Faulkner's place, less real than the places of both Anderson and Joyce, is at the utmost end of abstractions of spatio-temporal planes, and yet it most compellingly invites its own dialogic completion in readerly experience.

The conclusion brings the three writers together and looks at their notions and treatments of place in their short fiction in a comparative way, in turn opening up some points for future inquiries.

## Chapter One

### Dublin: A City of Dreams and Paralysis

#### I

When in 1902 Joyce met George Russel, a leading figure in the Irish Cultural Revival, he was asked “if he could write short stories for the *Irish Homestead*, something ‘simple, rural?, livemaking?, pathos? [pathetic] which would not shock his readers... it is easily earned money if you can write fluently and don’t mind playing to the common understanding and liking for once in a way”<sup>1</sup>. What Russel was asking Joyce was to write in the tradition of the Irish Revival. This group of Irish writers was preoccupied with foregrounding an idea of Ireland as a country/nation with its own heritage and traditions. They found in rural Ireland an aesthetics through which they could express what they believed was a unique national and ethnic nature of Ireland. That they turned their thoughts to rural Ireland is not surprising; for one, Malcolm Bradbury has highlighted that “the forms and stabilities of culture itself have often seemed to belong, finally, outside the urban order”<sup>2</sup>. Raymond Williams in his book *The Country and the City* writes that, in English literature, there is a conspicuous notion of rural life as natural, simple and untainted by the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Bradbury and McFarlane, ed., *Modernism 1890-1930* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p.97.

sophistication and complexities of modern life. In other words, rural life represents a Golden age. This way, the rural life, according to Raymond Williams, is a “myth functioning as a memory”<sup>3</sup> that disguises and veils the diversity and tensions of real life and offers instead a romanticised and sentimentalised image of reality. Although Joyce took the opportunity to publish three of his stories in the *Irish Homestead* under the pseudonym of Stephen Dædalous, the decision was purely pragmatic and, from the very start, had a shadow of doubt about it: for Joyce’s approach to representing Ireland was different from that propounded by the *Irish Homestead*. When his fourth story was rejected, he decided to stay away from the *Irish Homestead*, which he later referred in *Ulysses* as “the pig’s paper”.<sup>4</sup> In a letter to his brother Stanislaus, James Joyce expresses the reasons for his refusal to write in the Irish Revival mode in ethical terms: “I am nauseated by their lying drivel about pure men and pure women and spiritual love and love for ever; blatant lying in the face of truth”.<sup>5</sup> Joyce also questions the simplistic view of home conceived by the Revivalists. In “Eveline”, one of the passages goes as follows:

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from...And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall...<sup>6</sup>

This passage portrays a troubled relationship to place. It conveys a sense of place that is far from the easy and simple notions promoted by the Revivalists. It shows that Eveline is surrounded by objects that are “familiar” (she sees them and cleans everyday) yet they are also unfathomable to her. The use of words such as “wondering”, “perhaps”, “never” and “yet” to describe her

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (St. Albans: Paladin, 1975), p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> See Allan Simmon’s “Topography and Transformation: A Postcolonial Reading of *Dubliners*”, in *Joyce, Imperialism and Postcolonialism*, ed. Leonard Orr (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008), p. 12. The published stories are “the Sisters”, “Eveline” and “After the Race”. The fourth story, rejected by the journal, is “Clay”.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Elleman, ed., *Letters of James Joyce*, Vol. 2 (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 191-2. This letter was written to his brother on 13 November 1906.

<sup>6</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners* [1914] (London: Everyman’s Library, 1991), p. 38. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

relationship to home and the homely possessions that purportedly encapsulate it only further intensifies the sense of unhomeliness. Eveline, like many other Dubliners, feels as if she is a stranger in the house in which she has lived all her life. Joyce questions any fixed and final idea of the relationship to home—the precise notion which has served as a rallying cry for the Revivalists. The present chapter concerns itself with the place and mode of imagining space that Joyce chose to employ instead of the “simple” and the “rural”—namely, contemporary Dublin—, and the reasons, artistic and ideological, for this choice. It focuses on the collection of stories that Joyce would begin to write a mere two years after Russel’s proposition, *The Dubliners* (written from August 1904-1907, published in 1914).

*Dubliners* was published (though written earlier) two years before the Easter Rising in 1916 against the English rule in Ireland. This uprising, which had been brewing in the years of the gestation and production of Joyce’s collection of stories, aimed to end the English rule in Ireland and to secede from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in order to establish an independent Irish republic. But this turbulent situation was not new to Ireland.<sup>7</sup> In 1801, the Act of Union annexed Ireland into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, a situation which would last until 1921. During this time Ireland experienced an economic, cultural and political stasis that was seen by the Irish as a direct result of the English rule. The deteriorating economic state of early twentieth century Ireland that Joyce subtly captures in his stories was not unlike, and may have been caused by, the economic hardships that had hit Ireland earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For that reason, the events like the 1845-51 Great Famine, when an estimated one million people died of causes related to the famine and a substantial portion of the Irish population emigrated, was

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<sup>7</sup> The antagonism between the Irish and the English is an old one and dates back to the Norman Conquest of Ireland. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Ireland was divided between two competing Irish forces: When Diarmait Mac Murchadha, king of Leinster, was overcome by Tigernan ua Ruairc, king of Breifne, for control of Dublin, he asked help from Henry II, king of England, to regain Ireland with help of Normans. The English first set foot in Ireland in 1169. This date marks the English involvement in Ireland for centuries to come. For more on this see Thomas Bartlett, *Ireland: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 34-8.

thus still strongly present in the memory of the Irish people in the 1900s.<sup>8</sup> The political situation was no more stable than the economic one. In face of the English rule various Irish nationalist movements arose throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of the famous and influential figures of this movement include Robert Emmet, who was executed in 1803; Daniel O'Connell, the parliamentary nationalist; the Fenian Leader Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell of the Irish Home Rule movement in 1880s—all of whom would feature prominently, if deceptively peripherally, in Joyce's fiction. Of these, Parnell exerted special influence on young Joyce. Parnell's rise and fall in Irish politics, the topic of the third section of this chapter, influenced Joyce's view of Irish politics and history at multiple levels, from that of emotional response to that of fictional reflection. Finally, to this cauldron, one must add the continued strong presence and marked impact on Irish sense of identity of the Catholic Church. The church had a powerful influence on Irish life in general and Irish politics in particular. The Church's role, especially its role in the downfall of Parnell, is often viewed in negative terms in Joyce's works and letters, as we will see in the third section of this chapter.

In *Dubliners*, Joyce wanted to offer a mirror for his people to have a look at themselves in all this complexity of their relationship to their home-place and it is for this reason that he chose to situate his narratives in a city. He believed that Dublin as a city represents the situation of Ireland, including its national awakening, better than the idealised countryside with which contemporary Irish writers were concerned. The city as a way of life had also appealed to Joyce for other reasons relating to his artistic project. For modernists, the importance of the city lies in its nature as an expression of plurality. Charles Baudelaire, for example, in "The Painter of Modern Life", writes about this diversity of city experience by exposing the consciousness of the figure of a man meandering the streets of Paris and observing and reflecting on the world around him:

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<sup>8</sup> See Bartlett, *Ireland: A History*, p. 281-2.

So out he goes and watches the river of life flow past him in all its splendour and majesty. He marvels at the eternal beauty and the amazing harmony of life in the capital cities... he gazes upon the landscapes of the great city—landscapes of stone, caressed by the mist or buffeted by the sun. He delights in fine carriages and proud horses, the dazzling smartness of the grooms the expertness of the footmen, the sinuous gait of the women, the beauty of the children... in a word, he delights in universal life.<sup>9</sup>

In this passage, “landscapes of the great city” refers to the city as that place which harbours diverse and multiple events and discourses. Baudelaire’s flâneur is “the painter” of the “present moment”: he exposes the city synchronically. As such, the city, both as a setting and as a subject-matter, generates artistic expression that, because of the various kinds of experience it provides, conveys an idea of place that is not static but rather dynamic, multi-layered and pluralistic.

Thus set, *Dubliners* is composed of fifteen stories. One of the more significant facts about the publication history of *Dubliners* is the difficulty Joyce faced publishing this collection. Joyce started writing these stories in 1904 but the volume was published as a collection only in 1914 after many rejections on the part of publishers, both in Ireland and England. Most of the publishers’ complaints concerned the book’s “obscene” content, but some of them curiously highlighted the setting and the genre: the volume had an apparent “disadvantage” because it “[was] about Ireland... and it [was] a collection of short stories”.<sup>10</sup> These objections were met by Joyce’s refusal to change anything. The latter circumstance shows Joyce’s clear sense of purpose with regard to these stories, one that relates to the political history of his country. From the beginning, Joyce planned the stories to be part of a thematically unified and chronologically arranged collection with Dublin as its setting. In his letters to his publishers Joyce states:

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1964), p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> John S. Kelly, “Introduction”, Joyce, *Dubliners* (London: Everyman’s Library, 1991), p. x.

My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because the city seemed to me the centre of paralysis. I have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories are arranged in this order.<sup>11</sup>

Joyce would write that “moral history of [his] country” in his own way and with his own style, a style of “scrupulous meanness” as he called it. Through this style Joyce has explored the role of language in our understanding and conception of place.

## II

In the final story of *Dubliners*, entitled “The Dead” (composed in 1907), the main character called Gabriel Conroy, in a speech delivered to the attendants of “Misses Morkan’s annual dance”, proclaims:

Listening to-night to the names of all those great singers of the past it seemed to me, I must confess, that we were living in a *less spacious* age. Those days might, without exaggeration, be called *spacious* days... (Emphasis added).<sup>12</sup>

This passage provides two related points about place in this story and throughout *Dubliners*. On the one hand, it offers a vision, or sense, of a relative, localised place as representative of an age/time-period as a whole. On the other hand, it juxtaposes two chronotopic configurations: the place of the present age, claustrophobic and deadening (“we [are] living in a less spacious age”), and the place of the past which Gabriel, in a nostalgic tone, labels as “spacious”. Whereas the first

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<sup>11</sup> Ellmann, ed., *Letters of James Joyce*, vol. 2, p. 134.

<sup>12</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 232.

one is the place-time as configured by the writer (that is, the setting of the story), the second one could be called the space as re-imagined by characters. Here I would like to argue that many characters in Joyce's collection of stories, in response to their suffocating environment, show a tendency to recreate and reimagine the relative, claustrophobic place of their present moment as a past, more "spacious" place-time.

"The Dead" takes account of a few hours of an evening at the house of Gabriel's aunts. As the setting of the story shows, Joyce explores another kind of place in this story: this is the interior space of a Dublin house. Gaston Bachelard, in his book *The Poetics of Space* (1958), explores the interior space of home and views it as an intimate and felicitous place. Home is the place that provides security and comfort. "[T]he house", writes Bachelard "shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace".<sup>13</sup> However, home can also be alienating and a place that lacks a sense of comfort. Gabriel's remarks about a "less spacious age" are exemplified early in the story when we are first introduced to the setting of the story, the lines which inform us that "Kate and Julia, after the death of their brother Pat, had left the house in Stoney Batter and taken Mary Jane, their only niece, to live with them in the dark, gaunt house on the Usher's Island".<sup>14</sup> Although the story concentrates on the milieu of the educated and sophisticated middle class Dublin society, this preliminary introduction of the setting conveys a place that is "dark" and "gaunt". Images of darkness and gauntness pervade this evening and establish a feeling of being trapped in a claustrophobic place. This sense of entrapment is further asserted through Joyce's language. The following description of Misses Morkan's annual dance aptly conveys this affect in language:

It was always a great affair, the misses Morkan's annual dance. Everybody who knew them came to it, members of the family, old friends of the family, the members of Julia's choir, any of Kate's

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<sup>13</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas [1958] (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 199.

pupils that were grown up enough and even some of Mary Jane's pupils too. Never once had it fallen flat. For years and years it had gone off in splendid style as long as anyone could remember....<sup>15</sup>

This passage imparts contradictory impressions about the party. At the surface level, it gives a positive view of the annual happening. For example, adjectives used to describe the party such as “great” and “splendid” convey the bright side of the event. However, these impressions do not last long and turn out to be only appearances, like many others that are immediately questioned and refuted by the very language that describes them. This effect is achieved through the strategic convolution of sentences and the repetition of words and phrases. For example we read that “[e]verybody who knew them came to it, *members of the family*, old friends of the *family*, the *members of Julia's choir*” (emphasis added). This repetition undermines the initial impressions of greatness and splendidness of the event and establishes a lethargic tone in regard to the whole event: it is, after all, an “internal” matter of family and family friends. The repetition, with its effects of languidness in this passage, is also affirmed if one reads this passage in relation to the rest of the story. For repetition, as in the above-mentioned passage, becomes a pattern that dominates in the story: every year the attendants have to dance in the same way; every year Gabriel has to do the same thing such as delivering a speech and carving the goose while Miss Daly carves the ham; and every year Gretta serves the pudding. The repetition and habituation of these rituals asserts the routine and ultimately suffocating nature of this event. These characters are engulfed in and gripped by these events: “[f]or years and years” and also “as long as anyone could remember” this party has taken place. It goes on without the memory of a beginning and without any sense of finality. It is a perennial “present”, a continuum of this “*less spacious age*”.<sup>16</sup>

Closely connected to this sense of entrapment and claustrophobia created through the effect of the language is the space created as a result of these characters' longing for a more “spacious”

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<sup>15</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 199.

<sup>16</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 232.

place. Almost all the characters in *Dubliners* try to escape their present situation, embodied in a more or less stifling, or stilted, place, and are therefore repeatedly engaged with a certain practice of spatial or temporal meandering throughout the story. This tendency is implicit in Gabriel's nostalgic tone in regard to the past which, he thinks, "might, without exaggeration, be called spacious".<sup>17</sup> What is remarkable about Gabriel's description of the past or past time is that it is expressed in place vocabulary; the past is "spacious". "Spacious" implies physicality, movement and motion which are comfortable and/or uninhibited by (spatial) constraints. Such a sense of freedom is, from the protagonist's point of view, what Dubliners lack in the present. The past had more potential for movement and subsequently for change. This impression is possible, of course, only because the past is not material. Gabriel forms his idea of the past through "listening to the names of those great singers of the past". Listening is not spatial/tangible and it transports the character easily into the recreation and manipulation of the past as it suits his personal needs. Vincent Pecora writes that "...nearly all the main characters in *Dubliners*, create texts within which they play out particular roles".<sup>18</sup> It could be added that these "texts" created by the characters invariably include the imagining of a spatialized present and past. Notably, Joyce's characters tend to create their own texts out of past events as a kind of refuge where these characters resort to from the suffocating and claustrophobic conditions of their "present" place.

Creating past-oriented texts is a characteristic of both Gabriel's and Gretta's characters. Both are constantly engaged with reimagining the claustrophobic and restrictive realities of their place as something less constrictive. Gretta achieves spatial reimagining by resorting to her memories of bygone days. Hearing a song called *The Lass of Aughrim* reminds Gretta of a particular time in her past when she was loved by a young man called Micheal Furey who used to sing the same song:

The song seemed to be in the old Irish tonality and the singer seemed uncertain both of his words and

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<sup>17</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 232.

<sup>18</sup> Vincent P. Pecora, "'The Dead' and the Generosity of the Word", *Modern Language Association*, Vol. 101, No. 2 (March 1986), p. 240.

of his voice. The voice, made plaintive by distance and by the singer's hoarseness, faintly illuminated the cadence of the air with words expressing grief:

O, the rain falls on my heavy locks

And the dew wets my skin,

My babe lies cold...<sup>19</sup>

As this passage shows, the earlier language of the story depicting the material details of place is transformed into another one that is more personal and emotionally charged through an intertextual insertion. The present glides into the past with its strong tone of nostalgia and longing. The present is almost invisible: "the song *seemed* to be in the Irish tonality" and "the singer *seemed* uncertain". The voice dominates the scene and marks the beginning of the process of recreating the present through memories. For Gretta the past is livelier than the present. The past suddenly materialises to the extent that she re-inhabits the past: "I can see him plainly, she said after a moment. Such eyes as he had: big dark eyes! And such an expression in them—an expression!"<sup>20</sup> The past is actually stronger than present events because it is strongly felt by Gretta. But the intertextual nature of the inserted affect also subtly ironizes the described emotional engagement. Joyce incorporates songs in his stories to reveal characters, enhance certain themes and motifs or comment on certain acts. The introduction of this song brings Gretta to the light and she becomes a central figure whose character is revealed. While the reader sympathises with her sense of loss, where Michael Furey is concerned, her obsession also highlights her passivity. Gretta's perspective on the past is not objective. For example, when asked by Gabriel as to the reason of Michael Furey's death she says that he died for her turning him into a mythical figure and, by implication, her story into a myth.

Gabriel is engaged more than any other character with spatial reimagining. We know about this because "The Dead" is a story written in third person that is focalised from Gabriel's

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<sup>19</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 240.

<sup>20</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 254.

perspective. Throughout the story Gabriel repeatedly attempts to reimagine place and creates his own texts in lieu of the humiliating atmosphere of his place.<sup>21</sup> Towards the end of the party Gabriel thinks of Gretta and remembers their happy time together. He looks forward to being alone with her in the hotel. However, a conversation between the two about Michael Furey leads Gretta to tell him the story of Michael Furey and his love for her. Having heard about Furey's love and subsequent death Gabriel feels more humiliated than before. Gabriel's attempt at reimagining place culminates in an imagined journey to the West, an imagined place:

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.<sup>22</sup>

The window through which Gabriel sees snow and hears rain is that which shows the contrast between the experience of the claustrophobic interior place and the exterior space of the outside world. Gabriel's mental escape is dramatised through the use of language in this passage. The snow in this story is a stylistic device through which Joyce shows the transformation from a material and local place to a re-imagined and immaterial space. Commenting on Joyce's style Allen Tate says that Joyce's naturalism "consists in manipulating what at first sight seems to be

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<sup>21</sup> Pecora, "'The Dead' and the Generosity of the Word", pp. 233-255.

<sup>22</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 255-6.

mere physical detail into dramatic symbolism”.<sup>23</sup> Such an example is found in Joyce’s use of snow in this story. Snow first appears at the beginning of the story when Gabriel enters the house of his aunts and brushes snow from his galoshes. At this stage snow is treated just as a mundane and material detail. Later on snow takes on additional connotations, to the extent that, by the end of the story it becomes a symbol of “other space”.<sup>24</sup> It is released from its ordinary meaning: snow is universal. This symbol shows a general pattern in this story: the story moves from external details to reveal the interiority of Gabriel’s character.

The open-ended conclusion of “The Dead” is also evocative of a more general assessment of the relationship between humans and places in Joyce’s fiction. It is the dwelling site, such as the one described in this story, that necessitates regular negotiations of our relationship to place. Gabriel’s idea of the West is mostly based on the story of Michael Furey and his pure love and sacrifice for Gretta, as told from her perspective in that stifling room. Gabriel’s epiphany comes after he realises the emptiness and meaninglessness of his own life in comparison with that of Michael Furey who could offer love for Gretta. Could not this image of Michael Furey be a creation of Gretta’s imagination? If this is the case then Michael Furey “functions as a myth”<sup>25</sup> upon which Gabriel builds his own imagined space, much like Gretta in her endless rewriting and reimagining of place. This mythic reimagining of place is replicated outside the text, too, and it informs the very relationship between the reader and the text: the act of reading implies spatial/locational imagining. This imagining, in turn, shows that the scholarly reader, too, is engaged in a constant process of re-imagining the space of the story in an inconclusive manner.

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<sup>23</sup> Allen Tate’s article entitled “The Dead”, in the Penguin edition of *Dubliners* (London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 389-390.

<sup>24</sup> The conclusion of “The Dead” has been the topic of extensive and often contradictory interpretations. For more on this subject see John Humma, “Gabriel and the Bedsheets: Still Another Reading of the Ending of ‘The Dead’”, *Studies in Short Fiction*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Spring 1973), pp. 207-9; Vincent P. Pecora, “‘The Dead’ and the Generosity of the Word;” Melissa Free, “‘Who is G. C.?’: Misprizing Gabriel Conroy in Joyce’s ‘The Dead’” in *Joyce Studies Annual*, 2009, pp. 277-303. And also for a study of epiphany in Joyce as a disruptive element or as “non-epiphany” see Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* [1992] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

<sup>25</sup> Melissa Free, “‘Who is G.C.?’: Misprizing Gabriel Conroy in Joyce’s ‘The Dead’”, p. 296.

### III

While in “The Dead” Joyce explores the claustrophobic interior sense of place of Dublin and shows the constant re-imagining of the “spaceless” present into a “spacious” past through the consciousness of characters, language effects and the interpretative challenge to the reader, in “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” Joyce explores Irish nationalism and nationhood. “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” (written in 1905), takes the reader from the private room of “The Dead” to a public room with historical connotations. At the end of the story the narrative perspective shifts to focus on a group of Irish political canvassers after listening to an emotional poem that celebrates Charles Stewart Parnell.<sup>26</sup>

Mr Hynes sat down again on the table. When he had finished his recitation there was silence and then a burst of clapping: even Mr Lyons clapped. The applause continued for a little time. When it had ceased all the auditors drank from their bottles in silence. *Pok!* The cork flew out of Mr Hynes’ bottle, but Mr Hynes remained sitting, flushed and breathed on the table...<sup>27</sup>

That a group of present Irish politicians and canvassers are listening to a poem about a dead Irish

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<sup>26</sup> For more on this poem in “Ivy Day” see C. F. Burgess, “A Note on ‘The Death of Parnell’ in Joyce’s ‘Ivy Day in the Committee Room’,” *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Fall 1971), pp. 123-125. Charles Stewart Parnell (1848-1891) was the founder of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the leader of the Irish Home Rule. After an affair with a married woman (Katherine O’Shea) whom he would later marry, Parnell was abandoned by the Catholic Church and Irish politicians. When Parnell died Joyce was nine years old. Joyce was an admirer of Parnell. In an early poem entitled “Et Tu, Healy”, written when he was nine years old, Joyce voiced his admiration for Parnell by making a contrast between Parnell and the Irish who betrayed him. See *James Joyce: Poems and Short Writings*, ed. Richard Ellman, A. Walton Litz and John Whittier-Ferguson (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), p. 71.

<sup>27</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 152.

politician in a room called “Committee Room”<sup>28</sup> is revealing. Here Joyce explores the current Irish nationalism and politics. What is notable about this passage is the pervading “silence” that characterises the reaction of these canvassers. This silence has a double-meaning. It highlights two sides of this group of people: being silent after listening to a poem about Parnell and the past silence is an indicator of the nationalist emotions and feelings of these characters, on the one hand. Joyce shows that these characters are engaged with cultural memory and national symbols. But this reaction is not that simple for Joyce. This is implicit in the second meaning of silence in this passage as it also indicates a lack of activity, that is, the effective passivity of these canvassers and politicians. These characters are not only engaged with a national past but are also engulfed by it. They do not act but only react. They are passive: they sit, drink and clap. Silence, in this sense, signifies the emptiness and the paralysis of the political life of the Irish in the present time.

“Ivy Day” is a story about a group of political canvassers working for candidates for the municipal elections. Gathering in the National Party’s Committee Room they drink and talk about politics. The events unfold on 6 October (1902)<sup>29</sup>, as these politicians are preparing for municipal elections, and the place to which the entirety of the physical action is confined is the Committee Room in Wicklow Street, Dublin. One aspect of the chronotope, according to Bakhtin, is that it incorporates real historical time and space into fiction. One of these historical facts is the present time of the story. That the story is set on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October is significant not only because municipal elections are about to take place but also because it is the anniversary of Parnell’s death. This symbolic use of time, referring both to the present and the past of Irish politics, allows the establishment of another fictional chronotope out of the historical time-place, one that exposes the affects and emotions of these characters. The key feature of this chronotope is that it compresses

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<sup>28</sup> Frederick Stern writes that the “Committee Room” recalls for many of “Joyce’s contemporaries, among other things, the Committee Room 15 of Westminster, which Ireland watched with anxiety from December 1 to 5, 1890, as Parnell fought for—and in essence lost—his position of leadership in the Irish Parliamentary Party”. See “‘Parnell is Dead’: ‘Ivy Day in the Committee Room’”, *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Winter 1973), p. 228.

<sup>29</sup> See M. J. C. Hodgart, “‘Ivy Day in the Committee Room’”, in *James Joyce’s Dubliners: Critical Essays*, ed. Clive Hart (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 116.

past and present (of Dublin, of the Committee Room) into one fictional time-space, wherein past invades and reshapes the present: Parnell, though he died long ago, is the dominant figure throughout the story. The conversation between the characters is swept by nostalgia and memories of the past. Time takes shape and is fleshed out through their reconstruction of the past. This aspect of time contraction is metatextually commented upon in the narrative. Commenting on Parnell's days as a politician, a man says: "Musha, God be with them times! ...There was some life in it then".<sup>30</sup> For these Irish politicians, Parnell represents the lost father figure: "[h]e was the only man that could keep that bag of cats in order".<sup>31</sup> For these characters, the past signifies meaning and potential. They feel that the time of Parnell was better and more meaningful than the present.

Benedict Anderson defines a nation as an "imagined political community".<sup>32</sup> The glorified sense of the past that these characters share is what Irish nationalism is based on in this story.<sup>33</sup> The cultural memory is what makes people feel part of a community. The figure of Parnell is an important factor that accommodates and reflects these values. While Joyce's view of the nature of nationalism is on a par with Benedict Anderson's conception of the nation as an "imagined political community", a community that is constructed through language, they diverge when it comes to the potentials of nationalism. For Anderson the idea of a nation is liberating and not necessarily negative. For Joyce nationalism could be confining and restrictive. Elmer Nolan complicates Joyce's attitude towards nationalism by arguing that Joyce's attitude is not a simplistic rejection of Irish nationalism asking us to reconsider the image of Joyce's hostility, constructed by a long-standing critical literature, towards Irish nationalism. However, Nolan focuses more on the later works of Joyce such as *Ulysses*.<sup>34</sup> In *Dubliners* in general and particularly in this story,

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<sup>30</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p.136.

<sup>31</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p.149.

<sup>32</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* [1983] (London: Verso, 1991), p.6

<sup>33</sup> In other stories such as "A Mother" and "Grace" Joyce explores other aspects of Irish nationalism. In the former Joyce examines the Irish language revival and in the latter he explores Catholicism.

<sup>34</sup> It should be noted that Joyce's attitude towards nationalism is not fixed throughout his writings. This change over time is due to both personal and historical changes. The moment that Joyce was writing *Dubliners* is the same moment when he chose self-imposed exile in Europe. The time from his early writing to the publication of later works such as

Joyce's "imagined community" does not function. Joyce's exploration of issues of nation and an imagined national community are connected to the idea of betrayal.<sup>35</sup> This is particularly true when it comes to the story of Parnell. In an early essay Joyce writes in regard to the betrayal of Parnell by his own people that

In his (Parnell's) final desperate appeal to his countrymen, he begged them not to throw him as a sop to the English wolves howling around them. It redounds to their honour that they did not fail this appeal. They did not throw him to the English wolves; they tore him to pieces themselves.<sup>36</sup>

Parnell described here is a victim of the ideology of nationhood and imagined national community.<sup>37</sup> While on the surface this group of men seem to have an idea of themselves as Irishmen, the story shows that they are actually divided and, for that reason, do not function as effective members of nation-community. The idea of aimless and fragmenting nationalism is conveyed in the story through drifting, purposeless, actionless conversations between the characters, their betrayals of each other and their obsession with personal interests.<sup>38</sup> They work for money and vote in return for free drinking rather than for any political devotion. For instance, Henchy, a supporter of the Nationalist Party for the parliamentary elections, says that the candidate he supports "is in favour of whatever will benefit this country", and then he makes his point clear

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*Ulysses* witnessed crucial developments in the history of Ireland such as Easter Rising (1916) and the establishment of Ireland as an independent nation in 1922. These changes are reflected in the stylistic changes in Joyce's writings. For example, James Fairhall argues that Joyce's later works compose a "virtually endless dialogism": "In *Ulysses* the discourses of British colonialism, Irish nationalism, low-brow popular magazines, the Celtic twilight, Catholicism, and other belief systems all have their say, yet all are unmasked and demonstrated to be 'inadequate to reality.'" See *James Joyce and the Question of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 55, 51.

<sup>35</sup> In "Joyce the Irishman" Seamus Deane highlights Joyce's obsession with this theme throughout his writings. Betrayal was connected with the fall of Parnell by his own Irish people. See *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 31-53.

<sup>36</sup> Joyce, "The Shade of Parnell" in *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellman (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 228.

<sup>37</sup> For more on this relationship see Brian G. Caraher, "Irish and European Politics; Nationalism, Socialism, Empire" in *James Joyce in Context*, ed. John McCourt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> See Paul Delany, "Joyce's Political Development and the Aesthetic of Dubliners" in *College English*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Nov 1972), pp. 256-266.

when he goes on to say that “[w]hat we want in this country...is capital. The King’s coming here will mean an influx of money into this country”.<sup>39</sup> Henchy wants money in Ireland even if that means imitating and becoming part of the colonial power. The story’s ironic edge zooms in on the drinking habit of these canvassers and politicians. Alcohol becomes a stand in for hypocrisy: “Is there any chance of a drink itself? asked Mr O’Connor. I’m dry too, said the old man. I asked that little shoeboy three times, said Mr Henchy, would he send up a dozen of stout. I asked him again now...Why didn’t you remind him? said Mr O’Connor”.<sup>40</sup> The Irish politicians’ passivity and lack of goal can also be read as an effect of the status of Ireland as a colonised nation.<sup>41</sup> The English subjugation of Ireland, this story shows, results in Ireland becoming a substantive part of English coloniser’s high capitalist vision, and, thus, also, economically dependent on the union with England. What these Irish politicians are left with, then, are only words and aimless conversation; no actual agency. Even what they say about the English King is rendered meaningless and ineffective.

This passage shows vividly that the canvassers pursue their own interests and not those of the community or the nation. Thus a more profound paradox of nationalist nostalgia is highlighted: while the image of “martyred” Parnell dominates the thoughts and conversations of the characters, their behaviour is precisely what betrays him (Parnell) and his legacy, Joyce suggests. This betrayal finds an emblematic expression in Henchy’s proposition that the King of England visits this very room- the Committee Room- that used to belong to Parnell. In short, this story shows that Irish nationalism is a form of imprisonment. The story shows that these politicians are confined in a state of limbo extending between the dreams of a better past and the terrible conditions of a decadent present. These politicians are unable to maintain consistent beliefs and views and as such they are divided.

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<sup>39</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 147.

<sup>40</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 142.

<sup>41</sup> See Allan Simmon’s “Topography and Transformation: A Postcolonial Reading of *Dubliners*”, in Joyce, *Imperialism and Postcolonialism*, ed., Leonard Orr, p. 13.

## IV

In “Eveline” Joyce explores the oppressive and restrictive place of home, both in terms of a family home and a country, Ireland in this case, through its dynamic relationship to an *other*, a distant place that is constructed through narrative and within which characters accommodate their dreams and desires. “Eveline” is the story of a girl named Eveline who reflects on the possibilities of emigrating to Buenos Ayres<sup>42</sup> by eloping with her lover Frank, a sailor who promises her a better life, on the one hand, and staying at home with her family in a house from which she feels alienated, on the other. The story starts with an image of two contrasting places, that of home and that of Buenos Ayres. Relayed in the third person but consistently focalised through Eveline’s perspective, the story gives the reader access to Eveline’s interiority as she thinks about her choices:

She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question.... in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married--she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they were growing up he had never gone for her, like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl; but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother's sake.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> In “Eveline”, Joyce spells the name of the city of Buenos Aires as “Buenos Ayres”. Buenos Ayres, as spelled in “Eveline”, is a town in Trinidad and Tobago. I shall follow Joycean idiosyncratic spelling in what follows because it usefully captures one of the dynamics of Orientalism itself.

<sup>43</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 38.

Written in a dynamic free indirect discourse<sup>44</sup> that blends the narrator's and the protagonist's perspectives, this passage establishes a contrast between home and another place, here Buenos Ayres. Eveline feels restricted and oppressed at home. That her mother had also suffered in her life emphasises that home is also a gendered place where men have more privileges than women. Then there is this other world of the Argentinean capital in which Eveline sees an opportunity for escape from her bleak situation in Dublin. Buenos Ayres is the place where she will have her house and be a respected woman in the future, she muses.

Katherine Mullin locates the story within the tradition of emigration stories popular in Ireland at the time Joyce was writing *Dubliners*. She argues that “Eveline” addresses the “ideologically irreconcilable fictions of emigration and national identity”<sup>45</sup> that plagued early twentieth century migrants. As the anecdote with which I opened this chapter suggests, when Joyce was writing *Dubliners*, *The Irish Homestead* was the main venue for promotion of national unity and (sometimes exclusionary) identity. In order to discourage Irish people from immigration outside Ireland, *The Irish Homestead* was encouraging writers to write stories that promote an image of Ireland as the only safe and secure place for Irish people. The emigration stories that *The Homestead* regularly published showed that leaving Ireland was perilous and disappointing. In order to create such an image of Ireland these writers needed to create an opposing discourse to which Ireland could be contrasted. The site-embodiment for that discourse was found in Argentina as Argentina was the destination of many emigrants and was often seen as a centre of human trafficking. Therefore, Argentina is presented by *The Homestead* as a trap for Irish emigrants,

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<sup>44</sup> In *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* Dorrit Cohn calls this mode of narration “the narrated monologue”, which she defines “as the technique for rendering a character’s thought in his own idiom while maintaining the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration”. The importance of this mode of narration, according to Cohn, comes from the “ambiguity” it creates: “[i]mitating the language a character uses when he talks to himself, it casts that language into the grammar a narrator uses in talking about him, thus superimposing two voices”. Dorrit Cohn, “From *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*”, in *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 494, 497.

<sup>45</sup> Katherine Mullin, “Don’t Cry for me, Argentina: “Eveline” and the Seduction of Emigration Propaganda” in *Semicolonial Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge and Marjori Howes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 173.

especially women, many of whom were taken as prostitutes. In the *Homestead* stories, Argentina therefore signifies an ideological discourse which fulfils particular needs. Argentina is transformed into that different and *other* place to which Ireland—a safe haven—could be contrasted.

Joyce's discomfort to write for *The Irish Homestead* can be also seen as an early evidence that the young writer was determined to offer an alternative treatment of the discourses of home and the other. Thus his writing about this charged "contact zone"<sup>46</sup> is strategically more complicated than the stereotypical view proffered in *The Homestead* stories. "Eveline" is far from being an unambiguous and a simplistic text. The complexity of presentation of this subject matter is achieved in Joyce's story through the intricacies and subtleties of form. The form of "Eveline" denies any totalizing and fixed perspective.<sup>47</sup> As a result, the text is dominated by uncertainties. The pliability of free indirect discourse is to be credited for this effect: while purporting to convey a "neutral", third-person's perspective, the story is totally immersed in Eveline's interiority to the extent that almost every bit of information we read is filtered through her perspective. Eveline's thoughts are, of course, neither fixed nor stable; they keep changing and, consequently, continually modify the meanings and the tone in the story itself.

Eveline's preliminary attitudes towards home and also towards Buenos Ayres change constantly to the extent that what seems at first to be the fixed signifiers of home and Buenos Ayres becomes, upon closer examination, slippery and I would argue signifies more than simply two contrasting places. One example of these slippages of signification in Eveline's discourse could be found in the passage relating to Frank and Argentina. The following excerpt, though long, is rich and offers some important characteristics of Eveline's views of Buenos Ayres as an *other*

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<sup>46</sup> "Contact zone" is a term coined by Mary Louise Pratt as a specific place-and-time where two different cultures meet and interact, although operating in uneven power relations. Her term has been widely appropriated and further developed by scholars. My use of the term signals the imaginary contact zone established between the space of home (imagined as exulted, or "colonizing") and the space of other (imagined also as "colonized"). See Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone", *MLA Profession*, Vol. 91 (1991), pp. 33-40.

<sup>47</sup> For more on this aspect of "Eveline" see Paul Stasi, "Joycean Constellations: "Eveline" and the Critique of Naturalist Totality", *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Fall 2008), pp. 39-53.

place:

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered the first time she had seen him; he was lodging in a house on the main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his head and his hair tumbled forward over a face of bronze. Then they had come to know each other. He used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home. He took her to see *The Bohemian Girl*.... he told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians.<sup>48</sup>

This passage portrays an image of Buenos Ayres that is ambiguous and uncertain; it is real and imagined at the same time—it is a name-place that is as much a projection as an actual place. When Eveline first saw Frank, he “was standing at the gate”. The gate here is both a literal and a symbolic site. The gate could signify escape and change for Eveline—an entry into a new world. However, the narrator neither confirms nor contradicts this impression: all that follows is based on speculation. The reader is kept on one side of the gate and will never get the chance to know what “actually” lies on the other side of the gate. All we know about what lies beyond the gate is focalised through Eveline’s perspective or she has been told about it by Frank, and the instability and contradiction of this vision is consistently reiterated. Eveline sees Frank as her liberator from the dire and restrictive conditions of her life in Dublin – as a gate-keeper of the new world who will offer her love, security, and—a new home in Buenos Ayres. But there are many signs in the text that indicate that the “truth” about Frank and Buenos Ayres might be just the opposite of what

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<sup>48</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 39-40.

she thinks. Earlier in the story her father warns her against sailors: “I know these sailor chaps”.<sup>49</sup> Is not *The Bohemian Girl* ironic in this regard because Eveline is not a bohemian girl at all? Maybe this reference to *The Bohemian Girl*<sup>50</sup> reflects her aspirations and dreams rather than reality. Even within Eveline’s own discursive space things become problematic: Frank’s reference to the “terrible Patagonians”, appropriated by Eveline, further complicates the protagonist’s views of Argentina; and, because, it implies the engagement with a particularly popular fictional genre (adventure stories), the reference signals that what Frank tells her about Argentina could be fictional rather than real. In short, it is difficult for the reader to form anything resembling a stable and clear image of Buenos Ayres in “Eveline”. The image of the other space is deliberately constructed as ambiguous and subjective. This strategy could also be read alternatively, as a critique of the English colonisation of Ireland. What Eveline does to Argentina, by manipulating it and controlling it through her own subjective views, is similar to what the English do to Ireland by controlling it politically, economically and culturally. In other words, Eveline, and thus Ireland, who are entrapped by English colonisation only imitate the coloniser and reproduce its practices. This particular narrative exploration of the dynamic of the self and the other through a slippage of positions, where the oppressed replicates the oppressor’s discourse but aims it at even more vulnerable entity, would evolve soon into one of the key narrative strategies in Joyce’s *Ulysses* (see, in particular, the so-called “The Cyclops” episode in the latter work).

But Joyce starts to fully deconstruct this orientalist image by shifting the focus onto his home-space. For, the same ambiguity is also present in Eveline’s attitude towards Ireland/home. Her initial idea of the feeling of home as an oppressive place is modified later in the text. Home seems to be an alienating place but also the host of good memories: “[it] was hard work-a hard

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<sup>49</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 40.

<sup>50</sup> *The Bohemian Girl* is an opera composed by the Irish composer Michael William Balfe. It is based on *La Gitanilla*, a tale by Cervantes. That the most well-known piece in this opera is called “I dreamt I dwelt in Marble Halls” in which a girl remembers her vague childhood memories is revealing in relation to “Eveline”. Both texts examine the condition of being immersed in dreams and subscribing to fantasies.

life- but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it wholly undesirable life”.<sup>51</sup> In fact, her descriptions of her father change. At an early point in the story she describes her father as an oppressor but later she details how he could be nice at times:

Her father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice. Not long before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father putting on her mother’s bonnet to make the children laugh.<sup>52</sup>

What we see here is that she establishes and expresses her sense of home-place through her personal memories and past experiences. The final stage of dealing with the relation between home and the other is taken a step further when, towards the end of the story, Eveline’s attitude towards Frank and Buenos Ayres changes. The last scene of the story takes place in the port where she and Frank are about to take the ship to Buenos Ayres: “He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition”.<sup>53</sup> As the passage shows, Eveline, faced with the final decision, becomes “passive” and “helpless”. Her perplexity and confusion is intensified to the extent that she is paralysed. The earlier familiarity she showed towards Frank disappears and is replaced with distrust and indifference towards him. Frank becomes a stranger to her. Eveline gives up the chance of escape she was entertaining at the beginning of the story. The reason for her rejection of Frank could be that she is trapped in and paralysed by her circumstances and the narratives of home. As such, the story shows how

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<sup>51</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 39.

<sup>52</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 41.

<sup>53</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 43.

overwhelming and restricting the ideology of home can be. Other critics such as Hugh Kenner argue in favour of Eveline and explain that she does not trust Frank and his narrative of a foreign country.<sup>54</sup> This attitude shows once again that the initial hope, even the attempt at, liberation and escape fails.

Whether we take this turn of events as a sign of hypocrisy and weakness or as a psychologically expected outcome that fitly closes the story one thing is certain: by shaping his story using the free indirect speech of the protagonist, where visualisations of space are restricted to her mind, Joyce has complicated our vision of the relationship between the home and the *other*. The *other* space here functions, rather in line with Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, as that place which characters recreate to place their dreams and desires. But Joyce also extends, or goes beyond, this vision. The story shows that both home and the *other* are far from fixed signifiers that can be contrasted. They are actually ideas created in relation to each other through language.

## V

In the nineteenth century Charles Baudelaire, experiencing the intensive development of city life, argued that a new method was needed in order to explore and represent this novel urban experience. Baudelaire found the solution in the figure of the *flâneur*, a lonely man walking the streets of the city and watching and contemplating the world around him. Baudelaire thus describes the *flâneur*:

The crowd is his element as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an

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<sup>54</sup> See Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), p. 37.

immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world....<sup>55</sup>

The flâneur is both part of the multitude for he rejoices to be in the middle of the crowd but at the same time he feels lonely there. In other words, he is both an insider and an outsider in the city. He is an insider in the sense that he offers access to the city and its crowd. On the other hand, he is an outsider and consequently proffers his perspective and observation on the crowd and the city:

[W]e might liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life. He is an 'I' with an insatiable appetite for the 'non-I'.<sup>56</sup>

The consciousness of the flâneur, or this “I” with an insatiable appetite for the “non-I” to which Baudelaire refers, is important for our understanding of the modernist notion of self. At the same time, this aspect of the flâneur is crucial in relation to exploring place and space in modernist fiction because this figure is profoundly chronotopic. In Bakhtin’s terms, “[t]he image of man [in literature] is always intrinsically chronotopic”.<sup>57</sup> This means that place and time are naturally interwoven into the making of fictional characters. One could also argue the other way round and say that the character’s emotions, feelings, thoughts and movements themselves establish the chronotope. Such interactions are especially pronounced in the representation of the modernist city-stroller.

A good example of the flâneur figure could be found in Joyce’s story “Two Gallants” (written in 1905-6). This is the story of Lenehan and Corley, two friends, who are roaming the streets of

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<sup>55</sup> Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, p.9.

<sup>57</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 85.

Dublin. This story, focalised mostly from Lenehan's perspective, evolves through a series of encounters and experiences that expose various sides of the life of Irish people, both personal and collective. Each of these encounters marks the beginning of a stage on Lenehan's journey, and, together, they reveal what the city is.

Told in the third person, the story opens with the narrator looking at Dublin from above like a God taking a snapshot of the city. In the opening paragraph, the narrator describes the streets and the crowd:

The grey warm evening of August had descended upon the city and a mild warm air, a memory of summer, circulated in the streets. The streets, shuttered for the repose of Sunday, swarmed with a gaily coloured crowd. Like illumined pearls the lamps shone from the summits of their tall poles upon the living texture below which, changing shape and hue unceasingly, sent up into the warm grey evening air an unchanging unceasing murmur.<sup>58</sup>

This naturalistic image that veers into impressionism forms an image of the city: the place is Dublin and time is Sunday evening. The city is portrayed as stagnant and lethargic. This effect is rendered and reiterated through the repetition of the phrases "grey warm evening", "a mild warm air" and then "warm grey evening air". The description of the atmosphere of the city then moves to focus on the crowd of people that walks the city: the crowd is seen as a mass, as "the living texture" and felt through its "unchanging unceasing murmur"; it is almost indistinguishable except through its continuously "changing shape and hue". The passage also creates a sense of ambivalence through the contradictions latent within the language. "[I]llumined pearls" is meant to suggest a romantic and shiny image of the city that is immediately reversed through dominating "grey" colour that invades the city revealing a world that is dominated by false appearances. Then the narrative perspective zooms in on Corley and his friend Lenehan:

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<sup>58</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 52.

Two young men came down the hill of Rutland Square. One of them was just bringing a long monologue to a close. The other, who walked on the verge of the path and was at times obliged to step on to the road, owing to his companion's rudeness, wore an amused listening face.<sup>59</sup>

This cinematic opening of the story then gradually moves the focus from the streets of Dublin and its crowds to the lonely man in the crowd of the city. A comparison between the two passages above shows that the images of these two men and the crowd in the streets of Dublin are purposefully contraposed. The static image of the "gaily coloured crowd" is contrasted to the moving (mobile) two men as they start on their journey through the city. It is as if through this narrative perspective the focus moves from the surface of the life of Dublin to the secrets of its reality. Although the passage does not reveal the conversation between them, we get some hints as to the content of their exchange: Corley and Lenehan are arguing whether Lenehan is going to succeed to see a "slavey" girl he has been talking about.

The perspective of the story then focuses on Lenehan—a proper flâneur—who, after leaving Corley with the girl, is roaming the streets of Dublin until Corley comes back. His experience of and interaction with the city forms the crux of the story. The plethora of narrative details and changes of narrative mood and perspective merits a lengthy quotation. Lenehan

[C]ould think of no way of passing them[hours] but to keep on walking....He paused at last before the window of a poor-looking shop over which the words Refreshment Bar were printed in white letters.... When he had eaten all the peas he sipped his ginger and sat for some time thinking of Corley's adventure. In his imagination he beheld the pair of lovers walking along some dark road....

This vision made him feel keenly his own poverty of purse and spirit....He paid twopence halfpenny

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<sup>59</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 52.

to the slatternly girls and walked out of the shop to begin his wandering again.... He turned to the left at the City Markets and walked on into Grafton Street. The crowd of girls and young men had thinned and on his way up the street he heard many groups and couples bidding one another goodnight.... His mind became active again. He wondered had Corley managed it successfully. He wondered if he had asked her yet or if he would leave it to the last...<sup>60</sup>

In these passages the character appears as both part of a multitude sharing their food and drinks and profoundly lonely. He feels lonely in the midst of the crowd: “[t]hough his eyes took note of many elements of the crowd through which he passed they did so morosely. He found trivial all that was meant to charm him and did not answer the glances which invited him to be bold”.<sup>61</sup> The above account of Lenehan’s wandering additionally exposes two related aspects of the modern experience: the importance of the visual stimuli in the city and the transient nature of human experience and self. Both Georg Simmel and Baudelaire assert the importance of the external stimuli in the city and their impact on the inner thoughts and life of city dwellers. In his essay “the Metropolis and the Mental Life”, written in 1903, Simmel argues that the metropolis creates new conditions that in turn generate new psychological and social attitudes. He describes how the city changes the mental state of individuals:

The psychological foundation, upon which the metropolis individuality is erected, is the intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli.... To the extent that the metropolis creates these psychological conditions—with every crossing of the street, with the tempo and the multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life—it creates the sensory foundations of mental life, and in the degree of awareness necessitated by our organization as creatures dependent on differences, a deep contrast with the slower, more habitual,

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<sup>60</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, pp. 60, 61, 62, 63.

<sup>61</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 60.

more smoothly flowing rhythm of the sensory-mental phase of small town and rural existence.<sup>62</sup>

Simmel differentiates urban experience from rural experience through images of change and flow in contrast to images of fixity and stability. City experience is one of continuous flow of both “external and internal stimuli”. This idea of flow is well captured through the motif of walking or wandering in Joyce’s story. Reflected through this light, the idea of flow applies to both the Joycean city (its streets with their infinite stimuli) and the consciousness (and self) of the observing character. The abundant stimuli in the city stimulate an endless stream of ideas. The street and the act of walking brings these two, the city and the observing figure, together through the act and metaphor of “wandering”, whose main characteristic is that it is almost aimless. This story shows how Lenehan “walked listlessly” and wandered about the city just as his consciousness flowed endlessly and with no sense of purpose. Lenehan’s act of city-wandering ends with his return exactly to where he started, Rutland Square, without any sense of finality or resolution. This act itself is probably meant to convey to us that the city and the self reflect each other. In other words, there is a close relationship between the city and the observer of the city. They are actually dependent on one another. Sanja Bahun argues that both the meaning of the modernist city and the identity of its strollers exist in relation to each other: “the modernist city becomes the hero only in relation to the modernist observing subject, just as the modernist character derives his/her identity only through the streets he/she is meandering”.<sup>63</sup> For Lenehan’s journey through the streets of Dublin is both an exploration of the city and also of his self and inner life.

The self here is fragmentary because it does not have any anchor upon which to settle; it is made of a continuous flow of impressions, memories and thoughts, similar to the changing stimuli

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<sup>62</sup> Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life”, in *The Blackwell City Reader*, ed. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson [1903] 2nd Ed., (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 103-4.

<sup>63</sup> Sanja Bahun, *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Counter Mourning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 51.

on this circular journey through the city. Thus Lenehan's consciousness is revealed through a constant process of free association. What we see in this passage, however, is not merely a free association of thoughts, but the vacillation of the narrative between inner and outer reality as the narrative moves between Lenehan's chain of thoughts and its interruptions by the reality and noises of the outer world. The reader sees all sorts of ideas, thoughts and feelings in a rambling way: from Lenehan's sensation of hunger to his reflections upon his existential situation, from his realisation of the meaninglessness of his own life to his feelings of impotency and passivity; from his sentiments of alienation from the crowd to his sense of optimism that there might be something left in the world which he might be able to achieve. In short, all these shuttling fragmentary images reveal the mental life of individuals which reflect the big city with its rapid succession of fragmentary images.

The abundance of external stimuli in the city represented in "Two Gallants" also reflects another important aspect of city space to which Joyce was attracted: the diverse nature of urban life. This aspect of the city could be explained through Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, and its consequence, in narrative terms, is the extreme polyphony of the text. Polyphony in fiction, writes Bakhtin, is "[a] plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses".<sup>64</sup> The city of Dublin becomes the space that gathers within itself diverse languages and voices, each with its own "value" or ideological and axiological make-up. Echoing this same diversity the narrator of another short story in the collection, "Araby" (written 1905), walking the streets of Dublin portrays the many voices and events he sees and hears: "We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a come-all-you about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native

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<sup>64</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. and ed. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 6.

land”.<sup>65</sup> One can see that Joyce’s city is, as Alter describes it, “a vast palimpsest in which one language is written, or indeed scribbled, on top of another”.<sup>66</sup> The city becomes a scene on which the drama of the clash and interchange of many languages, each of which echoes certain values, unfolds.

One more aspect of place in this story is the potential which the practice of the flânerie offers to the figure of the flâneur. In Baudelaire and Benjamin, and also subsequent theorists of the flâneur, the practice of flânerie offers a sense of liberation and freedom. Walking is a way of liberating for the flâneur as it offers a possibility of creativity and change. In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau writes about “spatial practices” such as walking and journeying through the city and relates them to the meaning of place from the perspective of the stroller. De Certeau distinguishes between two contrasting views of the city: one is the panoptic God-like perspective from above such as looking at New York City from the top of the World Trade Centre and the other is the street-level perspective of the pedestrian walking the streets. In other words, one implies watching passively while the other means being actively involved with place.

De Certeau builds his argument around the distinction he makes between space and place. Place is that site upon which practice occurs while space is what results from practice. The central metaphor here is language. While we have certain given rules to make meaningful communication we can use these rules in infinite ways. “The act of walking”, says de Certeau “is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered. At the most elementary level, it has a triple ‘enunciative’ function: it is a process of appropriation of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian (just as the speaker appropriates and takes on the language); it is spatial acting-out of the place.... it thus seems possible to give a preliminary definition of

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<sup>65</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 31.

<sup>66</sup> Robert Alter, “Joyce: Metropolitan Shuttle”, in *Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the Language of the Novel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 134.

walking as a space of enunciation”.<sup>67</sup> Thus while the first instance of viewing the city, the panoptic one, offers an observation that presumes to *know* the city, whereas the other one, the pedestrian, *writes* the city through walking its streets. While a glimpse of hope looms on the horizon and the flâneur manages to fill the streets with the “forests of [his] desires and goals” this is only momentarily and soon reversed to the reality of life in Dublin.<sup>68</sup>

The fact that Lenehan, by the end of the story, returns to where he left Corley shows the futility of his attempts at creativity and freedom. This sense is further enhanced at the end of the story with the scene that includes the coin. When Lenehan comes back to meet Corley and make sure if he got his girl the story thus concludes: “Corley halted at the first lamp and stared grimly before him. Then with a grave gesture he extended a hand towards the light and, smiling, opened it slowly to the gaze of his disciple. A small gold coin shone in the palm”.<sup>69</sup> This passage has connotations of betrayal. The passage implies that Corley betrays the “slavey” girl. This impression is asserted when Lenehan earlier in the story implies that Corley had betrayed another girl before: “she’s on the turf now. I saw her driving down Earl Street one night with two fellows with her on a car” says Corley. Then Lenehan says “I suppose that’s your doing”.<sup>70</sup> The materiality of the coin indicates the inability of these two characters to achieve a sense of freedom and liberation. The coin, leaving the last impression in the story, is a symbol that indicates a life overshadowed and paralyzed by betrayal and materialism, a theme that connects this story to many others. In short, instead of liberation and creativity we have paralysis.

### Conclusion

This chapter has engaged in exploring place and the various spaces in James Joyce’s *Dubliners*. It

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<sup>67</sup> De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 98.

<sup>68</sup> A similar example is also provided in “An Encounter” in which a group of school boys, evading school, embark on an adventure through Dublin and which ends in failure and unexpected encounter with an old man. Eventually they return to where they started feeling more restricted and disappointed.

<sup>69</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 65

<sup>70</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, p. 56.

started with an investigation of the politics and poetics of the interior space of a private room in “The Dead”. My reading of this story highlighted the characters’ constant recreation and reimagining of the relative and the local form of place. The next section was also dedicated to an exploration of Joyce’s negotiation of interior urban space, again, a room, but, here, a public space with historical significance. The strategically warped chronotope of Joyce’s “Ivy Day in the Committee Room”—both the setting and structural principle of the short story itself—was interpreted as a Joycean scrutiny of Irish nationalism. The theme of the interaction between the politics of space, home(land) and nationalism is followed, also, in my interpretation of “Eveline”. On my reading, the story is based on an exploration of the limits and potentials of the space of home, both a family home and home as country, and its relationship to the *other*, Buenos Ayres in this case. The final section of this chapter zooms in on “Two Gallants”—a story whose chronotope takes us out in the streets of Dublin in 1905. Here, the urban space of Dublin, with the mutual interdependence of streets, aimless meandering, and the figure of the flâneur, becomes, characteristically, both the setting and the protagonist of the piece, presaging the similar operation of the city in *Ulysses*. Unlike in the latter piece of fiction, however, the transformative power of flânerie is here repeatedly curtailed, ironically challenged and ultimately questioned.

What connects all these spaces, apart from being in the same geographical location of Dublin, is that they are pervaded by a sense of paralysis and confinement. The atmosphere of the city is represented as alienating and restrictive, and, in stark contrast to the proverbially glossed dynamism of cityscape (and Dublin’s actual vibrancy in the early years of the twentieth century), the Dubliners are consistently depicted as being stuck in a kind of paralysis. This paralysis has psychological (isolated and alienated characters), physical, social (disintegration of family), and spiritual (religion becomes a business) implications. Paralysis is portrayed through the inability of the characters to act. It is also dramatised through the presence of death and the dead people in the present life of Dubliners. The dead dominate the lives of the living. Dublin seems like a place

where people are caught in nets from which they cannot release themselves. Institutions such as the Irish Catholic Church, politics, economics and family do not function as tools for the betterment of life in early twentieth century Dublin. Instead these institutions are disclosed in Joyce's stories as hindering creativity and free thinking. Dubliners are trapped in many nets from which they constantly try to escape whether through dreams or through actual attempts at escape. The Irish, *Dubliners* shows, are entrapped by the English colonisation and manipulation of their nation to the extent that they are passive and cannot go beyond their current situation. Worse still, they replicate its very dynamics in their own orientalisng, epistemologically colonising visions. Paralysis is so pervasive that even the purportedly liberating places such as the public streets and activities such as walking do not offer freedom. The flâneur is consumed by the space of the city. This early conception of the space of the city in *Dubliners* would be replaced, in *Ulysses*, by another space in which the flânerie is more creative, and productive of the narrative, in *Ulysses*.

Joyce's use of the short story form and the short story cycle in particular is remarkably suitable to express the urban experience of Dublin. Joyce's open-ended stories echo the circular walks of characters in the streets of Dublin. The stories themselves are like the city through which Joyce's characters walk endlessly and aimlessly in a circular way, a walk in which they end up where they started. Joyce's decision to network the stories in a short story cycle, made up of short narratives that are connected through shared themes and motifs and yet are separate, was fortuitous. In *The Short Story Cycle*, Susan Garland Mann states that, in this subgenre,

[t]he stories are both self-sufficient and interrelated. On the one hand, the stories work independently of one another: the reader is capable of understanding each of them without going beyond the limits of the individual story. On the other hand, however, the stories work together, creating something that could not be achieved in a single story.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Rolf Lundén, *The United Stories of America: Studies in the Short Story Composite* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), p. 17.

This form allows the interaction between stories and as such it sheds light on the various spaces and aspects of Dublin, which, together, create a kaleidoscopic chronotope, an image of the city that is both holistic and, simultaneously, fragmentary. This fragmentary form constructs diverse, independent, yet related, narratives, rather than one unified narrative and, by implication, one unified and stable place. In this sense at least, the collection could be properly labelled “polyphonic”, or interiorly dialogical, in Bakhtinian terms. Such is, also, Joycean place itself: both real and imagined, interiorly diversified yet homogenous in its paralysis plight.

## Chapter Two

### Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*: The Pastoral and the Heterotopic Spaces

#### I

Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* ends with an image of the main character, George Willard, on the train, leaving his town of Winesburg in Ohio, USA, for the city:

The young man's mind was carried away by his growing passion for dreams. One looking at him would not have thought him particularly sharp. With the recollection of little things occupying his mind he closed his eyes and leaned back in the car seat. He stayed that way for a long time and when he aroused himself and again looked out of the car window the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood.<sup>1</sup>

George Willard is on the train that takes him from his small town of Winesburg to the big city of Chicago. The significance of this passage comes from the fact that it captures the important historical realities in the region of the Midwest United States in the early twentieth century: a young man is leaving his small town and goes to the city in search of a better life.<sup>2</sup> The image of

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<sup>1</sup> Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio* [1919] (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 247. Subsequent references will be to this edition of the book.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted here that the use of terms such as "West" as in the title of Smith's book *The Virgin Land: The American West as A Symbol and Myth* and the term "Midwest" used in this thesis both refer to the region of the Midwest in the US. The term "West" was used by easterners to refer to all that lay west of the fringes of their

the city that lies ahead looms large, while at the same time the small town receding into the background embodies, at individual and general levels, a time of tremendous change in the history of the Midwest and also America. Indicatively, it is the train, representing technology and the force of industrialisation, which brings change to the world of the small town. George's location at the end of the short story cycle moving between two places—indicates his relationship to place in more general terms, and the function that place and place imagination have in this short story cycle. The relationship in question is an unstable one and this instability, or flux, is the topic with which Anderson himself, being the child of the American industrial revolution that transformed the Midwest small town, was preoccupied with throughout his literary career. This place-imagination and the specific form which the representation of it takes in Anderson's short story cycle—namely, that of the renegotiation of the myth of the pastoral, often through what could be described as a “heterotopia”—are the subject of this chapter.

Anderson (1876-1941) was born in Camden, Ohio, and in 1884 the family moved to Clyde, another town in Ohio, which, at the time, had a population of about 2500 people, and which, by scholars' consensus, later served as the model for his fictional town of Winesburg.<sup>3</sup> In 1900 Anderson moved to Chicago where he would pursue various jobs. In 1922, Anderson left Chicago, giving up his job and his wife, for New York. Then he moved to New Orleans. Anderson was a restless traveller to the end of his life. In 1941, he was on his way to South America to meet some friends and to live in a small town in Chile when he died on March 8. Although Anderson was away from the small towns where he was brought up and spent the early years of his life, he continued to examine and dwell upon small town America, through his fictional recreations and exploration of these towns and their values, for the rest of his life. In Chicago Anderson became

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settlements, including the region of the Midwest before the establishment of various regions. The region under study here has been called various names, but it was in 1912 that it was first referred to as the Midwest. At that time it consisted of twelve states. For more on this topic, see James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> See Walter B. Rideout, *Sherwood Anderson: A Writer in America*, Vol.1 (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

associated with “The Chicago Renaissance”. It was also during this time that Anderson became acquainted with some important writers and critics that would prove most influential on his literary career. The most important of these writers, apart from Edgar Lee Masters, was Gertrude Stein, whose work *Three Lives* Anderson read in 1915, and whose advice (he met her in Paris later on) guided Anderson towards creating a simpler and more repetitive style closer to the American vernacular in *Winesburg, Ohio*.<sup>4</sup> In 1922 Carl Van Doren influentially termed a tradition of writing that was practised by “The Chicago Renaissance” authors “The Revolt from the Village”.<sup>5</sup> Those writers, most notably Edgar Lee Masters<sup>6</sup>, produced creative work that directly criticised American small-town values. Although Anderson shares with these writers such a critique, he is also different from them in that his is not a simple disavowal of the small town. Anderson’s sophisticated treatment of the small town and its values is shown in his preoccupation with finding a suitable form to explore his region and its myths. Anderson started treating the Midwest small town in the form of the novel in texts such as *Windy McPherson’s Son* (1916) and *Marching Men* (1917), and, later, *Poor White* (1920), *Many Marriages* (1923) and *Dark Laughter* (1925).<sup>7</sup> In the late 1910s, however, he moved towards creating what could be argued to be a more successful means of expressing this experience, as represented in the short story cycle of *Winesburg, Ohio*, widely credited as his best work. It is with this form that Anderson was able to reveal a more nuanced perspective on the Midwest and its culture.

Anderson started writing *Winesburg, Ohio* in the late fall of 1915 and the collection was eventually published in 1919 by the publisher B. W. Huebsch. The manuscript had previously been

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<sup>4</sup> John W. Crowley, “Introduction”, *New Essays on Winesburg, Ohio*, ed. John W. Crowley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 9. For a more detailed study of Stein’s influence on Anderson see Duane Simolke, “Anderson and Stein: Symbiosis”, in *Stein, Gender, Isolation and Industrialisation: New Readings of Winesburg, Ohio* (New York: To Excel Press, 1999), pp. 5-26.

<sup>5</sup> See Carl Van Doren, “The Revolt from the Village”, in *Contemporary American Novelists 1900-1920* (New York: J. J. Little and Ives Company, 1922), pp. 146-76.

<sup>6</sup> Master, *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), another major influence on Anderson and *Winesburg, Ohio*, is a collection of short poems in which the writer presents a group of self-spoken epitaphs in which the now dead people of a fictional small town tell about the frustrations and tragedies they experienced in a Midwest small town.

<sup>7</sup> For a brief comment on the quality of these novels see Malcolm Cowley, “Introduction”, *Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), pp. 2-3.

refused by several publishers. Jefferson Jones, for example, chose not to publish it on account of its being “too gloomy”.<sup>8</sup> The publication of the cycle both generated critical applause and caused moral outrage. The last type of response was related to its explicit treatment of sexuality and its dark envisioning of the lives of small town people and their puritan values. For example, an anonymous reviewer for the *New York Evening Post* “warned that none of the stories [in *Winesburg, Ohio*] was an “artistic interpretation of life” and [that] at least half were “of a character which no man would wish to see in the hands of a daughter or sister”.<sup>9</sup> However, it is with the critical applause the cycle received that we see Anderson’s distinctive approach, in writing about his home-place, being discussed. These reviews mostly concerned Anderson’s contribution to the short story form in America. An early review of the cycle writes that: “[a]s a challenge to the snappy short story form, with its planned proportions of flippant philosophy, epigrammatic conversation, and sex danger, nothing better has come out of America than *Winesburg, Ohio*”.<sup>10</sup> Another early review by H. L. Mencken writes that “[h]ere, indeed, is a piece of work that stands out from the common run of fiction...It lifts the short story, for long a form hardened by trickery and virtuosity, to a higher and more spacious level..”.<sup>11</sup> These initial responses highlight the short story form, and, more generally, the invention of the short story cycle, as the aspect of Anderson’s work that would establish him as a distinct writer among his contemporaries. Anderson himself expressed his opinions about the importance of the choice of literary form to convey the American experience on many occasions. For example, in his *Memoirs*, Anderson writes that “the novel form does not fit an American writer”. He continues: “Do we not live in a great loose land of many states and yet all of these states together do make something, a land, a country. I submit that the

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<sup>8</sup> See Walter Rideout, *Sherwood Anderson: A Writer in America*, Vol. 1, pp. 299-330.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Rideout, *Sherwood Anderson: A Writer in America*, Vol. 1, p. 317.

<sup>10</sup> Maxwell Anderson, “A Country Town” (25 June 1919), quoted in *Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio*, eds., Charles E. Modlin and Ray Lewis White (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), p. 162.

<sup>11</sup> H. L. Mencken, “A Book of Uncommon Merit”, quoted in *Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio*, eds., Charles E. Modlin and Ray Lewis White, p. 163.

form of my Winesburg tales... may offer a suggestion to other writers".<sup>12</sup> Thus Anderson claims that he has found the most suitable means to express this heterogeneous cultural unity in the loose form of the short story cycle.<sup>13</sup> For him, the quintessence of this differentiated whole resides, and is emblemized, in the Midwest. While, before Anderson, most representations of the Midwest and the utilisations of its most significant myth-genre—the pastoral—were in the form of the novel or, sometimes, the short story, Anderson chose the short story cycle as a strategic means of expression.

Traditional short story cycle criticism, while acknowledging the fragmentary form of the short story cycle, sought unity and coherence while studying these cycles. Various critics of the short story cycle were more interested in the unifying aspects of a cycle; they were looking for themes and motifs that unified the cycle as a whole. Such an example is found in Forest L. Ingram's study of the short story cycle. In his book entitled *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century*, Ingram approaches story cycles thematically, focusing on what occurs and recurs in the cycle. In other words, he seeks to construct a whole and unified entity out of his approach to these stories. This eventually results in imposing coherence and unity on a discontinuous form. This tendency is undermined by more recent scholarship of the short story cycle. It is in line with these perceptions of the short story cycle that Rolf Lundén recommends that one should heed, in particular, "the short story composite's structure of disjointure with its gaps, voids, contradictions, and silences".<sup>14</sup> He highlights the "tension between the unifying and the discontinuous elements" of the short story cycle.<sup>15</sup> Lundén's more radical views in

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<sup>12</sup> Anderson, *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942), p. 289. Note that this passage is omitted in the critical Edition of the *Memoirs* edited by Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

<sup>13</sup> Anderson is frequently described as one of the most influential writers on the subsequent generations of American writers like Faulkner, Hemingway, F. Scot Fitzgerald, Jean Toomer, and Erskin Caldwell. His contribution to the American short story in general and the short story cycle in particular is widely acknowledged. Faulkner famously said that "[Anderson] was the father of [his] generation of writers". See Richard Gray, *A History of American Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 371.

<sup>14</sup> Rolf Lundén, *The United Stories of America: Studies in the Short Story Composite* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), p. 21.

<sup>15</sup> Lundén, *The United Stories of America*, p. 146.

appreciating the formal properties of these short story cycles sheds light on their subversive effects. The importance of formal innovation in the short story cycle stems from the fact that, in its revamped version, the short story cycle presents itself as a quintessentially modern(ist) form and therefore, in it, as in much modernist literature, form expresses content. The short story cycle, with its formal characteristics of discontinuity, playfulness and open-endedness, many theorists of the form argue, has potential for proffering new ways of examining home-place at a time of profound change. As the first chapter on Joyce's *Dubliners* shows, and as will be shown in this chapter, this form results in the subversion of narrative conventions and with this a questioning and undermining of social and historical narratives.

The following pages will scrutinize Anderson's short story cycle *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) from the perspective of place imagination, here articulated as the Midwestern American small town at the end of the nineteenth century, and the many levels on which place is viewed, experienced and lived in Anderson's fiction. This chapter will focus, in particular, on Anderson's view of the agrarian Midwest and its myth of the pastoral in the context of industrialisation. The main argument is that in the process of writing about his region Anderson rewrites this particular genre/mythic construction and its articulation in fiction, and, in turn, dialogizes the representation of place inherent to the genre and Midwest cultural imaginary.

## II

A paradox underlies the above-quoted passage that portrays George Willard on the train. It is an image that contains both the means of modern technology, like the train, on the one hand, and the small agrarian town with its myths on the other. Glen A. Love argues that this tendency in Anderson's fiction could be read in the context of the pastoral: "Perhaps no alternative to the shrill disorder of industrial civilization had so seductive an appeal to Sherwood Anderson as a return to

the primitive”.<sup>16</sup> The pastoral is a genre that appears already in the works of ancient poets such as Theocritus and Virgil. Theocritus’ *Idylls* may be taken as the inaugural template for the genre. In this series of poems the writer celebrates the simplicity of the life of shepherds and their contact with nature. Yet Theocritus wrote his poems for the people who lived in the court. What Theocritus does then, is to re-enact and recreate another world—the world from which the people of the court, or the seed of power, are divorced—for the benefit of those who no longer have access to it. This “created” world is distinguished by a specific relationship between people and place: “[f]or the most part the pastoral... creates an image of a peaceful and uncorrupted existence; a kind of prelapsarian world”.<sup>17</sup> Thus the genre of the pastoral itself is based on a tension between two states or two ways of living—and two “types” of place; in many cases between urban and rural ways of life; simplicity and complexity; present and past. As such, the pastoral is a remarkably appropriate genre to adopt when wishing to explore and express the sense of place. The pastoral’s creation of the chronotope of “a golden age” is also a symptom of “nostalgia for the past, for some hypothetical state of love and peace which has been somewhat lost”.<sup>18</sup> Put in philosophical terms, the main drive of the pastoral is a desire for recuperation of an “unmediated unity”, or continuity, between the subject and the world, imagined as once existent and now irretrievably lost.<sup>19</sup> It is premised upon and works through “a yearning for a lost innocence, for a pre-Fall paradisaic life in which man existed in harmony with nature”.<sup>20</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin’s ideas concerning “idyllic chronotopes” could usefully enhance our discussion here. Bakhtin differentiates between three types of “idyllic chronotope”: the love idyll, the family idyll and the

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<sup>16</sup> Glen A. Love, “Horses or Men: Primitive and Pastoral Elements in Sherwood Anderson” in *Sherwood Anderson: A Study of the Short Fiction* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), p. 129. Love argues that the tendency towards primitivism in Anderson’s work constitutes in itself a form of the pastoral: “What I would claim here is that much of what is called primitivism—and left at that—in Anderson is more meaningfully seen as pastoralism...” (p. 129). This tendency, Love further writes, occurs in other works by Anderson through an obsession with horses and “negroes”.

<sup>17</sup> J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* [1977] (London: Penguin Books, 1999), p. 644.

<sup>18</sup> Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, p. 647.

<sup>19</sup> See Charles Taylor, *Source of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 471.

<sup>20</sup> Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, p. 647.

agricultural idyll. All of these varieties of the idyll have in common the appeal to an “ancient complex” and a “folkloric time”, which is expressed in the special relationship that time and space have within the created idyllic world. This relationship, writes Bakhtin, is

an organic fastening-down, a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory with all its nooks and crannies, its familiar mountains, valleys, fields rivers and forests, and one’s own home. Idyllic life and its events are inseparable from this concrete, special corner of the world where the fathers and grandfathers lived and where one’s children and their children will live. This little special world is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world.<sup>21</sup>

This description applies very well to the genre of the pastoral as it was reinvigorated and refashioned in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century US literature, and indeed to the way in which the chronotope of the idyll—of “a little special world”—is both summoned and deconstructed in Anderson’s fiction. Various scholars have argued that Midwestern US literature, like that of the South, is informed by and centres on a sense of the “fall”.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Midwestern literature is preoccupied with the affect of cultural disruption; a feeling that there was a “good” time and then it was disrupted by a certain force. It perceives as its key artistic task to attempt to reconstruct/phantasize the pre-disruption world through a nostalgic chronotope or to reflect upon this interruption or separation through a scrutiny of its effects and the image of new space-times. I would suggest that Anderson’s treatment of the myth of the pastoral most significantly partakes in

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<sup>21</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 225.

<sup>22</sup> Ronald Weber, *The Midwestern Ascendancy in Writing American* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 17. While in the Midwest this force is industrialisation, in the South it is the Civil War between the South and the North. Richard Gray also argues that American writers are preoccupied with the idea of the fall from a pre-lapsarian state into a post-lapsarian one. See “Introduction: After the Fall”, in *After the Fall: American Literature since 9/11* (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 2011), pp. 1-20.

this post-lapsarian framework of literary production.

In *The Machine in the Garden*, Leo Marx notes that in American literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a pattern recurs in which an agrarian tradition is interrupted by the forces of industrialisation.<sup>23</sup> He highlights how one way of living and thinking is replaced with another; the agrarian tradition is vanishing under the increasingly encroaching industrialisation of American life. Henry Nash Smith writes about how the West (including the Midwest) was transformed into a certain image sustained in American literature and culture. In his book entitled *The Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, Smith argues that the West was conceived by Americans of the nineteenth century as a virgin land and as the Garden of the World.<sup>24</sup> This agricultural utopia was seen as a paradise that promises happiness and good life for those who go there. The hero of this garden is the yeoman farmer. According to Henry Nash Smith, the yeoman farmer embodies “the heroic figure of the idealized frontier farmer armed with that supreme agrarian weapon, the sacred plow”.<sup>25</sup>

This utopia is explored in Anderson’s “Godliness”, a tale in four parts that was originally conceived as the opening story of the cycle. This is the only story that treats the social and economic context of the Midwest region and thus it presents the backdrop against which the collection is set.<sup>26</sup> In this story, the narrator recreates an image of the town of Winesburg and the surrounding farms by relating the history of a family, the Bentleys, on an Ohio farm. Covering the private history of three generations of the same family living on the same farm, Anderson’s text also writes and explores the history of his region, real or imaginary. It is, in a way, also a story of

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<sup>23</sup> See Leo Marx, *The Machine in The Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Smith argues that, for the Americans in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were two Wests that lay beyond settlements: one was the West of manifest destiny while the second was the West of the frontier of settlement. This latter one, the topic of this chapter, was divided into the Wild West populated by trappers, cowboys and hunter and the agricultural West whose main population and hero was the yeoman farmer. See Henry Nash Smith, *The Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1978).

<sup>25</sup> Henry Nash Smith, *The Virgin Land*, p. 138.

<sup>26</sup> Anderson changed this positioning of the story later. However, this original place highlights the extent to which the image of the Midwest is important and influential in Anderson’s work. See John O’Neill, “Anderson Writ Large: “Godliness” in *Winesburg, Ohio*”, *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb, 1977), pp. 67-83.

origins: in a deliberate retrospective move, Anderson strategically includes in his complex interaction of chronotopes the time when the first settler came to the region. The earliest chronotopic image in this story goes back to the pioneer time when the Bentley family arrived in Ohio:

The Bentley family had been in Northern Ohio for several generations before Jesse's time. They came from New York State and took up land when the country was new and land could be had at low price. For a long time they, in common with all the other Middle Western, were very poor. The land they had settled upon was heavily wooded and covered with fallen logs and underbrush.<sup>27</sup>

This passage conveys an image of the land as pristine and pictures the pioneers as financially poor but determined people who build homes and establish communities on their new land. Then the story goes on to reveal more details about the daily life and values of these pioneers. It was an age, we are told, when

[M]en laboured too hard and were too tired to read, in them was no desire for words printed upon paper. As they worked in the fields, vague, half-formed thoughts took possession of them. They believed in God and God's power to control their lives. In the little Protestant churches they gathered on Sunday to hear of God and his works. The churches were the center of the social and intellectual life of the times. The figure of God was big in the hearts of men.<sup>28</sup>

What characterises the experience of this early mode of living is an overwhelming presence of

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<sup>27</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 64.

<sup>28</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 71.

community. In this pastoral place all “men laboured” in the land and on Sundays people “gathered” to talk and “hear of God and his work”.<sup>29</sup> These farmers exchange their views of the world and meanings they ascribe to events in the church or in the fields. And the lives of these people were anchored on stable beliefs: “the figure of God was big in their hearts”. But more than anything else, this earlier mode of experience is based upon common values. There is a kind of certainty in their lives: for there is a “center” for the “social and intellectual life” which these people share. There is a sacred masterplot that explains the world for them and creates order in their lives. It is the exchange of this experience that makes communication possible. The oral pre-industrial culture is linked to an integrated society in which meaningful communication is possible. In short, people had a sense of grounding and orientation in place.

Alfred Kazin argues that Anderson has the tendency in his fiction to capture images of “the world of handicraft artisans, the harness makers and Civil War veterans like his father, the small town tailors and shoemakers, buggy and wagon craftsman of the old school”.<sup>30</sup> What these figures of the past have in common is the immediacy and close contact, almost continuity, they have with their crafts and, by implication, their environment. In his discussion of the chronotope of the agricultural idyll, Bakhtin draws attention to the importance of labour in this kind of idyll. In this kind of genre the representation of the intrinsic link between labour and labourer becomes important, Bakhtin writes, because it “transforms all the events of everyday life, stripping them of that private petty character obtained when man is nothing but consumer; what happens rather is that they are turned into essential life events. Thus people consume the produce of their own labor”.<sup>31</sup> The theme and emotion of this continuity and interaction between the labourer and the products of his or her labour is a theme that underpins much of Anderson’s preoccupation with the relation of people to place in his fiction: labouring in a place is a “life event” of great significance

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 71.

<sup>30</sup> Alfred Kazin, *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature* [1942] (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 211.

<sup>31</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 227.

and it is this labour that constitutes (the image of) the place itself. In Anderson's stories this vanished continuity between the labourer and labour is as a rule contrasted to the grimly depicted present: Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Fordism* wept the region of the Midwest and drastically changed both the Midwestern economy and social life—for Anderson the emotional life also—of the Midwesterners. The industrialisation of the Midwest led to an economy of mass production and a relationship to labour in which people did not own their labour and were increasingly separated from it.<sup>32</sup> Anderson's specific sensitivity to this characteristic feature of high capitalism is partly informed by his personal life. In 1895, while working for twelve hours a day in a bicycle factory in Elyria, Ohio, doing repetitive acts that require almost no skills, Anderson experienced a strong sense of isolation and meaninglessness. He saw that under capitalism, in contrast to the relationship between the labourer and labour in earlier modes of production, the worker gets money (a meagre amount) but his work fulfils no other needs such as social collectivity or the use and understanding of the very products of his labour. This way the worker not only becomes alienated from his work but also from his/her self and his world and environment.<sup>33</sup>

Not surprisingly, then, the idyllic image of Ohio in "Godliness" is disrupted by the force of industrialisation. Perhaps nothing symbolises this change of the American consciousness more than the automobile. That line that separates human experience was drawn by the force of the machine. This image of a simple way of living is suddenly threatened by an intruding force. "Godliness" elaborates on this moment of change and its influence on the thinking of people

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<sup>32</sup> For more on the economy in the Midwest and especially Fordism see Brian Page and Richard Walker, "From Settlement to Fordism: the Agro-Industrial Revolution in the American Midwest", *Economic Geography*, Vol. 67, No.4 (October 1991), pp. 281-315.

<sup>33</sup> Anderson's view of capitalism, as expressed in his accounts of that period and inferable from his short fiction like "Godliness", strikes one as similar to Karl Marx's idea of "alienation" that workers experience under capitalism. According to Marx, labourers do not own the product of their own work and so there is a division between the worker and the object he produces. This division eventually leads to a sense of estrangement and alienation of the worker not only from work but also from his/her self and the world. See *Sherwood Anderson: A Writer in America*, Vol. 1, pp. 62-3. For a brief account of alienation in Marx see also David Macey, *Dictionary of Critical Theory* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p. 7.

through the introduction of the machine. We read this change narrated as follows:

In the last fifty years a vast change has taken place in the lives of our people. A revolution has in fact taken place. The coming of industrialism, attended by all the rattle and roar of affairs... the going and coming of trains, the growth of cities, the building of the interurban car lines that weave in and out of towns and past farmhouses, and now in these later days the coming of automobiles has worked a tremendous change in the lives and habits of thought of our people of Mid-America.<sup>34</sup>

These lines signal the moment of cultural disruption in no equivocal terms. It is a relatively violent image: the train or the car, representing the power of technology and industrialisation, exists inside the garden and violates it. However, it is the change in the non-material American culture that Anderson is preoccupied with more than anything else. Anderson made this atmosphere of transition the subject matter of his writing. He was preoccupied with exploring this process of transformation and with it the transformation of the American consciousness. Anderson registers this change beyond all established forms in American life and consciousness through the American myth of the fall. It is within this context of transformation and change that the presence and the power of place become pervasive. The sense of place is strong because standing between two periods, like George Willard himself positioned between the town and the city, between the past and the future, provides a better chance to see both ways and feel the present. The tension displayed in the pastoral genre between the two traditions or two ways of living now becomes a means for examining and exploring place at a time of radical change. It is meant to articulate a strong sense and awareness of place. The pastoral, as the preceding pages have shown, centres on the relation of people to place, and Anderson's short story cycle is emblematic of the way this

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<sup>34</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, pp. 70-1.

genre, just like the imagining of place, reinvented itself at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The nostalgic celebration of vanishing continuities between the subject and his work and the critique of alienation in Anderson's fiction reveal a wider sense of disorientation and placelessness,—indeed, a more general separation between the subject and the world—which we can see being experienced by many of his characters. These affects find expression in two specific chronotopes that explore the relation of characters to land and nature: that of the farm and that of the small town. “Godliness”, as we have seen, portrays two kinds of relationship between people and the land they inhabit through two contrastive chronotopes. One depicts a space-time remembered and longed for: before industrialisation; the other articulates the narrative (and writerly) present, that is, the process of industrialisation in the Midwest. In the recreated narrative the life of the earlier generation of the Bentleys is characterised by people's close relationship with nature and the land. Their life was simple and primitive: they worked in the land for their living and their life patterns were similar to and dependent on seasons and nature:

When Jesse Bentley's father and brothers had come into their ownership of the place... they clung to old traditions and worked like driven animals. They lived as practically all of the farming people of the time lived. In the spring and through most of the winter the highways leading into the town of Winesburg were a sea of mud. The four young men of the family worked hard all day in the fields, they ate heavily of course, greasy food, and at night slept like tired beasts on beds of straw... On Saturday afternoons they hitched a team of horses to a three-seated wagon and went off to town. In the town they stood about the stoves in the stores talking to other farmers or to the storekeepers... When they had bought meat, flour, sugar, and salt, they went into one of the Winesburg saloons and drank beer... On the road home they stood up on the wagon seats and shouted at the stars. Sometimes

they fought long and bitterly and at other times they broke forth into songs.<sup>35</sup>

This passage exemplifies an important aspect of the idyllic chronotope: the very specific treatment of time. As was shown earlier, Bakhtin argues that although various types of idylls may differ from one another, they have in common “their general relationship to the immanent unity of folkloric time”. Time in this kind of the chronotope is unified in the sense that it is mythical, it exists outside the parameters of historical time. It is a universal time that exists without a beginning and an end, frozen at a particular moment. Time in this chronotope of the idyll is immanent because it is inherent to this kind of chronotope and also because an important attribute of this “folkloric time” is immediacy with nature/world. This is usually expressed in the special relationship that time has to space in the idyll. This image of an agrarian way of living, harsh as it is, imparts a sense of immediacy between the human subject and the land. In this passage, there is a rhythm to the Bentley family life that corresponds to the rhythms of nature’s seasonal cycles. For example, they work hard in the fields during the day and sleep like “beasts” during the night. This sense of their closeness and immediacy to the land is further asserted through the repetition of these patterns creating a “cyclic rhythmicalness of time characteristic of the idyll”.<sup>36</sup> The fact that on Saturday afternoons they go to town and then come back home singing on the road leaves an impression of a life that is closer to ritual and spontaneous. Also, another characteristic of this idyll is “the conjoining of human life with the life of nature”.<sup>37</sup> These farmers are also closely associated with nature as they have been likened to “animals” and “beasts”—indeed, “driven animals”, that is animals used to plough the land. In this instance we see that for these farmers the farm is a lived and felt place. It is a place where they work and have friends. It is a place where communication and interaction happens. It is a place where they experience intense feelings of

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<sup>35</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 64-5.

<sup>36</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 225.

<sup>37</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 226.

attachment.

This nostalgic celebration of a time and a place when people such as these artisans and pioneer figures maintained contact with their work highlights the increasing sense of disorientation and placelessness of characters in the narrative present. The following passage articulates Jesse's relationship to the farm:

In the room by the window overlooking the land that had come to him sat Jesse thinking of his own affairs. In the stables he could hear the tramping of his horses and the restless movement of his cattle. Away in the fields he could see other cattle wandering over green hills. The voices of men, his men who worked for him, came in to him through the window. From the milk-house there was the thump, thump of a churn being manipulated by the half-witted girl, Eliza Stoughton.<sup>38</sup>

This snapshot shows Jesse's estrangement and distance from the farm. Jesse only observes from the outside: he thinks rather than works, he hears workers and animals from afar. He is distanced from the land through the mediation of the machines. This passage touches upon Anderson's preoccupation with a contemporary lack of immediacy between the subject of the world and his or her diminishing contact with nature. In order to discuss this theme in *Winesburg* it would be useful to explain it with reference to the concepts of "landscape", or merely a view, and "place". Tim Creswell says that "landscape is an intensely visual idea. In most definitions of landscape the viewer is outside of it. This is the primary way in which it differs from place. Places are very much things to be inside of".<sup>39</sup> This state of being inside or outside is closely related to the sense of rootedness and place. For, a person who is looking at a landscape, that person is not active in the creation of meaning; he or she "reads" values latent in the landscape. Place, on the other hand, is

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<sup>38</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 69.

<sup>39</sup> Tim Creswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, p. 10.

meaningful; the person in a place has a certain relationship to place that is governed by values and meaning. In a place, one is part of a web of relations. Reading “Godliness” in light of these concepts, one may find that the chronotope of the story is used to associate Jesse’s experience of the farm with “landscape” or a mere view. He is outside of place in the sense that it is not a way of life for him. The web of relations for Jesse is mediated by the machine. He is a viewer of nature more than a participant and a part of nature.

This “being outside” shows itself through the lack of spirituality. The land that surrounds Jesse is not a place where he may experience spirituality. The Jesse narrative suggests that, instead of using machines, people themselves have become machine-like. Traditional rituals that used to assure the sense of continuity between the human and the world, and a feeling of being guarded and protected by an ontological entity, are now emptied of their meaning. Jesse increasingly merges the idea of material success, about which he reads in the magazines, with ideas from the Old Testament. He comes to believe that he was one of the men of the old days of the Bible—a kind of prophet for modern age. Therefore, he believes that he is better than other people around him. He assumes that if he sacrifices a lamb in the presence of his grandson he might be sent some sign towards this effect from God. The following passage describes what might be called a modern ritual:

Into the old man’s mind had come the notion that now he could bring from God a word or a sign out of the sky, that the presence of the boy and man on their knees in some lonely spot in the forest would make the miracle he had been waiting for almost inevitable.... when he had come to an open place among the trees he dropped upon his knees and began to pray in a loud voice. A kind of terror he had never known before took possession of David... his own knees began to tremble. It seemed to him that he was in the presence not only of his grandfather but of someone else, someone who might

hurt him, someone who was not kindly but dangerous and brutal.<sup>40</sup>

The ostensibly solemn ritual is treated with irony. This irony is latent in the representation of the present time of Winesburg through ancient myths of sacrifice. This serves to intensify the failure of the present. Unlike the ancient rituals of the Bible which succeeded in achieving meaning for those participating or hearing about the sacrifice, the present rituals of sacrifice only alienate humans. No meaningful contact is achieved and Jesse does not receive any sign from God. In fact, Jesse is humiliated by David who, terrorised by his grandfather, strikes him to the ground and then leaves the town of Winesburg never to be seen again.

In this instance the sacrifice ritual is meaningless and leads to catastrophic outcomes such as the family's disintegration; this is exemplified by the escape of the protagonist's grandson and the neurotic state of his daughter. The family idyll, quite absent and reversed here, is closely connected to the agricultural idyll for Bakhtin. It is this form that "comes closest to achieving folkloric time".<sup>41</sup> This contrast between the pioneers' experience of place and the present people's experience of place embodies a deep sense of disorientation in the present. If the farmers of the past are likened to animals and beasts and their existence is one that involves interaction with animals (in both positive and negative ways), Jesse effectively fails to establish any symbolic or actual relationship with the animal world. Instead, he becomes associated with machines. Jesse's association with machines is also indicated through his feelings of being uprooted. This is expressed all through "Godliness" as an "indefinable hunger" within him and then we read that he "would have given much to achieve peace and in him was a fear that peace was the thing he could not achieve".<sup>42</sup> In short, the relations between people, land and nature are transformed from one of participation to that of a viewer; the movement is from one who is rooted in place to rootlessness.

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<sup>40</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 85.

<sup>41</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 226.

<sup>42</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 68.

If nature and land do not offer a spiritual experience, the small town is not the home that provides a sense of security either. That Anderson chose to set his stories in the small-towns or villages of the Midwest is vital for our understanding of the poetic and political implications of his fiction. The image of the small town has become an important means for reflecting on and engaging with place in the US culture. Carl Van Doren, describing the image of the Midwestern small town (or the Midwestern village as often referred to), with which Anderson's contemporary writers of the Midwest were preoccupied, writes that

[t]he village [i.e., the small town] seemed too cosy a microcosm to be disturbed. There it lay in the mind's eye, neat, compact, organized, traditional: the white church with tapering spire, the sober schoolhouse, the smithy of the ringing anvil, the corner grocery, the cluster of friendly houses; the venerable parson, the wise physician, the canny squire, the grasping landlord softened or outwitted in the end; the village belle, gossip, atheist, idiot; jovial fathers, gentle mothers, merry children; cool parlors, shining kitchens, spacious barns, lavish gardens, fragrant summer dawns, and comfortable winter evenings.<sup>43</sup>

This picture is a variation of the image of the Midwest as a pastoral heaven where people are happy and lead a harmonious life. When trying to read *Winesburg, Ohio* in this context one finds that Anderson's depiction of the small town hardly matches the one mentioned above. Contrary to the image of the small town provided here by Van Doren, Anderson's stories give a sense of the small town as a claustrophobic place from which people try to escape.<sup>44</sup> The small town's conventions are repressive and limiting for many of these characters. This is reflected in the wide

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<sup>43</sup> Carl Von Doren, "The Revolt from the Village", p. 147.

<sup>44</sup> Although some critics, among whom Carl Van Doren, argue that Anderson does not wholly condemn the small town. He argues that Anderson feels sympathetic to the town people such as these. See "The Revolt from the Village", p. 156. It should also be noted that in this article and also in other works of scholarship of the Midwestern literature there is no distinction between the terms "small town" and "village". Although *Winesburg, Ohio* is set in a small town it is frequently referred to and labelled as the village literature.

dissemination of the motif/action of departure or escape throughout the collection, a point to which I shall return later.

The image of the human being in fiction is always intrinsically chronotopic, Bakhtin has argued, insofar as the fictive figuration of the human subject both operates within and establishes a chronotope.<sup>45</sup> This is particularly true when evaluating the characters' relationship with place: how they create and are created by specific places. Anderson's work as a short story writer has often been associated with that of Anton Chekhov in that both authors focus on stories of character instead of plot.<sup>46</sup> Anderson's stories are concerned with individuals and, rather than detailing the lives of his characters by showing the progression of events chronologically, Anderson is interested in what, as he often described it, lies under the surface of things.<sup>47</sup> Like Chekhov before him, Anderson delves into the psychological lives of individuals in order to stress their relationship to a place—here, the small town of Winesburg, Ohio.

Unlike Chekhov, who never developed a short story cycle, however, Anderson is keen on representing this experience of place through what Lundén termed “centrifugal and centripetal narrative strategies” which are appropriate to the short story composite.<sup>48</sup> While in Joyce's short story cycle, explored in Chapter One, we have encountered the unity of place and repetition of characters, but no unifying protagonist, in Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* the binding force in the sequence of narratives is a protagonist, George Willard. This character creates a thread that runs throughout the collection, contributing both to the forces of cohesion as well as to those of disruption, or differentiation. Although the reader follows some developments in the character of George (for example, his “growing into young manhood”<sup>49</sup>), we never experience him evolving

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<sup>45</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 85.

<sup>46</sup> Rideout, *Sherwood Anderson: A Writer in America*, Vol. 1, p. 318.

<sup>47</sup> For more on this aspect of *Winesburg* see John Updike's “Twisted Apples” in *Winesburg, Ohio: Sherwood Anderson*, eds. Charles E. Moldin and Ray Lewis White (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996). PP. 189-194.

<sup>48</sup> Rolf Lundén, “Centrifugal and Centripetal Narrative Strategies in the Short Story Composite and the Episode Film” in *Interférences Littéraires/Littéraire Interenties*, Vol. 12 (February, 2014), 49-60.

<sup>49</sup> Anderson, *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs*, p. 289.

into an independent character. Although he is present in almost every story, Melissa Gniadek highlights, “George remains an intangible being—a mass of ideas—some consistent and concrete like his desire to be a writer, but most undeveloped and shifting. His physical appearance is never made specific, and as a reporter he is, for the most part, a receptacle for other people’s tales”.<sup>50</sup> George’s authority is furthermore questioned because of his ostensible failure to “master” the narrative. As both the main character and the narrator, George does not manage to deliver what could be called, in strict terms, a coherent narrative with a unified message. As will be explained in more detail in the next section, *Winesburg, Ohio* is best described as a fragmentary narrative or collection of narratives. The only binding thread between them is that every short story deals with the life of an individual in the small town of Winesburg. George listens to these characters’ own narratives of aspiration and failure in the town, which in turn tell him, or suggest to him, that he should do what they have not achieved. Clarence Lindsay argues that the characters in *Winesburg, Ohio* create their own romantic narratives of selfhood. As such, he goes on to write, “*Winesburg, Ohio* inevitably becomes a meta-fictive carnival, an extended, thorough examination of an astonishing range of romantic artistic postures and possibilities”.<sup>51</sup> Although Lindsay examines these selfhood narratives in the context of and as an engagement with American identity, these narratives could also reveal much about these characters’ relationship to place. In her article entitled “Narrative of Community: The Identification of a Genre”, Sandra Zagarell writes about what she calls “the narrative of community”—literary works used by writers, especially women, to write about a community and the way it works. She maintains that this narrative model is most often used by marginal groups, and she suggests that these include the work of some male writers like Sherwood Anderson. She argues that “[t]he predominant viewpoint of *Winesburg* is the individual-based conviction that everyone has a story to tell”. According to Zagarell, Anderson’s

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<sup>50</sup> Melissa Gniadek, “The Art of Becoming: Sherwood Anderson, Frank Sargeson and the Grotesque Aesthetic”, in *Journal of New Zealand Literature* (JNZL), No. 23, Part 2 (January 2005), p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> Clarence Lindsay, “The Nearest Thing to Being Loveable”, in *Such a Rare Thing* (Ohio: Kent University Press, 2009), p. xvii.

fiction articulates the tension between the narrative of the community and that of the individual, in which the individuals' perspectives prevail.<sup>52</sup> One could add to these insights that these tensions are created and sustained by individuals engaged in a process of *negotiating place*. Through these narratives the characters are reimagining place and creating their own space. Interestingly, however, a recurrent pattern in *Winesburg, Ohio* is that, instead of pursuing the inherited myth of the pastoral, the featured characters create their own variants of it, or myths of community using place-imagination. The second story in *Winesburg, Ohio*, "Hands", offers a good example of these narrative strategies. Its protagonist, Wing Biddlebaum, lives at the edge of the town, and his existence as well as his experience of the place which he inhabits may well be described as liminal. The opening of the story delineates this dual liminality well:

Upon the half decayed veranda of a small frame house that stood near the edge of a ravine near the town of Winesburg, Ohio, a fat little old man walked nervously up and down.... Wing Biddlebaum, forever frightened and beset by a ghostly band of doubts did not think of himself as in any way a part of the life of the town where he had lived for twenty years.<sup>53</sup>

The character is isolated and confined in the world of the town. He has been there for many years yet he is not part of the community. Words such as "decayed", "ghostly" and "doubts" express a sense of place grounded in anxiety and uneasiness rather than comfort and security. But Wing has a capacity to create an alternative place through story-telling and now he also has a listener, George Willard. Talking to George, Wing creates his own idyllic world:

On the grassy bank Wing Biddlebaum had tried again to drive his point home... he launched into a

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<sup>52</sup> Sandra A. Zagarell, "Narrative of Community: The Identification of a Genre", *Signs*, Vol. 13, No.3 (Spring 1988), p. 513.

<sup>53</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 27.

long rambling talk, speaking as one lost in a dream. Out of the dream Wing Biddlebaum made a picture for George Willard. In the picture men lived again in a kind of pastoral golden age. Across a green open country came clean-limbed young men, some afoot, some mounted upon horses. In crowds the young men came to gather about the feet of an old man who sat beneath a tree in a tiny garden and who talked to them.<sup>54</sup>

As the passage shows, Wing creates an image of another world that, unlike the real world of Winesburg, is full of movement: young men came or mounted horses. And, unlike in his silent and lonely life, people in this imagined world meet and talk to each other. However, the fact that these narratives have dream-like qualities reveals an unreal aspect. Like Joyce's characters in their relationship to the developing city of Dublin, Anderson's characters never succeed in going beyond the confines of the small town and materialize their narratives. In "An Adventure", Alice Hindman, having an epiphany following a failed "adventure", realizes that "many people must live and die alone, even in Winesburg".<sup>55</sup> In short, the small town is a claustrophobic place that characters try to negotiate by reimagining in the form of personal narratives. This leads to the point where Anderson's stories register a crucial tension between an image of place held in a certain culture and the experience of that place by people living there. In the larger context of the Midwestern literary imagination and its image of the pastoral, each tale by these individuals poses a challenge to the myth of the pastoral. At a more general level, Anderson's community of Winesburg emerges as not homogenous but rather individualized and heterogeneous—thereby suggesting a break-down of community as such but also a certain reimagining of what might constitute a community. The short story cycle, argues Gerald Kennedy,<sup>56</sup> offers an analogy to the sense of community itself; the short cycle is made up of stories that are related and connected to

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<sup>54</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 30.

<sup>55</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 120.

<sup>56</sup> See J. Gerald Kennedy's "From Anderson's Winesburg to Carver's Cathedral: The Short Story Sequence and the Semblance of Community", in *Modern American Short Story Sequences: Composite Fictions and Fictive Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 194-215.

each other through recurrent themes and motifs, yet they are independent from each other in that they could be considered as autonomous narratives. This ability of the short story cycle to express both the connection and disconnection shows the nature of community and the relationship of individuals within the community.

### III

While the previous section explored the spaces of the farm (embodying the new spatial system created by industrialisation in which people's relation to nature and land changes) and that of the small town (a claustrophobic space in which people are engaged in recreating space) as *experienced places*, the current section will explore Anderson's textual spaces and their relation to the myths of his region. I argue that, in his text, Anderson distinguishes between place as "lived" and place as "conceived" (using Henri Lefebvre's terminology), and therefore creates a text that could be best described as "heterotopic"—in the precise way Foucault defines this category.

Anderson's scepticism about the grand narratives of his region and its held image is expressed in the story that he strategically positions first in the cycle, "The Book of the Grotesque". This story introduces, in general terms, Anderson's preliminary conceptualisation of truth, a viewpoint that has implications for his understanding of place and its articulation in the short story cycle. The narrator, an old writer, relates the following:

That in the beginning when the world was young there were a great many thoughts but no such thing as a truth. Man made the truths himself and each truth was a composite of a great many and vague thoughts. All about the world were truths and they were all beautiful.... And the people came along. Each as he appeared snatched up one of the truths and some who were quite strong snatched up a dozen of them.... it was his notion that the moment one of the people took one of the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he

embraced became a falsehood.<sup>57</sup>

Playfully negotiating the discourse of the Book of Genesis in the Bible, this passage activates the motif that recurs in the collection henceforth: truth is contingent. Truths do not exist outside the contexts within which they are created. In other words, humans make truth at a certain time and place. Once a person believes that a certain idea is true then that idea becomes true from the perspective of that person. Anderson's friend George Daugherty suggests that Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas about truth may have influenced Anderson's conceptualisation of truth and his specific use of the grotesque: "Daugherty remembered that Anderson was interested in Nietzsche during the period he wrote *Winesburg, Ohio* and that he sometimes quoted a Nietzschean idea: "This is true-but the opposite is also true".<sup>58</sup> The old man's thoughts in the above-mentioned passage about absolute truth are quite close to Nietzsche's views concerning the non-existence of absolute truth and universal constants expressed in his article "On Truth and Falsity in their Ultramoral Sense" (1873).<sup>59</sup> For both Anderson and Nietzsche what we believe is truth is only fiction. Anderson found the best fictional correlative for this worldview in the concept and genre of the grotesque—a discourse and representative strategy that directly addresses itself to the questions of falsity, contradiction and fixation, but also to some kind of alienation of the subject from the (estranged) world.<sup>60</sup>

But Anderson's use of the grotesque has a very specific purpose: as metatextually described in these opening lines, here the grotesque signals a fixation on an idea taken as absolute truth and disclosed, in the course of the narrative, as a falsity. It should be noted here that Anderson was not

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<sup>57</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, pp. 23-4.

<sup>58</sup> Judy Jo Small, *A Reader's Guide to the Stories of Sherwood Anderson* (New York: G. K. Hall, 1994), p.15.

<sup>59</sup> Nietzsche, "On Truth and Falsity in their Ultramoral Sense", Trans. Maixmilian A. Mügge, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed., Oscar Levy, Vol. 2 [1873] (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1911), pp. 171-192.

<sup>60</sup> On grotesque in general, see, most influentially, Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grottesque in Art and Literature* trans. Ulrich Weisstein [1963] (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grottesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and, of course, Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, Trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1984).

interested in the physical aspect of the aesthetics of the grotesque, although the instances of the grotesque representation might appear in his stories from time to time.<sup>61</sup> Rather, he was interested in the interior grotesqueness, grotesqueness from within, a posture close to contradiction. It is in this way that *Winesburg, Ohio* becomes a gallery of grotesques in which characters choose specific ideas, take them as absolute truths and then try to live their lives by them. One of the dangers against which Anderson warns is that, by doing so, the “subjects of the grotesque” identify themselves with fixed ways of feeling, thinking and doing things in life. This results in being isolated not only from others (by way of excluding them and their truths), but ultimately in being isolated from one’s own self.<sup>62</sup> Eberhard Alsen draws a comparison between Sherwood Anderson’s views of truth and the grotesque and Mark Twain’s ideas about the same subject tackled in Twain’s article “What is Man?” (1917). Alsen argues that both Anderson and Twain warn against the pursuit of permanent and absolute truth. Both authors, he suggests, present the pursuit of this goal as an impossible task, which leaves those who attempt it as grotesques themselves.<sup>63</sup>

This sceptical attitude towards truth and grand narratives held by both Nietzsche and Anderson also translates in the narrative structures they deploy to convey that stance. Nietzsche relays his philosophical insights through a composite of narrative fragments or aphorisms, that are sometimes coordinated while at other times conflicting. Walter Kaufman says that what

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<sup>61</sup> The word grotesque is derived from “grotto”, an Italian word that refers to the representations of distorted and even ugly human figures in ancient caves.

<sup>62</sup> In “The Strength of God”, for example, the Reverend Curtis Hartman, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Winesburg, is alienated from his own inner self and desires when he takes his religious beliefs into extreme. He denies his love and sexual desire for a woman he sees naked and instead interprets it a sign from God.

<sup>63</sup> See Eberhard Alsen, “The Futile Pursuit of Truth in Twain’s “What is Man?” and Anderson’s “The Book of the Grotesque”, *Mark Twain Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Winter 1974-75), pp. 12-14. However, it should be noted that, while there are indeed many similarities between the two writers regarding the issue of truth and the grotesque, Alsen’s argument that Anderson was influenced by Twain while he was writing “The Book of the Grotesque” is disputable. While it is true that Anderson published “The Book of the Grotesque” in 1919 as the opening story of *Winesburg, Ohio*, many critics argue that it was actually written as early as 1915, two years before Twain’s article (first published in 1917). Besides, Anderson expressed his theory of the grotesque in works that date back to a time earlier than the composition of *Wineburg, Ohio* such as in an unpublished novel about Talbot Whittingham which he was composing in 1914-1915. For an overview of these critics and more on this issue see Judy Jo Small, *A Reader’s Guide to the Short Stories of Sherwood Anderson* (New York: G. K. Hall and Co., 1994), p. 13.

distinguishes Nietzsche's style, which he calls "monadologic", from that of earlier philosophers, is its "elusive quality". This style is characterised by "the tendency of each aphorism to be self-sufficient while throwing light on almost every other aphorism". Kaufmann writes that, "while in Nietzsche's books the individual sentences seem clear enough, it is the total design that puzzles us". In other words, the text itself confronts us with a "pluralistic universe".<sup>64</sup> This style lets the philosopher view life from as many different angles as possible.

Anderson may well have also been influenced by the way Nietzschean philosophical texts are structured: Anderson, I argue, uses a similar narrative structure for comparable aims. These are contrasted to the traditional modes of representation and thus the reader's experience of them deserves some additional attention. Richard Murphy says that "the authority of the "classical" modes of representation ... lies not so much in the explicitly ideological character of their depiction of events, objects and characters, but rather in another dimension entirely. It is ingrained in the very structure of the representational system itself as a means of organizing the recipient's experience".<sup>65</sup> To contrast traditional ideologies then means to oppose their representational systems. It is for this reason that, rather than in the didactic pronouncements, such as those we may find in the passage quoted above, the scepticism Anderson shows towards grand narratives is more effectively reflected in the very form of short story that he uses to relate the life of the inhabitants of his fictional small town. In *A Story Teller's Story* Anderson writes:

There was a notion that ran through all storytelling in America, that stories must be built about a plot and that absurd Anglo-Saxon notion that they must point a moral, uplift the people, make better citizens, etc., etc. The magazines were filled with these plot plays. "The Poison Plot", I called it...

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<sup>64</sup> Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist and Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 72, 75.

<sup>65</sup> Richard Murphy, *Theorizing the Avant-garde: Modernism, Expressionism and the Problem of Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 202.

What was wanted I thought was form, not plot, an altogether more elusive and difficult thing to come at.<sup>66</sup>

In a related line of argument about the short story, Anderson writes that “there were no plot short stories ever lived in any life I had known about”. He believes that the “true history of life is but a history of moments. It is only at rare moments that we live”. In terms remarkably similar to those contemporaneously used by British writer Virginia Woolf, Anderson argues that, in order to capture those moments, the writer has to break “with the rules of structure literally to embody moments, to suggest endless halts and starts, the dreamlike passiveness and groping of life”.<sup>67</sup> Thus the narrative structure of *Winesburg, Ohio* becomes a playfield for the author’s refusal of artificially connected life-narratives and a display for his uncertainties about the representation of the “truth” of a place. Like many other modernist short story writers, Anderson challenges the possibility of a fixed and determined meaning of truth by the very means through which he represents human experience. Reading *Winesburg* in light of what Murphy argues is useful, as the close relationship between the formal strategies and thematic representations of a place is a vital aspect of *Winesburg*.<sup>68</sup> The modernist short story undermines and questions our epistemological

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<sup>66</sup> Anderson, *A Story Teller’s Story* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1924), p. 352.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Robert A. Papinchak, *Sherwood Anderson: A Study of the Short Fiction* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), p. 3. Writing in 1919, Virginia Woolf suggests: “Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being ‘like this’. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions-trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? We are not pleading merely for courage and sincerity; we are suggesting that the proper stuff of fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it”. Virginia Woolf, “Modern Fiction”, in *The Common Reader* [1925] (London: Hogarth Press, 1933), p. 189.

<sup>68</sup> For more on the form in *Winesburg, Ohio* see Forrest L. Ingram, *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century: Studies in a Literary Genre* (The Hague: Mouton and Cp., Printers, 1971); Susan Garland Mann, *The Short Story Cycle: A Genre Companion and Reference Guide* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989) and J. Gerald Kennedy,

abilities, it questions and interrogates more than it gives answers. The short story cycle has a special position in this shared modernist impulse. Especially for Joyce and Anderson, the short story cycle's structure of disjointure with gaps, voids, contradictions, and silences became a perfect receptacle for their attitude towards place.<sup>69</sup>

Using the short story cycle Anderson offers another perspective on human experience and, as the argument goes here, in the process of writing about the pastoral he rewrites the pastoral myth itself. To put Anderson's treatment of the small town and its myths in Henri Lefebvre's terms is to say that Anderson's text creates a relativistic and uncertain "lived" space (Anderson's artistic treatment of the myth) that disrupts the certainties of "conceived", conceptualised, space (namely: the Midwestern myth of the pastoral). The "conceived" space, according to Lefebvre, is abstract; it is a constructed space and it is where hegemonic ideology (or the space of "abstract" or "petrified" truths) lurks. By contrast, the "lived" space is alive and living. It has the ability to change and appropriate.<sup>70</sup> An example of abstract or conceived space was given and explained earlier in my discussion of the pastoral and the story entitled "Godliness" in the second section of this chapter. As was shown, the Midwestern region of the United States is conceived as a utopia where people have a simple life and live in harmony with nature. Although "conceived" space is abstract, as the myth of the pastoral shows, it plays a crucial part in "social and political practice" within a particular place.<sup>71</sup> As any conceived space, this larger than life image of the Midwest idealises place, disguising many aspects of it that are otherwise conflicting. This means that "conceived" space plays an important role in arranging and organising aspects and components of place in ways that result in the formation of grand narratives about particular places.

The nature of the "lived" space created by Anderson's text could be better elucidated using

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"From Anderson's Winesburg to Carver's Cathedral: The Short Story Sequence and the Semblance of Community", in *Modern American Short Story Sequences: Composite Fictions and Fictive Communities*.

<sup>69</sup> See Adrian Hunter, "The Modernist Short Story", in *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 43-93.

<sup>70</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 41-2.

<sup>71</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 41.

Foucault's concept of "heterotopia"—space of heterogeneous sites. According to Foucault, a heterotopic site is contradictory and can contain and juxtapose a number of different sites within it. Heterotopias are not only spatial but also temporal, and, therefore, in heterotopias there is spatial as well as temporal disruption. Heterotopias are linked to heterochronies, "slices of time", particular historical moments of rupture from the traditionally understood course of time. But heterotopias operate and make sense only in relation to other forms of space. One of their key functions is that they are spaces of illusion that show real spaces to be more illusory than they seem. Another aspect of the heterotopia, says Foucault, is its capability of "juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are themselves incompatible", and therefore reposition our understanding of inherited grand-narratives or abstract truths. Foucault gives the garden as an example of this aspect of heterotopia. In the ancient rectangular gardens of Persia the four parts of the world are represented in each rectangle of the garden. Therefore, the garden and later the carpet, which is an imitation of the garden itself, are microcosms in which all the sides of life come together. One could argue that Sherwood Anderson's experimental stories, or collections of short story cycles for that matter, make up spaces that are heterotopic in nature. Through the fragmented stories or narratives Anderson offers an image of place that is made up of layers and contains many contradictory elements. This strategy offers a "lived" (heterotopic) image of place that exposes and questions the grand narratives that try to homogenise place. In turn, his interiorly contradictory composite of an idyll and realist dystopia also suggests that many components of the "reality" of turn-of-the century high capitalist America are in themselves illusory. Capitalism, according to Lefebvre, creates "abstract space" that in turn homogenises space.<sup>72</sup> It is these seemingly homogenised spaces that Anderson's artistic heterotopic spaces unveil. New methods of standardisation for American life ensued with industrialisation and capitalism and the obsession with money and material success came to not only contradict the long held image of the Midwest but also increasingly isolate people. There is no meaningful community in Winesburg and most of

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<sup>72</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 53.

the families are shown to be disintegrating.

At the level of organizing the chronotope of the text, in *Winesburg, Ohio* Anderson discards a progressive and continuous concept of chronological narration and instead creates a spatial form within which diverse narratives exist side by side. This way he gives up on creating one long narrative and gives more space for many short narratives that interact with one another. This interaction is made possible through the repetition of words, thematic patterns and situations within the spatial form. However, what is important here is not the act of repetition itself but rather how, the way in which, these motifs recur. For example, these patterns and situations are repeated with the use of a different tone every time they recur.<sup>73</sup> This characteristic of Anderson's short story cycle allows for a reading of the whole collection as, in Forrest Ingram's words, "a book of short stories so linked by their author that the reader's successive experience on various levels of the pattern of the whole significantly modifies his experience of each of its component parts".<sup>74</sup> In other words, these repeated patterns are related to each other in terms of the way that they comment on each other in the process of relating the events of the stories. In this sense, the reader's experience of the whole short story collection implies another reading, or multiple successive readings, of certain incidents and situations. Similarly, the reader reads certain repeated motifs in light of each other. As a result of this complex networking, the stories relate to each other in the way that they sometimes work against one other. A signifier is not limited to one signified anymore; rather than being stable it becomes dynamic and flexible. This fragmentary form allows Anderson to repeat and juxtapose as many fragments of experience as possible from various perspectives.

The motif of departure is particularly productive in this sense: it appears in many stories. As

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<sup>73</sup> Clarence Lindsay, "'I Belong in Little Towns': Anderson's Provincial Postmodernism", in *Such a Rare Thing*, p. 11.

<sup>74</sup> Ingram Forrest, *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century*, p. 19. It should also be noted that while this chapter makes use of this particular view of Forrest about the short story cycle it eventually disagrees with his final result and reading of the cycle. While Forrest seeks to find unity and cohesion in the short story cycle this chapter argues that, as will be demonstrated in this section, that these narratives, although they contain some cohesive forces, are basically open-ended and indeterminate.

the small town exudes entrapment, many characters in *Winesburg, Ohio* show the desire to escape the restrictions and oppression of their town and their condition, and to go somewhere else, preferably a big city. In a story entitled “Death”, a character named Elizabeth Willard gives voice to this feeling: “I wanted to go at a terrible speed, to drive on and on forever. I wanted to get out of town, out of my clothes, out of my marriage, out of my body, out of everything..”.<sup>75</sup> Elizabeth Willard, however, elopes only in her dreams and imagination. But (attempts at) escape for other characters are more literal and help to shape and reshape the entire narrative. In what follows I would like to examine the use of this motif in two stories, “Loneliness” and “Departure”, and a set of allied narratives, to elucidate how the repetition and revision of certain motifs “heterogenizes” the construction of place in Anderson’s text.

“Departure”, the final story in *Winesburg, Ohio*, centres on the departure of George Willard from the town of Winesburg to the city. The story concludes with the following paragraph:

The young man’s mind was carried away by his growing passion for dreams... With the recollection of little things occupying his mind he closed his eyes and leaned back in the car seat. He stayed that way for a long time and when he aroused himself and again looked out of the car window the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood.<sup>76</sup>

A moment of hope and a possibility of change for George Willard have been created here. The passage emphasises future rather than the past. The train is already taking him from his town to the city, from his past to the future. As the paragraph shows, George Willard is leaving his town and all that is associated with it behind. This is further asserted in the last sentence. This sentence

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<sup>75</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 227.

<sup>76</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 247.

suggests that George's departure is an act that is already done and finished (had disappeared) and that his town of Winesburg is there only as "a background" (in fact it "had become" one) upon which to write and draw his dreams of a better life in the future.

One understands this closure better if one reads it in light of the preceding story entitled "Sophistication". What links these two stories is their depiction of change regarding the character of George Willard. "Sophistication" is about the coming of age of George Willard and "Departure" centres on his leaving his hometown. "Sophistication", as Rideout summarises, charts George's "inward voyage from innocence to experience, from ignorance to understanding, from apparent reality of the face of things to true reality behind or below".<sup>77</sup> At the level of the short story cycle as a whole, George's development from youth into maturity is marked by his relationship and attitude towards women. In the past George's encounters with women were superficial and self-centred. In "The Thinker", for example, George shows his immaturity and naivety by deciding to deliberately fall in love with Helen White in order to be able to write love stories. By contrast, in "Sophistication", he manages to go beyond peddling with words into understanding what people feel and think. This is shown when he achieves a moment of understanding with Helen White:

[S]he took his arm and walked beside him in dignified silence. For some reason they could not have explained they had both got from their silent evening together the thing they needed. Man or boy, woman or girl, they had for a moment taken hold of the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible.<sup>78</sup>

In this passage George and Helen share a brief moment of mutual awareness. George gives up his preoccupation with words for a moment of true communication and understanding.

<sup>77</sup> Walter B. Rideout, *Sherwood Anderson: A Writer in America*, Vol1, p. 327.

<sup>78</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 243.

Significantly, this understanding comes through silence. By going beyond verbal communication (on which much of the cycle is based), George manages to avoid becoming what the old man in “The Book of the Grotesque” calls a grotesque figure. This is also a sign of his maturity in terms of thinking about the world. He accepts the world with an ambivalent attitude which most of the other characters are incapable of doing: “One shudders at the thought of the meaninglessness of life while at the same instant, and if the people of the town are his people, one loves life so intensely that tears come into the eyes”.<sup>79</sup> Having removed a barrier between himself and the people around him, the barrier that has paradoxically sustained his position as a “listener” and theirs as “storytellers”, George is now able to “think of the people in the town where he had lived with something like reverence”. This newly established affective link appears to be, paradoxically, a preamble to, indeed enabler of, his departure. Reading this story the reader assumes that George’s implied development from youth into maturity, from innocence into experience, is to be followed by a logical decision to leave the stifling and restrictive town of Winesburg behind in pursuit of a better place. This is hinted at in the temporal side of the chronotope: while “Sophistication” took place in autumn “Departure” takes places in spring. George’s departure and new beginning is the subject matter of “Departure”.

However, the seemingly simple subject matter of “Departure”, that is, George’s leaving his town, reveals itself to be more complicated. Although the story depicts George leaving his town on the train, the reader is warned against reading his departure in a straightforward or overly optimistic manner. The main factor in Anderson’s text which creates this sense of uncertainty is the role the narrator plays in these stories: as a rule Anderson uses an ambivalent, ambiguous and strategically unreliable narrator. The relation of the narrator to many of these stories he hears and the way the townspeople behave makes the reader’s task of reaching a definite interpretation of the fate of these characters and the resolution of their plight a difficult task, if not an impossible one.

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<sup>79</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 240-1.

Throughout *Winesburg* there are many examples in which the narrator maintains a double attitude towards these characters and their narratives. The following statement by the narrator about George Willard reveals some essential characteristics of the narrating instance itself. While describing George's listening to the story of Doctor Parcival (in "The Philosopher"), the narrator remarks that: "[t]he tales that doctor Parcival told George Willard began nowhere and ended nowhere. Sometimes the boy thought they must all be inventions, a pack of lies. And then again he was convinced that they contained the very essence of truth".<sup>80</sup> What the narrator says about George also applies to him. Like George Willard, he is both fascinated and at the same time sceptical about the narratives of the townspeople. At the same time as the narrator appears interested in these stories he remains silent. The narrator is non-judgmental in the sense that he does not offer immediate comments on the narratives of these characters. Rather, sometimes he shows his attitude by not commenting on the events or through "winking" to the reader. He holds back much information that the reader needs to know in order to assess what these characters do, but at the same time implies that he knows much more about the situation, and therefore undermines any sense of narrative certainty. The meaningful withholding of comment, characteristic of Anderson's narrator, spreads to other characters that temporarily appropriate a focalizing/narrating function when entangled in the act of observing each other. A focus on this strategy is the key for understanding "Departure".

In the following quote we observe George Willard, ready to embark on his journey out of Winesburg, from the view point of Tom Little, the conductor of the train: "When the train started Tom Little punched his ticket, grinned and, although he knew George well and knew on what adventure he was just about setting out, made no comment. Tom had seen a thousand George Willards go out of their towns to the city".<sup>81</sup> Tom Little's reaction to George's "adventure" creates in the reader some doubt about George's future and chances of success. The fact that he makes "no

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<sup>80</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 51.

<sup>81</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 246.

comment” about the journey of a man that he knows well and that he grins at George shows an ambivalent or uncertain attitude. This uncertainty is intensified when the omniscient narrator intervenes to reveal that, for Tom, George is only one of the thousands that depart their towns. Unlike George himself, the conductor sees nothing whatsoever unique about George’s departure from his town. It is as if the narrator conclusively draws the reader’s attention to other stories of (attempts at) departure from Winesburg that we have read about in the cycle. The narrator brings the reader back to consider the other “thousands” that escaped town before George and their stories, told or untold. By doing so, he also reconstellates the act of reading, from linear to palimpsestic.

As demonstrated above, Anderson counterbalances the optimistic perspective on George’s experience of maturity and subsequent departure with another perspective of the same theme without affirming any one of them. If one looks at the motif of departure retrospectively, as one is invited to do, one finds that the success in leaving the town of Winesburg does not guarantee the commencement of a happier life. Most of the physical departures from Winesburg in the book end with these characters failing to escape their alienation and isolation. The most memorable of these narratives, “Loneliness”, portrays the failure of Enoch Robinson who, an artist like George, tries to escape the town of Winesburg by going to New York where he hopes to find a better life. The parallels between George Willard and Enoch Robinson are very carefully established. Both young men aspire to be artists, and both dream of escaping from Winesburg. The events or the movements of the main character in “Loneliness” are circular: at the age of twenty one, Enoch left Winesburg for New York where he wanted to study art. Then, after staying in New York for fifteen years he comes back to his town of Winesburg. The story centres mostly on Enoch’s life in the city. The world where Enoch lives is physically well established and clear. In New York, we are told, he lived in a room that faced Washington Square. This is much like Joyce’s “The Dead” in that both stories take place in places (a room or a house) that are physically well established and

known from outside. It is when we go inside these interior spaces and experience them through the characters' eyes that they become less than what they seemed at first glance. "The story of Enoch", says the narrator, "is in fact the story of a room almost more than it is the story of a man".<sup>82</sup> The room where he lived was "long and narrow like a hallway". This description of the room makes it less and less familiar than the one first identified. It is almost surreal. When he first went to New York he became friends with a group of artists. He feels lonely among his friends and the artists that visit him: "Enoch wanted to talk too but he didn't know how. He was too excited to talk coherently. When he tried he sputtered and stammered... that made him stop talking. He knew what he wanted to say, but he knew also that he could never by any possibility say it".<sup>83</sup> The character's sense of place, as this passage shows, is received and gestured through language, the very medium that establishes place and makes it meaningful. Enoch cannot establish connections and communication with people.

When Enoch failed to establish true connections with the people around him he began to phantasise and invent people to whom he could "talk":

And so Enoch Robinson stayed in the New York room among the people of his fancy, playing with them, talking to them, happy as a child is happy. They were an odd lot, Enoch's people. They were made, I suppose, out of real people he had seen and who had for some obscure reason made an appeal to him. There was a woman with a sword in her hand, an old man with a long white beard who went about followed by a dog, a young girl whose stockings were always coming down and hanging over her shoe tops...<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 168.

<sup>83</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 169.

<sup>84</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 173.

Although Enoch feels at home among the people of his imagination and hallucinations, this place has become very thin. Its existence has been consumed by Enoch's imagination. This way the city as an entity becomes as unreal as the town from which he escaped. The city, its overwhelming and known physical presence and its significance as a place of emancipation, seems a better place only from far away. Once one gets closer it begins to be something other than what was conceived. Worse still, the unreal city seems not to function as a place at all, not even a place like the town from which the protagonist escaped.

The story "Departure" does not tell us anything about George's life after he leaves Winesburg, while in Enoch's case the whole story is about his life after he has left the town. The reader gets the impression that these two stories complement each other. The most significant effect of their juxtaposition (in relation to the poetics and politics of place) one perceives is that the movement of characters does not unfold only from the perspective of journeys from Winesburg to the city but also from those of the movement back from the city to Winesburg. The reader sees that Enoch returns to Winesburg more lonely and alienated than he was before his time spent in New York City: he ended up "out of the city to live out his life alone and defeated in Winesburg".<sup>85</sup>

At this point I would like to return to the question of heterotopic space. As we have seen in my previous analysis of "Departure" and "Loneliness", the reader of *Winesburg, Ohio* is invited to consider the desires and actual attempts at escape in relation to each other. The represented and imagined places and their received meanings, including mythopoetic meanings (for example, Winesburg as a stifling, alienating small town and New York as a liberating place of opportunities) are recomposed and re-layered, leaving the reader with a world that is much more similar to Foucault's image of the Persian carpet. This is so because the chronotope that conveys this world defies homogenisation and generalisation. This created artistic world deprives the small town as a signifier of its conceived and imagined signified. Throughout the cycle, there is a contrast

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

established between the town and the city as two different places: the city is where there is progress and success while the town is where there is backwardness and failure. Anderson's artistic recreation of the world shows that the contrast established between the village or town and the city is not actually as it seems. As signifiers both the town and the city are more complicated: their relationship is fluid and dynamic rather than fixed and stable; and, for all their ideological semantic proliferation, they actually seem to lack anchoring semantic points. Commenting on the style of Anderson, Richard Gray says that it "is hesitant, moving forward stealthily as if words were hazards; it is repetitive, circling back and forth as if words had to be probed, gently teased to disclose their meanings".<sup>86</sup> To apply what Gray says to Anderson's use of words or signifiers, such as the city and the town, one would find the short story cycle explores and probes these two signifiers from various perspectives until, eventually, we are able to view these two things in novel terms. In other words, this strategy draws attention to our view of these places, and by implication our preconceived conceptions of the Midwest and America, in new ways.<sup>87</sup>

This heterotopic place only increases in complexity when it is placed in the context of the short story cycle, imagined as it is by Anderson as a disruptive, centripetal-centrifugal genre. Its disturbing effects strengthen, too. Heterotopias, according to Michel Foucault, are disturbing

[b]ecause they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to 'hold together'...[H]eterotopias...desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of

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<sup>86</sup> Richard Gray, *A History of American Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 373.

<sup>87</sup> This worldview is quite similar to Anderson's preoccupation with what lies under the surface of things demonstrated in the stories but openly stated in the epigraph to *Winesburg, Ohio*, which reads as follows: "To the memory of my mother... whose keen observation on the life around her first awoke in me the hunger to see beneath the surface of lives..." (no page number available in the original).

grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilise the lyricism of our sentences.<sup>88</sup>

As we have seen, “Departure” begins with statements about George’s departure from his town and ends with unanswered questions. At the end of “Departure”—and the short story cycle itself—we are told that Winesburg has become only a background to his future life but the reader receives this information cautiously. He or she is never sure whether or not George will succeed in his adventure away from Winesburg. By the end of the story, George Willard and, by implication, the small town and its myths, appear like a “Janus-like figure standing between” two states: the state of “innocence and experience, youth and maturity, agrarian past and city future”.<sup>89</sup> Winesburg, like George himself, is caught between two states: between a lost agrarian past that is irretrievable and between an uncertain future in the city. As both a summation and embodiment of the narrative-epistemological strategies in the entire cycle, the story creates an initial sense of certainty in the reader only to deconstruct it later on. The way in which all these stories comment on and question each other and the discourse of place in them is not unlike what Doctor Reefy does in “Paper Pills”. In this story, Doctor Reefy “ceaselessly” builds and then destroys what he has previously put together. The narrator says that in his office Doctor Reefy “continually stuffed scraps of paper” into “the huge pockets” of his “linen duster”. “On the papers were written thoughts, ends of thoughts, beginnings of thoughts”. Then “after some weeks the scraps of paper became little hard round balls, and when the pockets were filled he dumped them out upon the floor”.<sup>90</sup> These hard round balls, we are told, operate as “[l]ittle pyramids of truth he [Doctor Reefy] erected and after erecting knocked them down again that he might have the truths to erect

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<sup>88</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. xviii-xix.

<sup>89</sup> Glen E. Love, “Horses or Men”, in *Sherwood Anderson: A Study of the Short Fiction* by Robert Allen Papinchak, p. 132. Note that Love’s article is in the third part of this book which is entitled “The Critics” and includes articles by some critics of Anderson.

<sup>90</sup> Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 36.

other pyramids”.<sup>91</sup> The task of the narrator of *Winesburg* and the whole collection is not dissimilar to that of Doctor Reefy in that both show the fragmentary nature of truth. “Paper Pills” works as an epitome for Anderson’s concept of truth and in so doing it also highlights the way the whole collection functions in creating a sense of indeterminacy that conveys an indeterminate place. This place is an uncertain one because it is seemingly real but then revealed as unreal. As the short story cycle develops and gains in complexity the town of Winesburg, with the recurrence of the many figures, streets, shops, buildings and farms in the stories, acquires a life of its own. Yet the town is also unreal. This idea of the town as indeterminate is formed through the disruptive heterotopic strategies creating an image of the town as a cosmos laden with contradictions and uncertainties. What we start with is a seemingly familiar Midwestern small town surrounded by farms; by the end of the text this place ends up being unfamiliar and increasingly distant to us. The place, the Midwestern small town, is there but it is in fact disappearing and is about to be consumed by the city, which looms large on the horizon.

### **Conclusion**

The short story cycle is sometimes described as one in which the sum of the whole is more important than the individual stories. In *Winesburg, Ohio* Anderson creates a cosmos that functions vertically rather than horizontally; discarding the traditional concept of time in relation to narrative as progressive and end-oriented, so that the text’s focus is instead the spatial relation of various narratives. In this sense, the overall function of these stories creates a text that is composed of many separate narratives that are polyvocal and dialogic in nature. The episodic

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p.35.

nature of the collection defies complete narratives. The short story cycle functions not through the progression of time but through the accumulation of experience gained from the repetition of themes and motifs which in turn guide the reader.

The heterotopic text of Anderson creates a “lived” space that undermines and disturbs the “conceived” and the abstract space of the pastoral myth and ideology of the small town. This chapter has explored this complex representation and (writerly and readerly) experience of place in Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio*. It has examined place as imagined, lived and experienced, and studied specific chronotopes such as that of the farm and the small town as experienced by characters, as well as the sense of alienation that pervades both experiences and imaginings of place. Anderson’s stories, I conclude, show us a sense of disorientation and placelessness.

Anderson’s ambivalence to his region and its myths is strongly expressed through the short story form he chose: it enables him to critique the small town values and the failure of the myth of the pastoral but also to provide an ambiguous picture of the future. Through the fragmentary form of the short story cycle in particular Anderson counterbalances the narrative of the pastoral myth with the fragmentary narrative form of the short story cycle. The form, I have argued, expresses Anderson’s scepticism towards some of the discourses or grand narratives of his region. The short story form itself serves Anderson well in expressing the isolation of many characters. The relationship of characters to each other resembles the short story cycle in that individual stories are disconnected and connected at the same time. The collection shows that although many characters live side by side in the town of Winesburg, they are isolated from each other and are unaware of one other’s needs and dilemmas. Anderson’s concern with this theme of isolation and lack of communication is expressed through a literary form that conveys the fragmentary nature of social relations. Through a form that is composed of separate yet related narratives, Anderson gives voice to as many alienated and isolated individuals as possible. In this sense the use of the short story cycle in Anderson’s text is closely related to the breakup of community and a focus on the

suffering of individuals struggling with a new mode of life. Anderson's cycle is made up of narratives that are separated from each other by textual discontinuities. These textual discontinuities express the alienation and the isolation of these individuals from each other but also contribute to the production of a heterotopic whole that questions what Foucault would call the "syntax", or ideology, of the small town-big city narrative as much as it affirms it. The last move, one of the order of Lefevbre's "lived" experience, has disquieting effects: it discloses the place in Anderson as deceptive and indeterminate.

## Chapter Three

### Yoknapatawpha County:

### The Resonant Cosmos of William Faulkner

#### I

Remembering his visit to New Orleans, William Faulkner writes in an essay how Sherwood Anderson encouraged him to write about his home place: “All you know is that little patch up there in Mississippi where you started from”.<sup>1</sup> Later on Faulkner would not only return to his home place to live there for the rest of his life but also to spend his life writing about and exploring his “own little postage stamp of native soil” as he called it.<sup>2</sup> Faulkner’s fiction, long and short, is mostly set in Mississippi, in the South region of the United States and it deals persistently, even compulsively, with Southern themes and history.<sup>3</sup> This scrupulous exploration of his own region resulted in Faulkner’s gradual creation of the fictional County of Yoknapatawpha, an imaginary place based on the blend of facts, memory, and fiction about the South.<sup>4</sup> As is well known, this

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Meriwether, ed., “A Note on Sherwood Anderson”, in *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), p. 8. Early in 1925 Faulkner, while waiting a ship to take him from New Orleans to Europe, received an invitation by Elizabeth Anderson, his acquaintance and then wife of Sherwood Anderson who was residing in New Orleans, to stay in their apartment. It was also in New Orleans and during this visit that he met many other writers and scholars and heard about Freud and *The Golden Bough* by James Frazer. See Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, Vol. I (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 385-431.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, Vol. 2 (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 1595. For more on Faulkner’s views of the South and Mississippi, see his autobiographical essay “Mississippi” in *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters*, ed. James B. Meriwether, pp. 11-43.

<sup>3</sup> Also referred to as the U.S. South, what is called the region of the South does not literally refer to the exact geographical south of the United States. The region of the South, referred to in this chapter, includes the geographical south-eastern states of the United States. The region is known for its specific culture and history that distinguishes it from the rest of the United States. This view of the region will be further expanded and explained in what follows.

<sup>4</sup> Faulkner explains that the name Yoknapatawpha means “water runs slow through flat land”. Yoknapatawpha is a Chickasaw word that comes from the name of a river that runs through Lafayette County in Mississippi. See *Faulkner in the University*, ed. Fredrick Gwynn and Joseph Blotner [1959] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995), p. 74. Charles S. Aiken, in his book *William Faulkner and the Southern Landscape*, explores the relationship between

place permeates and gives shape to Faulkner's fiction—his short stories, novels, and many transitional fictional texts. But how does this “place”, or, rather, space-time composite, truly operate in Faulkner's text? What is its nature, and what does it tell us about Faulkner's vision of history, community, places themselves? And how is this specific chronotope constituted in short fiction? These are the questions that I shall address in the present chapter.

Faulkner's motives for writing and publishing short stories are, as is quite often the case with short story writers, often linked to his need of money. Although this argument is relatively true, Faulkner's attitude towards the short story as a genre is more complicated than it might seem at first sight. Faulkner's statements throughout his literary career indicate a sophisticated understanding of the distinct constrictions and writerly advantages afforded by the short story genre. In an interview at the University of Virginia he says:

In a short story that's next to the poem, almost every word has got to be almost exactly right. In the novel you can be careless but in the short story you can't. I mean by that the good short stories like Chekhov wrote. That's why I rate that [i.e., the short story] second--it's because it demands a nearer absolute exactitude. You have less room to be slovenly and careless. There's less room in it for trash. In poetry, of course, there's no room at all for trash. It's got to be absolutely impeccable, absolutely perfect.<sup>5</sup>

In his appraisal of the short story, Faulkner highlights the value of “near absolute exactitude”. In other words, Faulkner's esteem of the short story is related to a general tendency in the modernist short story towards attention to craftsmanship, for a minute and precise handling of the form, as well as a heightened awareness of the text's nature as an artifice. Dominic Head argues that there are two key elements of the modernist short story: it is characterised by “its intensity and its

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Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha and his home town of Lafayette. His approach is quantitative rather than qualitative, that is, he focuses on Faulkner's adoption of real names or the extent to which he modified real facts from his county of Lafayette into his fiction. Besides, Aiken considers Yoknapatawpha corresponding to Lafayette rather than Mississippi and the South.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in James Ferguson, *Faulkner's Short Fiction* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), p. 8.

exaggerated artifice”.<sup>6</sup> Faulkner’s characterisation of the short story in terms of “exactitude” is related to Head’s “artifice” of the short story. By “exaggerated artifice” Head refers to the formal innovations that characterise the modernist short story. One of these formal innovations is the “artistic self-consciousness of the modernists”. This self-consciousness is reflected in the way the material of a story is presented: “reception and analysis proceed from a grasp of pattern, of juxtaposition and simultaneity”.<sup>7</sup> This mode of presentation in the short story (or even the short story cycle as we saw in the previous two chapters) results in paradox and ambiguity and demands participation in creating and constructing the meaning of a text. Faulkner’s short fiction shares this formal aspect of the modernist short story. In many instances, we see within the space of one story various view points and perspectives juxtaposed and set side by side. This formal aspect of Faulkner’s short fiction will be elaborated on later in this introduction when discussing the implications of the short story form for the exploration of Yoknapatawpha and also in more detail in the body of the chapter while discussing the implications of the spatial properties of his stories for creating uncertainty and celebrating plurality in section 5.

By the second term, “intensity”, Head means the compression of time and the dependence on symbol and image imposed by narrative limitations.<sup>8</sup> If the short story, by its very nature, cannot deal with the passing of long spans of time then it is fit for momentary and epiphanic experiences. As we saw in the previous chapters, Anderson and Joyce discard plots and use economic language, symbolism and epiphanies (moments of truth) to depict intensity, to depict intensely charged moments in the life of individual characters. As we saw in many stories by Joyce and Anderson the plot of the story heads towards a moment of intense revelation or an epiphany. This moment or conclusion does not necessarily close and finalise the events of the narrative. The story could be open-ended. Faulkner’s stories, as we will see in this chapter, though they use long sentences and

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<sup>6</sup> Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice*, [1992] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Head, *The Modernist Short Story*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Head, *The Modernist Short Story*, p. 7.

still depend on plots, often achieve this intensity that characterises the modernist short story. Some critics describe Faulkner's art as "essentially expansive, as opposed to the focused intensity required of the very best short stories".<sup>9</sup> This generalisation of Faulkner's stories is not totally true of his stories. Faulkner does often achieve this intensity of which he talks in his best stories. For example, if one looks at Faulkner's views of the short story, one would find that he associates the modernist short story with intensity. Faulkner achieves this intensity in his stories through what he terms arresting motion. In an interview in the *Paris Review* he explicates:

The aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that 100 years later when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life. Since man is mortal, the only immortality possible for him is to leave something behind him that is immortal since it will always move. This is the artist's way of scribbling "Kilroy was here" on the wall of the final and irrevocable oblivion through which he must someday pass.<sup>10</sup>

Arresting motion in Faulkner's stories achieves similar effects to the focus on intense charged moments in modernist stories. In a letter to Joan Williams in which Faulkner compares a short story to "a crystallised instant, arbitrarily selected, in which characters conflict with characters or environment or itself".<sup>11</sup> Like modernist short stories, Faulkner's stories are concerned with the study of personality.<sup>12</sup> Skei argues that Faulkner's short fiction is distinguished by its focus on existential issues and the study of characters.<sup>13</sup> Faulkner's stories sometimes focus on moments when a character is torn between opposing forces that struggle within a character. As such they tend to focus on the climax of a situation.<sup>14</sup> It seems that Faulkner sees in the short story the form which can capture this moment more than the novel which, according to him, accommodates

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<sup>9</sup> James Ferguson, *Faulkner's Short Fiction*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>10</sup> James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate, eds., *Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner 1926-1962* (New York: Random, 1968), p. 253.

<sup>11</sup> Blotner, ed., *Selected Letters of William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 345.

<sup>12</sup> Blotner, ed., *Selected Letters of William Faulkner*, p. 7

<sup>13</sup> For more on this aspect of Faulkner's short fiction see Hans Skei, *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*, pp.32-41.

<sup>14</sup> A good example of this dynamic is found in "Red Leaves" which focuses on the existential plight of the African American servant as he faces death. After the death of an Indian chief his horse, his dog and his servant should be buried with him. As the story depicts his situation his experience becomes the experience of all humans.

carelessness on the part of the writer. Paradoxically, despite Faulkner's veneration for the short story form, it is the novels for which he is most known.

The matters of assessment are compounded by the circumstance that, at first glance at least, the borderline between the short story and the novel is not as clear in Faulkner's fiction as in Joyce's and Anderson's oeuvres. This difficulty stems from the fact that Faulkner's fiction, short and long, is set in the same place and it uses the same narrative material: rather than being changed, or reinvented, the fictional setting simply discloses its different facets across various texts; characters remain the same, or are linked to the same groups of characters, and, gain additional aspects, or complexity, as we encounter them in different pieces of fiction. Events repeat or are illuminated from a variety of perspectives, both within a piece of fiction (see, for example, my analysis of "That Evening Sun") or across distinct texts. Finally, some of Faulkner's finest novels, for example, *Absalom, Absalom!*, started as short stories and were later developed into novels.

During his literary career Faulkner published and significantly participated in the editing of the following short story collections: *New Orleans Sketches* (1925), *These Thirteen* (1931), *Dr Martino and Other Stories* (1934), and *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (1950). *The Uncollected Stories of William Faulkner* (1979) was edited and published by Joseph Blotner after Faulkner's death. It should be noted that there are other collections of short fiction that Faulkner wrote such as *Go Down, Moses* and *The Unvanquished*. However, Faulkner's critics are divided about how to label these works; some call them novels, others call them composite novels and still others label them short story collections. For these reasons in my study of Faulkner I will study here only those texts that appeared in what are clearly labelled as short story collections. My specific focus here will be the stories published in the 1950 *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*, which had a verifiable editorial input by Faulkner. It is important to note, however, that many of the stories featured in this collection had been published earlier, either in a journal or both in a

journal and a collection. *The Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (1950) seems to present their final destination edited by the author. It is a volume to which its author attempted to give “an integrated form of its own”.<sup>15</sup> In many ways, the stories that appear in Faulkner’s *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* are also the final versions of these stories (Faulkner had a habit of perfecting his texts with each publication). In addition to the specific stories’ aptitude for place-focused interpretation, the above are also the reasons why I mainly focus on this collection in the present chapter.

Faulkner’s note about the high artifice of the modernist short story also highlights the close relationship between text and context, between form and the reality it represents in the modernist short story. It is in this context that the short story form gains specific importance for Faulkner’s project of exploring and dramatising his home place of Mississippi and the South more generally. Faulkner’s own organisation of his *Collected Stories* (1950) testifies to the specific suitability of the genre for this purpose: Faulkner arranges the forty-two stories into six groupings that are geographically divided: “The Country”, “The Village”, “The Wasteland”, “The Wilderness”, “The Middle Ground” and “Beyond”. These geographical divisions do not only offer literal physical dimensions of Yoknapatawpha but, more importantly, they also offer suggestive and metaphysical dimensions/correlates to the imagined geography. This division of the collection – visible, also, in the division of the other collections of his stories that he edited – enables Faulkner to expose and interlace many perspectives and many views on his imaginary county. By taking hold of the editorial selection and ordering of the stories, Faulkner was able to ensure that each of the sections offers a view of the many forces and performing sides within his imaginary county— aristocrats, poor white people, African Americans, women and Indians.

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<sup>15</sup> After the Second World War when Faulkner was planning his *Collected Short Stories*, he wrote that he would “try to give this volume an integrated form of its own, like the Moses if possible, or at least *These 13*.” See Alfred Bendixen and James Nagel, eds., *A Companion to the American Short Story* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p.245. See also Tanaka Takako, “*These 13*: The Significance of Faulkner’s Collection of Short Stories”, *The Faulkner Journal of Japan* No. 6 (September 2004).

Admittedly, Faulkner's ordering of his short story collections does not amount to the same deliberate organisation of stories and use of form as in *Dubliners* and *Winesburg, Ohio* and that for one simple reason: when Faulkner collected his stories in *Collected Stories* they were already written or particularly rewritten for this volume.<sup>16</sup> Yet Faulkner's heightened attention to the matters of the selection and organisation of the material should not be disregarded in any meaningful analysis of his short fiction. Faulkner's deliberate ordering and organisation of his *Collected Stories* in particular is confirmed in a letter to Malcolm Cowley in 1948, where he argues that, "even to a collection of short stories, form, integration, is as important as to a novel—an entity of its own, single, set for one pitch, contrapuntal in integration, toward one end, one finale".<sup>17</sup> Repeated often in Faulkner's correspondence about his short story collections, the quality of the "integrity of form", or the condition of having an "integral form", emerges as one of the key elements of negotiating the short story collection and imparts additional seriousness to the editorial tasks. Michael Millgate writes that "[i]t is essential to think of them [i.e. Faulkner's short story collections] not simply as aggregations of individual stories but as volumes which may conceivably possess a discernible internal organisation of their own".<sup>18</sup> The charged role of the author-editor becomes even more complex when it presents one with the task of self-assessment and organisation of a substantive part of one's opus in a volume. Referring to Faulkner's *Collected Stories*, Millgate highlights that "the mere act of bringing together the stories into one volume made it possible for the first time to survey the full range of Faulkner's achievement in the short-story form, and his organisation of the stories into six separate titled sections made it necessary to read each of them in a new context".<sup>19</sup>

Faulkner's critics have been looking for unity or unifying themes in Faulkner's collections

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<sup>16</sup> See James Ferguson, *Faulkner's Short Fiction*, p. 149.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Blotner, ed., *Selected Letters of William Faulkner*, p. 278.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Millgate, *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (London: Constable, 1966), p. 259. In this book Millgate also provides a reading of the organisation of *These 13* according to divisions "in terms of geography and subject matter". See pp. 260-1.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Millgate, *The Achievement of William Faulkner*, p. 270.

of short stories. James Ferguson, for example, while arguing that “Faulkner did organize his *Collected Stories* with considerable care”, finds this organisation embodied in “an obvious unity” of the stories in each part.<sup>20</sup> This chapter goes beyond this acknowledgment to highlight that Faulkner’s editorial work on the collection matter for an understanding of his use of the short story form not only because his organisation of the material is knowingly based on the similarity of stories in a section of a collection but also because of the cumulative effect of these organisational and ordering decisions on Faulkner’s multiperspectival engagement with place: it appears vital to me that these subdivisions and sections within one collection are different from each other and consequently offer a perspective, through their interaction with one another and also with the reader, on the various sides and aspects of Faulkner’s fictional place. Taken as whole, Faulkner’s 1950 collection of short stories reflects a heteroglossic place. This multi-voicedness, however, is also embedded in each story and in its individual chronotopic figuration: with multiple layers and groups within his county to address, Faulkner has created the place-time which is by its nature dialogic, both at the level of an individual story and that of the collection, and beyond. Insofar as this dialogic chronotope is both the key constitutive aspect and the topic for reflection in Faulkner’s work, his entire project may be seen rooted in this pluralistic figuration of the space-time, which expresses itself at the level of a story, at the level of a collection, and that of a series of collections. The reader is gradually led to realize that his work as a whole is a dramatization and an exploration of a universe within which many forces and sides exist; this universe’s name is Yoknapatawpha. Mainly looking at Faulkner’s *Collected Short Stories*, but also taking into consideration the stories from other collections (and their specific places within those collections), this chapter will look at the many ways through which Faulkner views and conceptualises the “pluralistic cosmos” of Yoknapatawpha.

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<sup>20</sup> James Ferguson in *Faulkner’s Short Fiction* on page 156-7 and also Michael Millgate in *The Achievement of William Faulkner* are examples of critics that are trying to account for Faulkner’s organisation of his stories through unifying themes.

## II

The South, from its earliest history, has been widely perceived and discursively assessed as a peculiar cultural space.<sup>21</sup> This sense of distinctness could be traced back to the colonial period, during which a contrast between the southern and the northern parts of the United States and their communities was first established in discourse, contributing to the development of specific stereotypes, which will be the subject of my discussion in the third section of this chapter. However, this distinctiveness of the South, it should be noted, is also rooted in the actual regional history, and some economic and political principles of operation that persisted for a great part of this history.<sup>22</sup> Richard Gray writes that the alleged difference between the Southern region and the rest of the United States might be seen and evaluated in the “four cornerstones of Southern life, four forces that helped distinguish its modes of production and structure of feeling: [...] agricultural monopoly, economic poverty, military defeat and slavery/segregation”.<sup>23</sup> From its early history, the South had an economy based on agriculture and slavery. As early as 1820s and 1830s the South was already a slave economy, and a region where cotton plantations were booming. This history is of specific interest to Faulkner who captures this moment of Southern history in his novel *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) in which Thomas Sutpen, a white Southerner, brings slaves from Haiti and buys land, realizing his own dream in the form of a plantation and aristocratic values and a family. Other early families that came to the South and bought land from Indians are the Sartorises and the Compsons. This Southern economy cherished conservatism and its general apprehensiveness about progress and industrialisation eventually collided with the type of capitalist economy actively pursued in the North. The opposing views on slavery resulted in the

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<sup>21</sup> It should be noted that the southern part of the United States had been inhabited by native Indian tribes long before any white settlement in that part of the United States. However, the South as customarily glossed and assessed in literature is the one that started with the first white settlements.

<sup>22</sup> Although the idea of the South as a peculiar cultural space is very old, it is only late in the 19th century that the South was seen as a region with a sense of belonging by Southerners themselves.

<sup>23</sup> Richard Gray, *The Life of William Faulkner: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 16.

Civil War between the North and the South (1861-1865). The aftermath of the Civil War, known as the reconstruction era, witnessed important turning points in Southern history, including the abolition of slavery which was the basis for Southern plantation economy.<sup>24</sup> This new situation led to a competition between the newly liberated African Americans and poor white people on jobs, a fact which might have contributed to the escalating racial violence in the South in the beginning of the twentieth century. The South was additionally impacted by the two world wars, which, on the one hand, reinvigorated in the public the memory of the Civil War, and, on the other hand, created a rather widespread resistance to war and warfare.<sup>25</sup> Faulkner did not practically participate in these wars, although he occasionally fashioned himself a war veteran. After the war he came home from his five-month military training in Canada wearing his military garb and continued to wear it “at home, around town, and also to dances in neighboring towns” even after the war. Although Faulkner did not participate in the war, Johncy, William Faulkner’s brother, also noticed that when his brother Billy (William) came back from the military in Canada, he was limping, which, William Faulkner explained, was a result of injuries he sustained from his plane crash.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, one finds many young men who feel torn and disoriented as result of the war in his fiction.<sup>27</sup>

Similar to many other groups and ethnicities around the globe, history appeared to

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<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that the abolition of slavery did not immediately lead to a much better situation for the liberated slaves. It marked the beginning of a journey for more rights that culminated the Civil Rights movements in the twentieth century. For a detailed discussion of these matters, see David Brown and Clive Webb, *Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> See, Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man’s War, Poor Man’s Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the rural South during the first World War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 232. On a related issue of Faulkner’s attitude towards the Great War, Keith Gandal argues that Faulkner’s and also Hemingway’s and Scott Fitzgerald’s preoccupation with the Great War in their novels does not stem from any atrocities they actually witnessed in the trenches and at war fronts but it is rather due to their failure to see these experiences first hand. These writers, having rejected entry to the military service for some reasons, felt emasculated, argues Gandal. See Keith Gandal, *The Gun and The Pen: Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and the Fiction of Mobilization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> The First World War is explored in some stories in the section entitled “The Wasteland” in the *Collected Stories*. Trudi Tate discusses Faulkner’s soldiers who participated in the war. Focusing on *Soldier’s Pay*, he writes that Faulkner’s returned servicemen are wounded, traumatised and passive, especially in relation to their masculinity. He argues that the effects of the war are especially visible on the male body leaving these characters in a state of castration. See Trudi Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War* (Penrith: Humanities-Ebooks, 2013), pp. 123-131.

Southerners of the early twentieth century as painful and fragmented. But the specifics of their place and regional history that I have enumerated above contributed to the development of a particular sentiment: a sense of a divided history, broken into periods before wars and after wars, and, as their epitome, the antebellum and the post-bellum times. The past and the present appear as always contrasted and irrevocably separated. This view of history and time in relation to an identity of place persists for many of Faulkner's characters, and yet it is their very identities that testify to the conflation of the past and the present. Just like in the case of Anderson's short fiction, such troubled negotiation of recent history leads to a specific imagining of place. This section will look at the imagining and reimagining of place through Faulkner's specific and troubled engagement with history.

One of the stories that explores this side of Southern preoccupation with history is "That Evening Sun" (written in 1929 and first published in 1931 in *American Mercury* to be eventually included in the *Collected Stories*). This is the story of the Compsons, an aristocratic white family, and their African American cook Nancy, when Quentin Compson was nine years old. The story is told by the mature Quentin Compson in 1910 (present time of the story) remembering the old South before the process of modernisation fifteen years earlier. The story is framed by a few paragraphs told by the mature Quentin as he remembers the old South in the present and then the narrative moves to tell the story from the perspective and vocabulary of the child Quentin. The story opens with the following passages:

Monday is no different from any other weekday in Jefferson now. The streets are paved now, and the telephone and electric companies are cutting down more and more of the shade trees—the water oaks, the maples and locusts and elms—to make room for iron poles bearing clusters of bloated and ghostly and bloodless grapes, and we have a city laundry which makes the rounds on Monday morning, gathering the bundles of clothes into bright-coloured, specially made motor cars: the soiled wearing

of a whole week now flees apparition-like behind alert and irritable electric horns, with a long diminishing noise of rubber and asphalt like tearing silk, and even the Negro women who still take in white people's washing after the old custom, fetch and deliver it in automobiles.<sup>28</sup>

In the next paragraph, he describes the world that preceded the advent of car. Quentin, son of the Compson aristocratic family, sets Mondays in the past against Mondays "now" reminiscing that "fifteen years ago",

[O]n Monday morning the quiet, dusty, shady, streets would be full of Negro women with, balanced on their steady, turbaned heads, bundles of clothes tied up in sheets, almost as large as cotton bales, carried so without touch of hand between the kitchen door of the white house and the blackened washpot beside a cabin door in a Negro Hollow.... Sometimes we would go a part of the way down the lane and across the pasture with her, to watch the balanced bundle and the hat that never bobbed nor wavered, even when she walked down the ditch and up the other side and stooped through the fence.<sup>29</sup>

These two passages could be interpreted on a number of levels, the most important of which for the purposes of my reading of this story is the foregrounding of the issue of time. Faulkner's characters, it is argued by many critics, are obsessed with time and the past. In Faulkner's work, according to Jean Paul Sartre, "the past is never lost, unfortunately; it is always there, it is an obsession".<sup>30</sup> Faulkner's characters, to quote Sartre again, "never look ahead. They face backwards as the car carries them along".<sup>31</sup> This is particularly true for the male characters, who

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<sup>28</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* [1950] (New York: Vintage International, 1995), p. 289

<sup>29</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, pp. 289-290.

<sup>30</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "On *The Sound and the Fury*", in William Faulkner: *Critical Assessments*, Vol. 2 (Sussex: Helm Information Ltd, 1999), p. 183.

<sup>31</sup> Sartre, "On *The Sound and the Fury*", p. 183.

are regularly presented as being obsessed with the questions of the past (individual, familial, regional) and paternity.<sup>32</sup>

Thus these two passages in “That Evening Sun” also register “two temporal planes, *is* and *was*... the present man and the former child”.<sup>33</sup> This image of time has a specific pattern, which could be best explained in Bakhtin’s terms. There are two distinct, conflicting, time-space configurations at work here: there is the chronotope of the present and there is that of the past. The latter upholds a tension between two states of existence.<sup>34</sup> This contrast is marked, in the two passages from “That Evening Sun,” by the repetition of “now” in the first paragraph and then setting it in contrast to “but fifteen years ago” in the second passage. These two planes also reflect Quentin’s and, we are led to infer, the region’s structure of feeling. The present South that Quentin talks about is one that is undergoing drastic changes. The past, on the other hand, is stable and ordered. The “negro” women know their role as they do laundry for white people every week on the same day. While he is alienated from the present, he feels quite at home in the past. Quentin feels at home in the past more than the present as is indicated in his use of the word “But” at the beginning of the second paragraph. This contrast is shown in many other images; the present is “ghostly” and “apparition-like” while the past is alive and vital as the narrator makes the reader feel, and smell and listen to what he experiences. If Monday is monotonous and boring in the present it was fun and full of meaning in the past.

At the basis of Quentin’s perception and conception of his town and, by implication, the

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<sup>32</sup> In Faulkner’s fiction, there is often the figure of a lonely man sitting somewhere by himself contemplating the past. In a story entitled “A Return”, the character of Gavin Blount is obsessed with memories and legends of the Civil War: “Each afternoon from that office window Gordon could look down into Battery Park and see Blount sitting on a bench facing the River. He was always alone and sat there, in an overcoat in winter on in the linens of summer, among the old spiked cannon and the bronze plaques, for an hour sometimes, even in the rain.... a man still young yet who had firmly removed himself out of the living world in order to exist in a past and irrevocable time...” See “A Return” in *Uncollected Stories of William Faulkner*, ed. Joseph Blotner, pp. 566-7.

<sup>33</sup> Robert M. Slabey, “Quentin Compson’s ‘Lost Childhood’”, *Studies in Short Fiction*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Spring 1964), p. 174.

<sup>34</sup> This tension is sometimes expressed in Faulkner’s stories through the contrast between two female characters: one representing traditions and the Old South while the other, usually a young girl or woman, representing the new South or change brought by modernisation. This confrontation is sometimes of violent nature as in “There was a Queen”, “Elly” and “The Brooch”.

South, is the idea of a golden time in the past. This Southern idea of the past centres on agrarianism, aristocracy and family romance. Quentin's narration of the past soon turns into "a lament, a nostalgia" for what he remembers.<sup>35</sup> The past image of the "quiet, dusty, shady streets" full of Negro women carrying bundles of the clothes of white people on their heads is a strong repository for the affects of loss and longing. What Quentin feels nostalgic about is not only a geographic site, whose trees have been removed by modernisation as he claims in the frame narrative, but rather "it is a world, a way of life, a mode of being-in-the-world"<sup>36</sup> in which he existed, or imagined to exist, in a set of relations to other people in a certain place and time. John T. Matthews argues that the juxtaposition between the past and the present in this story highlights Quentin's nostalgia for the South of his childhood.<sup>37</sup> This form of nostalgia and the creation of a once-ideal time and place is exemplified, in many cases, through going back to an idea of the "lost" South. The past is, of course, a common theme in Southern literature and myth. But Quentin's image of the old South and alienation he feels from urbanisation and modernisation of modern South is particularly reminiscent of the causes advanced by the Agrarians, a group of Southern writers, most of them the so-called "Fugitive" poets situated in Nashville, Tennessee, including Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren and John Crow Ransom, who wrote a manifesto supporting the agrarian South. This manifesto was in the form of a collection of essays on the different aspects of Southern culture entitled *I'll Take my Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* published in 1930.<sup>38</sup> These writers sought to confront the rapid industrialisation and modernisation of the culture and traditions of the South arguing that the traditional rural and agricultural values upon which the image of the country was based in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was best

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<sup>35</sup> Skei, *Reading Faulkner's Best Stories*, p.182.

<sup>36</sup> Edward S. Casey, "The World of Nostalgia", in *Man and World*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (1987), p. 363

<sup>37</sup> John T. Matthews, "Faulkner's Narrative Frames", in *Faulkner and the Craft of Fiction: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha*, ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989), p. 71-91. In a different interpretation, Edmond L. Volpe argues that the story is mainly an initiation story, about Quentin's coming to awareness of the world around him. He writes that Quentin feels nostalgic for "that uncomplicated child innocence that he lost at nine"; Volpe, *A Readers' Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), p. 77.

<sup>38</sup> John Crowe Ransom, et al., *I'll Take my Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* [1930] (New York: P. Smith, 1951).

suitable for America. This detail is telling especially that the story was first written in 1929 and published in 1931, and it is about this point that the Fugitive poets started paying stronger attention in print (reviews, statements) to Faulkner's fiction.<sup>39</sup> Writing about Faulkner's attitude towards this group of Southern writers, Ted Atkinson argues that Faulkner's attitude was ambivalent: "Faulkner was less prone than they [Southern Agrarians] to romanticize the southern way of life at the expense of exposing its troubling history. Nevertheless, Faulkner's [short story] "The Tall Men" [1941] represents an affiliation" with the Southern Agrarians.<sup>40</sup> This story is concerned with themes of individualism and independence that characterises the yeoman farmers and their resistance against the attempts of federal authorities to change and control their lives during the Depression era through the New Deal.

Faulkner's story is told with the specific social and economic factors in the South as its backdrop. As the two frame passages from "That Evening Sun" show, this golden time is embodied in a system of benevolent aristocracy. Within this system white people and African Americans lived in a relationship of harmony and happiness. The past that Quentin longs for is that of the aristocratic white family and their African American servants. What draws Quentin to this past order and stability found in the apparently "harmonious" relationship between races: both African Americans and white people knew their roles. This seeming harmony is based upon the premise that the white man and the patriarchal system provide a living for slaves who in turn provide the work force for the whole family. By contrast, the present appears to be drastically modified by modernisation, in which processes, experience and roles have changed, and which, in turn, occasioned periods of confusion and flux.

Like many other characters by Faulkner, Quentin is configured here as a believer in a mythic

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<sup>39</sup> On the history of possible and impossible interactions between the Agrarians and Faulkner, see Cleanth Brooks, "Faulkner and the Fugitive-Agrarians", in Doreen Fowler, ed., *Faulkner and the Southern Renaissance* (Jackson: The University Press of Mississippi, 1982), pp. 22-39, and Ted Atkinson, *Faulkner and the Great Depression: Aesthetics, Ideology, and Cultural Politics* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), pp. 173-220.

<sup>40</sup> Ted Atkinson, *Faulkner and the Great Depression: Aesthetics, Ideology and Cultural Politics* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), p. 216.

idea of time, a past that is preserved and exists out of time and place. But Quentin also provides the reader with a concept of time as discontinuous. In his account there is a gap between the past and the present and they seem to exist independently of each other. To put it more correctly: while the present is immediate and transient, if potentially influenced, the past, as a fixed and stable entity, exists beyond the reach of human beings and is, consequently, immune from human influence.

However, Faulkner's view of history and the past is more complicated than what is exposed in the beginning of the story. In his remarks on *Absalom, Absalom!*, Michael Millgate writes that

[the novel] seems to be chiefly concerned, not with accuracy of historical re-creation and representation, but with the act of historical interpretation itself. The specific versions of history offered in the novel are important less for the light they throw upon the past than for the insight they provide into the perspective interpreters. *Absalom, Absalom!*, that is to say is not so much about Sutpen as about what the narrators, and especially Quentin, make of the Sutpen legend-or even what the Sutpen legend make of Quentin.<sup>41</sup>

Millgate's argument seems to be also markedly relevant to the dynamics of time and memory in "That Evening Sun". One could argue that what Faulkner presents in this story is not so much the factual history of the South as how that history is conceived and constructed by people. The many layers of time and the constant address to their constructed nature in Faulkner's short stories such as "That Evening Sun" dramatise and explore the complexity of our relationship to time. This story, likewise, concerns itself primarily with how we construct personal and group history, more specifically, how we activate the imagination of time and space to construct it. In this story, the polyvocal image of history is achieved through framing of the story, creating two consciousnesses

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Millgate, "'The Firmament of Man's History': Faulkner's Treatment of the Past", in *Mississippi Quarterly*, Vol. 25 (Spring Supplement 1972), p. 27.

- and two narrators: one is the nine-year old Quentin and the other of the mature Quentin. The present narration of the mature Quentin frames that of past events seen and heard by the nine-year old Quentin but the latter subverts the former at the same time.

Once the perspective of the story shifts from that of the frame narrative related by the mature Quentin to some events that happened fifteen years earlier and told from the perspective and in the vocabulary of the child Quentin, the reader becomes aware of the workings of memory and storytelling done by the mature Quentin. Although Quentin's nostalgia seems to be focalised through the recollections of an innocent child enjoying watching the sight of "negro" women carrying bundles without touching them, the past that Quentin longs for has in fact far more serious implications for the nature of the past he relates. There is some irony involved here, and the latter is achieved through a careful manipulation of the point of view. The story is structured by a contrast, visible as a strategic move from the frame narrative that is wholly established through words by twenty-four year old Quentin to a complex world depicted through the nine-year-old Quentin's experience. The child Quentin does not fully understand what is going on around him and, therefore, depicts many events as they impinge on his consciousness. Edmond Volpe argues that "[t]he use of a boy narrator creates resonance by presenting, from the perspective of a sensitive child, the fear of the central character. Faulkner's use of a narrator with limited consciousness intensifies the reading experience: the reader provides the awareness that is lacking in the registering consciousness of the child".<sup>42</sup> The resultant irony arises from the "discrepancy between the facts of the story and the limited understanding of the child, sex and death being beyond the range of a child's experience".<sup>43</sup> This ironic underpinning emphasises the racial tensions in the story.

As so often happens in Faulkner's fiction, Quentin's idealisation of the past masks the

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<sup>42</sup> Edmond L. Volpe, *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner*, p.14.

<sup>43</sup> Robert M. Slabey, "Quentin Compson's "Lost Childhood", *Studies in Short Fiction*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Spring 1964), p. 173.

realities and hierarchies of the present – as well as of the past. The story centres on events taking place over a few days when the Compsons' cook Dilsey is ill, and Nancy comes to cook for them. What young Quentin registers reveals many disturbing divisions within this remembered Southern world of his childhood: black and white, male and female, child and adult and master and servant. Elsewhere in the story, we learn that this division between the two worlds is physically manifested by a ditch or a lane that separates the homes of African Americans from those of white people. In some ways the ditch mediates perspectives in the story: it appears in the accounts of both black and white people. This place is sensed and perceived in different ways by whites and African Americans, and therefore it functions as a fraught "contact-zone" of cultural and ideological viewpoints, not unlike those imagined contact zones between countries/cultures that I have explored in my chapter on Joyce. There are two distinct references to the ditch: one by the mature Quentin as a place of fun by following "negro" women carrying white people laundry. The other is the ditch as it is felt by Nancy, as it impinges on the consciousness of the child Quentin. If the border between the two worlds meant fun for the mature Quentin by following black women as they carried laundry on their heads, it is not so from the perspective of Nancy. For Nancy the ditch inspires terror. She, thinking she might be pregnant by another man, believes that her husband Jesus is hiding in the ditch and he is going to kill her once she is alone. The ditch thus operates as a specific, emotively charged and dynamic centre-point of Faulkner's chronotope that brings together different temporalities, opposite (racial) perspectives, and dissimilar affective responses by both the characters and the reader.

But the ditch also separates two worlds that exist in hierarchical relations to each other. We repeatedly read houses on both sides of the ditch described in different terms: Nancy's house is described as a "cabin" by the Compsons while the Compsons describe their own house as a "house". This is a world ordered according to hierarchies and economic exploitation. African Americans occupy the peripheries of this world, the centre of which belongs to the Southern

aristocracy. Faulkner entrusts Jesus to express this inequity based sense of place: “I can’t hang around white man’s kitchen”, Jesus said. “But white man can hang around mine. White man can come to my house, but I cant stop him. When white man want to come in my house I aint got no house”.<sup>44</sup> This statement implies the continuance of a social and spatial organisation reminiscent of the slavery period, when the big house of the slaveholder was surrounded by slave cabins.

The interiorly contrastive figuration of place in the story, as exemplified by the ditch area, suggests that the existence of African Americans for white people is mainly economic: a relationship of subordination. African Americans, therefore, are present in and absent from the Southern economic and social system at the same time. The place configured by the story is importantly mapped through senses. It is a sightscape, smellscape and even soundscape within which blacks are emplaced and established in a certain relationship of exclusion. As a rule, this aspect of the story is revealed through certain encounters between the two races: through images of visibility and invisibility and through senses such as smell and sight and sound. Karl F. Zender focuses on “seeing” in this story and highlights the plight of African Americans in a society that does not see African Americans.<sup>45</sup> In “That Evening Sun”, for example, Nancy becomes invisible and inaudible to the Compson children. Quentin says that “Nancy whispered something. It was oh or no, I don’t know which. Like nobody had made it, like it came from nowhere and went nowhere until it was that Nancy was not there at all”.<sup>46</sup> In another instance, the narrator says: “Then we came to her house. We were going fast then. She opened the door. The smell of the house was like the lamp and the smell of Nancy was like the wick, like they were waiting for one another to begin to smell”.<sup>47</sup> This place is mapped out and given meaning through the senses of white people and African Americans are objects to be experienced and classified within this world. In other words,

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<sup>44</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 292.

<sup>45</sup> Karl F. Zender, “‘That Evening Sun’: Marginality and Sight”, in *William Faulkner’s Short Fiction: An International Symposium*, ed. Hans Skei (Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1997), pp. 253-259.

<sup>46</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 296

<sup>47</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 301

their existence in place through their smell, voice and visibility is interpreted and ordered by white people.

In more practical terms, the unsettling consequence of configuring place of the African Americans through sensory apparatus of the white Americans is that the African Americans here exist only as part of the white world, as defined by white culture. Their existence, this story implies, is realised, but in terms set by white system. The existence of African Americans is limited to how they are perceived by white people.

Throughout, the story also registers the division in the South through the contrasting emotional state of Nancy and the Compson children as embedded in their sense of place. This is achieved by juxtaposing the innocent and the comic world of the children of the Compson family and the apparently complicated and frightening world of their black servant Nancy. That Quentin and his sister and brother do not fully understand what occurs to Nancy is apparent in the contrast between the limited consciousness of the children who interpret Nancy's situation and reaction to her difficulties in a comic way, on the one hand, and the tragic and real plight of Nancy, on the other. This absence of understanding allows an irony to emerge from the juxtaposition of two worlds, existing side by side, sharing the same geographical space, and to that extent, the same identity, but with no real communication between one and the other, constituting a fundamental schism in the identity of the town and the remembered world by Quentin.

From the above one can conclude that the seemingly romantic and nostalgic memories of Quentin swiftly turn out to be full of contradictions and paradoxes.<sup>48</sup> Hence the nostalgia and sense of loss expressed by the mature Quentin is not merely the neutral and innocent recollection of childhood. Quentin's narrative of a golden age in the old South in which he portrays a good and

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<sup>48</sup> Laurel Bollinger reads Nancy as a disruptive force throughout the story. She disrupts Quentin's attempt at mastering time and narrative at the beginning of the story then she disrupts the patriarchal and racial authority of the white community throughout the story. See Bollinger, "Narrating Racial Identity and Transgression in Faulkner's 'That Evening Sun'", *College Literature*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Spring 2012), pp. 53-72.

benevolent aristocracy is undermined time and again by a general pattern of disturbing divisions. The story reveals a grim past in which African Americans suffer at the bottom of this system. It is a world of exploitation, violence, sex and death. What we see in this story is that there is actually a gap between an image of a past the young Quentin idealises and feels nostalgic for and the reality of that past. The past for which the boy yearns resists his attempts to unify and categorise it. History and the past are not, for Faulkner, static entities, existing independently of time and place, to be remembered and recalled when one wants. Rather, Faulkner's narrators actively participate in the process of recreating or reinventing the past. The relationship between the past and the present – history, in a word - is rather complex; they overlap and shape each other. The past exists in the present and shapes it as the past is also shaped by the present. Faulkner's argument here may be that history is not only facts but it is also contingent and, therefore, constructed within our time and place. History, like memory, is personal and thus Quentin's recollections are contingent. The narrator is selective in regard to choosing the subject of his remembrance.

Perhaps the most powerful situation that undermines the mature Quentin's idealised story of the past is achieved through the open-ending of the story. The story comes to an end with no resolution as to what would happen to Nancy. Before Mr Compson takes the children and goes back home, leaving Nancy alone in her place, the following conversation takes place between them:

“When yawl go home, I gone”, Nancy said....

“Nonsense”, father said. “You’ll be the first thing I’ll see in the kitchen tomorrow morning”.

“You’ll see what you’ll see”, Nancy said. “But it will take the Lord to say what that will be”.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 308.

Nancy's vague and uncertain language is revealing here. Will Nancy be killed or will she survive?<sup>50</sup> The indeterminacy of the end of the story stimulated expansive and conflicting responses among Faulkner's critics as to whether Nancy is killed or survives. In my reading of the story, I take another stance and argue that the story is deliberately left open-ended, just as the central chronotopic motif – site - in the story, that of the ditch, is readable only in multi-perspectival and contradictory fashion. This indeterminacy of the end importantly upholds the ambivalence of the story as a whole.<sup>51</sup> The ending of the story leaves the reader preoccupied with Nancy's dilemma and fear more than with the mature Quentin's nostalgia for the past. It moves the focus of the reader from the certainties expressed by the mature Quentin in the frame narrative about the old South to the uncertainties about the fate of Nancy and African Americans in that same old South. In short, this story, through the many place-related motifs and images, and particularly through the multiperspectival configuration of the site of the ditch, rearranges the whole place of Yoknapatawpha (past and present) into a space full of tension and divisions, a place based on inequality.

### III

The previous section explored the imagining and reimagining of place through an exploration of history and an ideal understanding and conception of the past and its revision through disclosing the contradictions that lie at the heart of this practice. This section will study place in terms of an imagined community. A nation, and by implication any other community, writes Benedict Anderson, is imagined and it is so “because the members of even the smallest nation [or community] will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet

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<sup>50</sup> For a detailed overview of these responses, see Laurence Perrine, “‘That Evening Sun’: A Skein of Uncertainties”, in *Studies in Short Fiction*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Summer 1985), p. 295-6.

<sup>51</sup> For a reading of the conclusion of this story as open-ended, see Laurence Perrine's “‘That Evening Sun’: A Skein of Uncertainties” and Mark D. Coburn, “Nancy's Blues: Faulkner's ‘That Evening Sun’”, *Perspective*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (1974), p. 211.

in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”.<sup>52</sup> For this reason, an imagined community, according to Anderson, is a community that is constructed through language. This section will focus on how a community – here the diegetic community in Faulkner’s stories in interaction with the community of the readers of these stories – creates a meaningful, if imaginary, place and defines its boundaries through language: the town of Jefferson, the county seat of Yoknapatawpha, and its community. Many of the stories that explore community are structurally similar in that they centre on an outcast or rebel character, usually a woman/girl or a young boy, living on the fringes of their community such as Emily in “A Rose for Emily”; Minnie and Will Mayes in “Dry September;” Zilphia in “Miss Zilphia Gant”; and Susan Reed and Hawkshaw in “Hair”. These characters, or an incident concerning them, become the object of the gaze of the community, they become the centre of the gossip and the talk. This section will zoom in on two stories of this type, “Dry September” and “A Rose for Emily”, both of which are included in the section of the *Collected Stories* which Faulkner entitled “The Village.” I shall also make reference to stories with a similar attention paid to the dynamics of place and community but included in other collections such as “Miss Zilpha Gant”.<sup>53</sup>

The strong sense of community and its role in (re)creating place, with positive or negative meanings and outcomes, is the subject of all these stories. “Dry September” is a case in point.<sup>54</sup> The story centres on the reaction of a group of white men in the town of Jefferson to “the rumor, the story, whatever it was” about an alleged rape of a white woman, Minnie Copper, by an African American, Will Mayes. The story focuses on the discussion among these men and ends with lynching Will Mayes. A close perusal of the dynamics of race and gender, the story opens with a conversation between a group of white men in a saloon in the aftermath of that rumour or gossip:

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<sup>52</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> This story is included in the *Uncollected Stories of William Faulkner* edited by Joseph Blotner.

<sup>54</sup> This story was first submitted for publication under the title “Drouth” and published for the first time in *Scribner’s* in 1931. It was then revised to be included in *These 13* and the same version would be included in *Collected Stories*.

“Except it wasn’t Will Mayes”, a barber said... “I know Will Mayes. He’s a good nigger. And I know Miss Minnie Cooper, too”.

“What do you know about her?” a second barber said.

“Who is she?” the client said. “A young girl?”

“No”, the barber said. “She is about forty, I reckon. She aint married. That’s why I don’t believe-”

“Believe, hell” a hulking youth in a sweat-stained silk shirt said. “Won’t you take a white woman’s word before a nigger’s?”<sup>55</sup>

The place, in this passage, is a barbershop in the town of Jefferson, county seat of Yoknapatawpha. Time is a “Saturday evening” in “September twilight”. After establishing a specific time and place in a relatively conventional manner, Faulkner’s stories as a rule unfold into a conversation, either storytelling or talking, thereby populating and dynamising the place/time in question. Conversation is an important element of Faulkner’s stories: they are most commonly structured around the sound image of a group of people engaged in a discussion or gossiping about someone or something, or recollecting an event and the people involved. Most of the time this activity takes place in a public space such the salon, the square, the porch, the court, but also in undifferentiated public sites where some people simply squat and talk. The superior significance of these places where the gossip or the talking happens, is that they markedly function as chronotopes, as spaces where time “thickens, takes on flesh”.<sup>56</sup> These are places of “gathering and lingering, a transitional area. The real importance [of these places] become[s] evident when we get to know [their] role as

<sup>55</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 169.

<sup>56</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 84.

[places] to transmit folklore, to tell stories”.<sup>57</sup> The language/speech practice that is performed here is crucial for our understanding of place in Faulkner’s stories. It is through speech that a place becomes meaningful. In an essay entitled “Folklore and Reality” in *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, Barre Toelken argues how the meaning of place is constructed and distributed through what he calls the “vernacular expression” by which he means a set of verbal expressions such as “legends, jokes, rumors, tools and crafts” as well as tales and anecdotes through which people communicate and share a common world view and sense of place.<sup>58</sup> In a similar way, Faulkner’s characters here, through gossiping, talking and telling stories, define their place. They use language to make sense of the world and to construct the world around them.

As the above-quoted passage shows, “Dry September”, likewise, is organised around the activity and effects of gossip. It is this configuration of place as vocal, conversational, that projects a strong sense of community; the community is made possible by its members defining themselves and their world through terms common to them. The characters are trying to come to terms with unsettling things through language. They arrange, formulate, and, importantly, reaffirm the world through their own vocabulary. This is done by revalidating in language a common assumption about their place and the identification that is derived from it; the word of a white woman comes before that of “a nigger” even if the situation is serious and the event might be grounded in gossip rather than in truth: “none of them.... knew exactly what had happened”.<sup>59</sup> Notably, this identification through language and place is based on the acts of inclusion and exclusion such as the use of the label “niggerlover” for that person that disagrees with them: “I don’t believe Will Mayes did it”, the barber said. “I know Will Mayes”. Then the other replies: “Maybe you know

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<sup>57</sup> Hans Skei, “A Life Remembered: Store Porch Tales from Yoknapatawpha County”, in *The Art of Brevity: Excursion in Short Story Theory and Practice*, ed. Per Winther, Jacob Lothe and Hans H. Skei (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), p. 164.

<sup>58</sup> Barre Toelken, “Folklore and Reality in the American West”, in *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, ed. Barbara Allen and Thomas J. Schlereth (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990), pp. 16-7.

<sup>59</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 170.

who did it, then. Maybe you already got him out of town, you damn niggerlover”.<sup>60</sup> These acts also divide the chronotope ideologically-ontologically-axiologically into two contrastive world views, the South and the North and the values each of these signifiers represents. In the same discussion in the salon one of the men tells the barber that argues for more investigation into the rumour of rape before hurting Will Mayes: “Do you claim that anything excuses a nigger attacking a white woman? Do you mean to tell me you are a white man and you’ll stand for it? You better go back to North where you came from. The South don’t want your kind here”.<sup>61</sup> Commenting further on the nature of communities, Benedict Anderson writes that “communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined”.<sup>62</sup> This style refers to the means and the terms in which a community is imagined and defines its identity. These modes and terms are diverse and include language and monuments, museums, maps and many other means. One significant way in which people establish their sense of place and who they are, though, is “by contrasting themselves with somewhere they feel is very different from them”.<sup>63</sup> The character Will Mayes’ comment suggests that Southern identity is constructed through contrasting it (the South) with what the Southerners think is the North. And this is indeed a prevalent mode in which the South has been fashioned and, more important for my purposes, has fashioned itself.

“The South”, writes Richard Gray, “has customarily defined itself against a kind of photographic negative, a reverse image of itself with which it has existed in a mutually determining, reciprocally defining relationship. The South *is* what the North *is not*, just as the *North* is what the *South* is not”.<sup>64</sup> The behavioural distinctions that purportedly exist between the two regions were aptly summarised in an account by Thomas Jefferson. In a letter to a Frenchman

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<sup>60</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 170.

<sup>61</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, pp. 170-1.

<sup>62</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Gillian Rose, “Place and Identity: A Sense of Place”, in *A Place in the World?*, ed. Doreen Massey and Pat Jess (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 92.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Gray, “Foreword: Inventing Communities, Imagining Places: Some Thoughts on Southern Self-Fashioning”, in *South to a New Place: Region, Literature, Culture*, eds., Suzanne W. Jones and Sharon Monteith (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), pp. xvi-xvii.

in the 1780s, Jefferson describes the following characteristics that, according to him, distinguish the South from the North: “Northerners”, writes Jefferson, “are cool, sober, laborious, persevering, independent, jealous of their own liberties, chicaning, superstitious and hypocritical in their religion.” But Southerners, Jefferson goes on to write, “are fiery, voluptuous, indolent, unsteady, independent, zealous of their own liberties trampling on those of others, generous, candid and without attachment or pretensions to any religion but that of their own heart”.<sup>65</sup> This attribution of the peculiar mixture of honesty and ferocity to the southerners persists in the accounts of the South centuries later, and it is shared by both scrutinizing it from within the region and outside it. The famous Southern historian and journalist W. J. Cash writes in 1940s that the South is “proud, brave, honourable by its light, courteous, personally generous, loyal swift to act, often too swift signally effective, sometimes terrible in its actions. Such was the South at its best and such at its best it remains today”. But the South, Cash goes on to write, is characterised by “violence, intolerance, aversion and suspicion towards new ideas, an incapability for analysis, an inclination to act from feeling rather than from thought, attachment to fictions and false values, above all to great attachment to racial values and a tendency to justify cruelty and injustice”.<sup>66</sup> This idea of the distinction between the South and the North and Southern self-fashioning occupied Faulkner’s fictional explorations and examination of place identity to a remarkable extent. It is immediately activated in “Dry September”. When a barber does not accept the men’s reasoning about the white woman, one man tells him: “[y]ou better go back to North where you came from. The South don’t want your kind here”.<sup>67</sup> The implication is that if one does not share the world view and subjective values of a community – however subjective or problematic they might be – then one is not part of it. This conversation also confirms the specific ideological position the community of Jefferson holds and identifies with: the principle of the white woman’s innocence; he believes that a white

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<sup>65</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian. P. Boyd, Vol. 8 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 468.

<sup>66</sup> W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* [1941] (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), pp. 428-9.

<sup>67</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 171.

woman's word comes before that of "a nigger".<sup>68</sup> For these white men Minnie, a white woman is innocent irrespective of her personal and individual circumstances. This is necessarily so, as the white woman, as we shall see imminently, represents simultaneously more and less than her identity as an allegedly victimised woman.

The dilemmas posed by the twine of gender and race in relation to place are at the centre of "A Rose for Emily" (1930). Through an unusually suspenseful narrative retrospection, the story relates the mysterious life of Miss Emily Grierson, an aristocratic spinster who went through difficult times. She was brought up under the oppressive and restrictive influence of her father who, readers are told, deprived her of a normal life by not allowing her to mix with men and rejecting many men who proposed to marry her. The present time of the story is the 1930s when the town people attend her funeral and then the story, through flashbacks, goes back to as early as 1888. The essence of the character-type to which Miss Emily belongs is perhaps best captured by the narrator's insistence that she and her father are more a joint tableau than two real "persons": "[w]e had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door".<sup>69</sup> Emily is detached from life and is fixed in a moment out of time. Being in a picture or a tableau she is made into an absent present person. Like in many other community stories, she is present all throughout the story, as in this picture, yet we do not have direct access to her own consciousness and interiority. This narrative strategy then relegates the focus on to how she is perceived, understood and reacted to/against by town people. In other words, the reader's experience is focused through a double observation: we observe the town people as they observe her, as they talk about her and analyse her behaviour and life.

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<sup>68</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the Southern belle, see Kathryn Lee Seidel, *The Southern Belle in the American Novel* (Gainesville: University of South Florida Press, 1985).

<sup>69</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 123.

The self-identificatory presence of the Jefferson community is underscored in the first paragraph of “A Rose for Emily”:

When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old servant - a combined gardener and cook - had seen in at least ten years.<sup>70</sup>

What is noticeable in this introduction of Emily is the voyeuristic tone of the passage. The story is narrated from the first person plural, “we” perspective of the community of Jefferson. Edmond Volpe terms this mode of narration the “village narrator”.<sup>71</sup> This type of narrator, appearing in a range of Faulkner’s stories, is an entity who speaks for his/her community, reflecting, Volpe argues, “the Southern society’s allegiance to Southern heritage, its attitudes and mores”.<sup>72</sup> As the passage quoted from the story shows, this narrating instance is authoritatively affiliated with the Jefferson community and is able to speak for the body politic as a whole. Edmond Volpe further argues that through this narrator, “the village narrator”, Faulkner manages to “evoke the very soul of life in a small Southern town”.<sup>73</sup> More to the point, these stories allow the reader not only to observe but also scrutinize the community from inside.

The fact that the townspeople don’t go inside Emily’s house is emphasised. Here, as mostly in this story, Emily is paradoxically “disclosed” from a distance; she is revealed by people who see her through windows or close to her door. Townspeople only “see” her from distance, and the

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<sup>70</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 119.

<sup>71</sup> Other examples of the “village narrator” in Faulkner’s stories include the narrator of “Death Drag” who speaks for “our village” and the narrator of “Hair” who identifies with the town values.

<sup>72</sup> Edmond L. Volpe, *A Reader’s Guide to William Faulkner*, p. 14.

<sup>73</sup> Edmond L. Volpe, *A Reader’s Guide to William Faulkner*, p. 14.

reader increasingly becomes aware that such a view must be myopic. But she is seen by the reader from the same distance that she is seen by the townspeople: we are complicit in their scope of vision/relationship to her. Townspeople are both curious and sceptical about Emily. Her status as a “fallen monument” of Southern womanhood invokes empathy and triggers a series of recollections/narrative flashbacks that unravel some personal information about Emily, such as her father’s control over her life and marriage prospects. As the story fixates on the event of the father’s death, the reader is assured of the community’s empathy as Emily refuses to allow them to bury him: “We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that... we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people do”.<sup>74</sup> Not long after the death of her father, however, the attitude of the townspeople begins to change and so does the “communal” narrator’s voice: they observe her with cagey curiosity as she is introduced to Homer Baron, a “Yankee - a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face”.<sup>75</sup> He was the foreman of the construction company that came “with niggers and mules and machinery” to pave the sidewalks. When the townspeople “see” Miss Emily and Homer go out together on Sundays they reacted as follows, say the narrator:

At first we were glad that Miss Emily would have an interest, because the ladies all said, “Of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day labourer.” But there were still others, older people, who said that even grief could not cause a real lady to forget noblesse oblige- without calling it noblesse oblige. They just said, “Poor Emily. Her kinsfolk should come to her.” She had some kin in Alabama.<sup>76</sup>

Here we see that the community becomes more active. People start talking, gossiping and

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<sup>74</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 124.

<sup>75</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 124

<sup>76</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 125.

whispering when they see Emily beginning to transgress against her role in the community. The initial sense of sympathy is now replaced by a more invasive, questioning observation of her behaviour. Expressions such as “at first we were glad” followed by “but” indicate that townspeople are becoming more cautious now. Some, the younger generation perhaps, are “glad” at first to see Miss Emily with a man after she was deprived by her father for a long time while others, mainly “older ones”, are more sceptical: they “said that even grief could not cause a real lady to forget noblesse oblige”. In their attempt to make sense of Emily’s behaviour the townspeople start from shared assumptions and commonplaces. This community has a shared vocabulary through which its members try to order experience. This shared vocabulary could best be explained through what Henry Lefebvre terms the “abstract space”. One aspect of “Abstract space” is that it is populated by ideological and political machinations, which maintain a dialogue between space and its users securing compliance pacts. In other words, this conceived space socialises people in a place as spatial bodies; people instinctively know their place, they know where things belong.<sup>77</sup> This vocabulary in “A Rose for Emily” includes the ideologem of “noblesse oblige” and the view of the white woman as asexual. In *The Mind of the South*, W. J. Cash explains that the cult of Southern Womanhood created an image of white women belonging to privileged classes as pure angelic creatures devoid of any sense of sexuality. The white woman, says Cash, became:

[T]he South’s Palladium, this Southern woman - the shield-bearing Athena gleaming whitely in the clouds... the mystic symbol of its nationality in face of the foe. She was the lily-pure maid of Astolat and the hunting goddess of the Boeotian hill. And —she was the pitiful mother of God. Merely to mention her was to send strong men into tears—or shouts. There was hardly a sermon that did not begin with tributes in her honor, hardly a brave speech that did not open and close with the clashing

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<sup>77</sup> See Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 56.

of shields and the flourishing of swords for her glory.<sup>78</sup>

As this excerpt shows, the idea of “noblesse oblige” positions white woman within the conceived space of her community: her “reality” as a woman is bracketed while the image of her is simultaneously elevated to different ontological and historical registers. It is this ideologically transformed existence that Faulkner depicts in the community’s attitude towards Emily. Rather than an individual woman, she has a position in the community and also in the history of her region. Emily, the narrator says, “had been a tradition, a duty and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town”—so much so that Colonel Sartoris, a Civil War veteran and a defender of the Southern cause, “remitted her taxes”. This last act of seeming generosity is actually a societal binding contract: it implies that a person should behave and act according to her position in her community. Emily as an aristocratic white woman is expected to act in a noble way: she should not marry “a day laborer” and as a lady, she is not expected to go out with a man to whom she is not married.

According to Henri Lefebvre, anyone who transgresses the laws imposed by the “abstract space” is “deemed guilty of a criminal act”<sup>79</sup> by the people in power or the people that hold power and authority in certain place. Labelling someone a transgressor is based upon and closely connected to value judgements: right and wrong, normal and abnormal. The townspeople classify the behaviour of a woman either as right, “noblesse oblige”, or wrong and immoral. *At first*, the townspeople thought that Emily and Homer were going to marry but when later Barron remarks that “he was not a marrying man”, the community’s aggressiveness in preservation of the parameters of its own “abstract space” escalates: they hope Emily would find the way to undo the disgrace she had brought upon her family and, being a symbol rather than a person, the town

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<sup>78</sup> W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South*, p. 86.

<sup>79</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 56.

community itself. Therefore, when one day Emily goes to buy some poison, the townspeople assume she will kill herself, and the communal narrator affirms the value of such decision: “and we said it would be the best thing”.<sup>80</sup> However, when Emily does not act according to their expectations the narrator says that “we believed that she was fallen”.<sup>81</sup> A pattern emerges through which the townspeople make sense of their world. The Jefferson community depends on a system of binary oppositions to define itself as a community with a world view. This system of binaries includes moral women/immoral women, aristocrat/labourer, African Americans/white people and South/ North. People are labelled as those who abide by the codes of the community and those who violate them. This system of oppositions helps them label the world as us and them; people belonging to the community and outsiders.

One distinctly modernist aspect of Faulkner’s stories, highlighted here and elaborated on in the next section, is the tendency in much modernist short story to relate the theme to the form of narrative. The sense of ambivalence and uncertainty thematised in this story is also experienced in the structure and form of the story. Faulkner’s texts are sometimes open and demand the reader to actively participate in meaning-making. This is particularly true when it comes to his handling of the chronology of stories which requires readers to actively participate in reconstructing the narrative. James Ferguson explains this aspect of Faulkner’s stories by distinguishing between three terms: “fabula”, by which he means “the raw materials of any given piece of fiction, the basic narrative”; “plot” which means “the selection and ordering of the events of the fabula in order to emphasize the casual relationships among them”; and finally “structure” which “refers to the organization of the materials of the story in terms of their sequential ordering— their placement in time, the use of temporal dislocation , flashbacks...”<sup>82</sup> In other words, the reader has to reorganise and reorder the “structure” (for example, Emily’s buying of poison and the bad smell coming from

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<sup>80</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p.126.

<sup>81</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 125.

<sup>82</sup> James Ferguson, *Faulkner’s Short Fiction*, pp. 126, 130.

the house later) into “plot” to show the cause-and-effect relationships between these elements of the story. The reader has to work forth and back in order to establish the relationship between events and reorganise the story in a way that shows their relationship in order to understand the story.<sup>83</sup> This allows the reader to be active rather than passive in his/her reception of the story.

This section examined place and community as articulated through language in use. It is in places such as barbershops, courts and squares that members of the Jefferson community make sense of their world through language. They exchange stories: tell and retell narratives about people and events that take place around them. People come to know who they are and define themselves through language. Language is also a means for ordering and structuring experience. In their discussions they try to order experience and give meaning to their world. Through their shared verbal practices the Jefferson community constructs a sense of place and establishes commonplaces and shared values and, consequently, they identify themselves as a distinct community. As such language can be used as a social means to manipulate people, to include and exclude others. Through their gossip, the townspeople enforce a certain kind of moral authority.

#### IV

What is also noticeable about the figuration of place in “A Rose for Emily” is that the world depicted in this story is divided into two places; an exterior place (the town and its people and the way they react and view Emily from outside as we saw in what preceded) and the interior place of Emily’s house which will be examined in this section. The story moves from a public world

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<sup>83</sup> See Suzanne Hunter Brown, “A Rose for Emily”, by William Faulkner” in *“A Rose for Emily”: William Faulkner*, ed., Noel Polk (Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000), pp. 101-2.

created through the voyeuristic perspective of the townspeople to Emily's mysterious and private place, and it is this place-move that imparts "A Rose for Emily" the status of one of the most complex and most unsettling short stories in Faulkner's opus. This shift between places is marked by a change in the tone and mode of the story; with it, the genre of the story turns from realistic, "gossiping community" narrative into gothic. The following description of the inside of her house, related by the narrator who, characteristically, heard it from a "deputation" sent to Emily's house by the "Board of Aldermen", is a good example of this narrative shift:

They were admitted by the old Negro into a dim hall from which a stairway mounted into still more shadow. It smelled of dust and disuse—a close, dank smell. The Negro led them into the parlor... when the Negro opened the blinds of one window, they could see that the leather was cracked; and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs, spinning with slow motes in the single sun-ray.<sup>84</sup>

This passage depicts a claustrophobic world. The words "dim" "shadow" "dust" "cracked" "dank smell" and "blinds" enhance this feeling of being confined in an alienating world where senses are challenged. The evocative and frightening nature of this world overwhelms the senses of the character that speaks here; he sees, smells and feels this world in all its uncertainty. It is an uncanny world through which we enter and explore not only the interiority of the house but also the protagonist's interior life. The physical descriptions of her home-place are therefore also an indication of her psychological and mental state: the word "cracked" describes a world that is falling apart.

Faulkner shared interest in "internal" grotesqueness with Sherwood Anderson. As we have

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<sup>84</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 120.

seen in the previous chapter, the idea of the grotesque in Anderson is related to psychological fixation and obsession; a grotesque character, intimates Anderson, is fixated upon an idea, takes it as an absolute truth and tries to live his/her life by that idea. Michael Millgate, writing about certain characters in Faulkner's novels, points out how "each man, apprehending some fragment of the truth, seizes upon that fragment as though it were the whole truth and elaborates it into total vision of the world, rigidly exclusive and hence utterly fallacious".<sup>85</sup> What Millgate argues is no less relevant to the character of Miss Emily.<sup>86</sup> Characteristically, the protagonist's compulsive fixation and blindness to truth are first introduced through the depiction of her home-place:

It was a big, squarish house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the seventies, set on what had once been our most select street. But garages and cotton genes had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighbourhood; only Miss Emily's house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps- an eyesore among eyesores.<sup>87</sup>

As described here, Miss Emily's house is the site where she encloses herself in isolation from the outside world. But the house operates not only as a setting but also as a metaphor, or a narrative continuity between the chronotope and the character: every detail of the house in this passage implies its inhabitant's isolation from her time and community. Her house is distinct from houses around it in the same fashion as she distinguishes herself from people around through her self-harming fixation to the bygone vision of the world and her stubborn rejection of social and economic changes. And, like the house over-adorned with cupolas and spires, "the Griersons held

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<sup>85</sup> Michael Millgate, *The Achievement of William Faulkner*, p. 87.

<sup>86</sup> There are many other stories with this theme. Most notable is "Miss Zilphia Gant" in which the main character, deserted by her husband, is obsessed with the idea that all men are like her husband and, accordingly, prevents her daughter from making contact with men or marrying.

<sup>87</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p.119

themselves a little too high for what they really were".<sup>88</sup> So does Miss Emily. In this sense, Faulkner's characters, like those of Anderson, are psychological grotesques, both terrifying and touching, that showcase the disparity between (the time and space of) the mind and that of the world, between reality and our conceptions and ideas of reality. For Faulkner, as much as for Anderson, these conflicts between interior and outer places are particularly visible in an economically changing world.

The impression that Miss Emily's house and Miss Emily herself are irreparably separated from the abstract space constituted by the Jefferson community gradually strengthens and prepares the reader for the ultimate disclosure of the secret that structures the entire narrative. It is inside Miss Emily's most private place, that of her bedroom, that the story reaches a climax and we enter the site that is most uncanny. Towards the end of the story the narrator describes the moment the townspeople force their way into Miss Emily's bedroom: the breaking of the door

seemed to fill this room with pervading dust. A thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal... among them lay a collar and tie... Upon a chair hung the suit, carefully folded; beneath it the two mute shoes and the discarded socks. The man himself lay in the bed. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay; and upon him and upon the pillow beside him lay that even coating of the patient and biding dust. [then when one of them lifted something the narrator notices] that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair...<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 123.

<sup>89</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, pp. 129-30.

This passage takes the earlier depiction of the inside of Miss Emily's house into extremes. We are now in her private world after being unlocked. This world is both realistic and gothic, almost surreal. After breaking the door the first thing the townspeople encounter is the pervading presence of dust. The dust is almost preventing them from entering this world as if to signal an ontological incomparability of their place-and-time and the place and time they are entering. The violence of breaking the door is immediately followed by the shock and unfathomable, violent private world of Emily. Then we have the same words "tomb" and "bridal" in the same line. It seems as if all her life (past and present) is condensed and frozen, indeed entombed, in her bedroom. The horror is further emphasised through the description of the body of Homer Baron, being in the position of an embrace, alluding to her necrophilic practices.

This figuration of Miss Emily's private place and its descriptive condensation in the site of Miss Emily's bed intriguingly connects this story to Joyce's "The Dead", likewise an exploration of interior place, studied in the first chapter. Joyce's and Faulkner's configurations of these interior places are similar; they are claustrophobic and suffocating places which bear witness to the fact that the characters, two women in this case, are alienated from their communities. Physically both places are described as dark, death-invoking places. More generally, both stories could be read as indirectly structured around the ways in which these places are formed and transformed by these two women. Both women, alienated from the "abstract space" (or place-time) of their community and their immediate surroundings, create their own space and live in this created world instead. These places are pervaded by the strong presence of death and memories. Emily secures her own macabre place, bed, by locking it from the outside world. It is, quite literally, the place of the dead: where, upon killing him, she keeps the body of her lover in a grotesque position of an embrace. The last image ensures that the reader understands that, for Emily, this deathbed is more real and meaningful than the world of the living. Something comparable happens in Joyce's story. Gretta's world is similarly dominated by the dead. As the story shows, she keeps memories of her lover

Michel Furey, dead now, whose songs move her and make her cry even after his death. The emotional “reality” of the world of the dead is emphasised through her emotional reaction to memories of Furey throughout the story. In both cases, then, the story secretly revolves around a private place that is disclosed as a world of the dead rather than the living.

## V

While the previous two sections examined community (within the stories themselves and the reader communities established in response to the narratives) and interior places, this section will both summon all the previous discussion and explore more directly the idea of heteroglossia in Faulkner texts and the role of the reader in creating and constructing place. I focus on a story entitled “Barn Burning” (written in 1938 and published in 1939) as the most suitable example of these tendencies.

Faulkner’s stories sometimes portray his county as a polyglot and a heteroglossic world made up of a conglomeration of discourses and opposing forces in the form of voices heard everywhere. Within the space of a collection of stories or the space of a single story Faulkner dramatises his county as a diverse and sometimes contradictory playfield of forces and ideas that exist side by side and interact with one another. It is often the case that Faulkner portrays characters that become “sites” on which we see various and conflicting aspects of Southern culture and history dramatized and brought to life. In “Barn Burning” the nine-year old boy Colonel Sarty Snopes, the main character in the story, becomes a figure through whom the many voices or

discourses that surround him are presented.<sup>90</sup> As some critics have noticed, it is a story of initiation, of the coming of age.<sup>91</sup> The story centres on Sarty and his father Ab Snopes. It is divided into a few scenes in each his father, a sharecropper who works on farms according to contracts with landlords, is accused of arson and brought to court. Sarty disagrees with what his father does and his sensitive consciousness and observation register the world around him to the reader as they move from farm to farm. Sarty is about to enter the symbolic system or the ideology of his community, what, following Lefevbre, I have referred to as “abstract space”. He is at an age at which he is about to be acculturated, and assume his role within his society. Being on the verge of two states and life-stages, that of innocence and experience, and childhood and maturity, Sarty is also on the margins of worlds. Being thus both an insider and an outsider, his perception and awareness of the world around him is sharp and sensitive to the polyphony of voices that comprise the community. The reader soon learns that, during one of the court sessions, “he [Sarty Snopes] merely retreated to the rear of the room, crowded as that other had been, but not to sit down this time, instead, to stand pressing among the motionless bodies, listening to the *voices*”.<sup>92</sup> (Emphasis added) As such Sarty’s character registers a moment in which we see the various realities of place or discourses, expressed here as voices. This story registers a range of voices: the voice of Sarty’s father, his own voice, the voice represented by de Spain and his house and some other voices such as the voice of nature that will be expanded on further in what follows.

We are first introduced to Sarty through his increasing psychological turmoil, manifested through his feelings of fear, despair and grief. We later know that this disturbance is because [h]e is “being pulled two ways like between two teams of horses”.<sup>93</sup> The first force that pulls him is the

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<sup>90</sup> Stephen Ross, *Fiction’s Inexhaustible Voice: Speech and Writing in Faulkner* (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1989), pp. 13-15. Many approaches to this story focus on how Sarty’s identity and self are formed and the conflict he experiences as a result. However, in my reading of the story, I want to explore not how these voices blend or quarrel with each other to eventually make Sarty who he is but rather to focus on these voices also as an expression of a heteroglossic world.

<sup>91</sup> James Ferguson, *Faulkner’s Short Fiction*, p. 41.

<sup>92</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 18.

<sup>93</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 17.

“old pull of blood;” this includes his duties towards his family and also class. His father tells him: “you’re getting to be a man. You got to learn. You got to learn to stick to your own blood or you ain’t going to have any blood to stick to you”.<sup>94</sup> Sarty’s father, the omniscient narrator reveals, works in the land of other farmers. The main, and recurrent, conflict arises when Sarty’s father sets the barns of his landlords on fire as an act of revenge and then denies responsibility for his actions. The inner conflict for Sarty is triggered by the opposing pulling force which moves him to object to the unjust deeds of his father, who, in turn, demands that Sarty fully abide by the codes of his class and clan.<sup>95</sup> Hans Skei explains this conflict as “one of loyalty to kinship and the ties of blood as opposed to a vague understanding of decent behaviour and the right of others. We may call it a new and intuitive recognized set of moral imperatives”.<sup>96</sup> The discourse of Ab Snopes is “emplaced” through the description of his own house. As they move to a new farm we read the following description of the house: “In the early afternoon the wagon stopped before a paintless two-room house identical almost with the dozen others it had stopped before even in the boy’s ten years.... “Likely hit ain’t fitten for hawgs”, one of the sisters said. “Nevertheless, fit it will and you’ll hog it and like it”, his father said. The house looks featureless and oppressive as Ab himself is. According to the clan codes of Ab Snopes, Sarty should be loyal to his father even when he unjustly burns the barns of his landlords. For Sarty’s father the world is divided into us and them or poor and rich, black and white, men and women. As a father, Ab wants to control the mind and emotions of his son by subjecting him to the codes of his clan and, therefore, making Sarty another version of himself.

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<sup>94</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 8.

<sup>95</sup> For more on Sarty’s experience of ambivalence, see Jane Hiles, “Kinship and Heredity in Faulkner’s ‘Barn Burning’”, *Mississippi Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Summer 1985), pp. 329-37.

<sup>96</sup> Hans Skei, *Reading Faulkner’s Best Short Stories*, pp. 58-9. Philip Weinstein approaches Sarty’s plight from a psychological point of view. He writes that Sarty is “a site of Imaginary and Symbolic crossings, a field brimming over with contradictory injunctions”. These “contradictory injunctions” could be argued to be the many voices Sarty hears. See Philip M. Weinstein, *Faulkner’s Subject: A Cosmos No One Owns* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 82.

But Ab's is not the only voice that Sarty hears. He also hears voices that are different from the one represented in the figure of his father. One of these other voices is expressed through a specific place: the house of Major de Spain. The house represents another discourse, a code that opposes his father's discourse or voice:

he saw the house for the first time and at that instant he forgot his father and the terror and despair both, and even when he remembered his father again (who had not stopped) the terror and despair did not return... he had never seen a house like this before. *Hit's big as a courthouse* he thought quietly, with a surge of peace and joy whose reason he could not have thought into words, being too young for that: *they are safe from him. People whose lives are a part of this peace and dignity are beyond his touch...*<sup>97</sup>

This new house offers him a sense of justice and peace: "*Hit's big as a courthouse*". Even the tone of the passage changes. This house, associated with words like "safe" and "peace" and "courthouse", exemplifies a feeling of security that he lacks in the presence of his father and at home. He feels hopeful and optimistic that this place might make his father abandon his harmful ways of dealing with people.

Towards the end of the story we hear yet another "emplaced" voice, one of Sarty himself or one that is a creation of his own affects. After he goes to Major de Spain and informs him of his father's plan to burn de Spain's barn, Sarty runs away from home and goes to nature where we hear yet another voice or another discourse, that of nature and wilderness away from civilisation and its rules and hierarchies:

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<sup>97</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, p. 10.

At midnight he was sitting on the crest of a hill. He did not know it was midnight and he did not know how far he had come. But there was no glare behind him now and he sat now, his back toward what he had called home for four days anyhow.... he knew it was almost dawn, the night almost over. He could tell that from the whippoorwills. They were everywhere now among the dark trees below him, constant and inflectioned and ceaseless, so that, as the instant for giving over to the day birds drew nearer and nearer, there was no interval at all between them. He got up... He went on down the hill, toward the dark woods within which the liquid silver voices of the birds called unceasing - the rapid and urgent beating of the urgent and quiring heart of the late spring night. He did not look back.<sup>98</sup>

The tone changes once again in this final part of Sarty's narrative trajectory. Sarty is still close to his father's home but far enough to establish a new relationship with the world around him. This is marked by his physical relationship to the world of nature. He does not know where he is nor how far he is from home. It is as if it did not matter to know where one was in this new place (contrary to the patriarchal demand to know one's own position and place within the community). In other words, the protagonist's new situation in wilderness, a space characterised by lack of traditional markers of time and place, could be seen as nomadic and rhizomatic.<sup>99</sup> As this passage shows, the end of the story is dominated by the voices of nature, birds all around him. It is with this final turn that the story "Barn Burning" confirms its status as a narrative premised on a heteroglossia of voices and competing ideologems, emplaced, or represented spatially, in three different sites: Ab Snopes' voice "emplaced" through his farm house, de Spain's discourse represented by his big house and finally the discourse and site of nature.

Having examined the specific ways in which heteroglossia engages representation of place in

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<sup>98</sup> Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, pp. 24-5.

<sup>99</sup> See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's study of Kafka's short fiction in *Kafka: Towards a Literature of the Minor*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: the University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

this story I would like to expand more on the role of the reader in Faulkner's texts and its implications for Faulkner's notion of place. Owen Robinson, focusing on the importance of form for the content in Faulkner's fiction in general and the essential relationship between readers and Faulkner's texts, argues that Yoknapatawpha is "constructed through the interaction between writers and readers". Faulkner's specific narrative strategies allow the text to remain open and invites the reader to play an active part in the construction of its meaning. This way Yoknapatawpha "can be seen as a state of mind".<sup>100</sup> I would like to argue here that the relationship between the reader and the text is in itself chronotopic. Sociolinguist Asif Agha writes that chronotopic representations are "experienced within a participation framework: The act of producing and *construing a chronotopic representation itself has a chronotopic organization* (of time, place and personhood) which may be transformed by that act".<sup>101</sup> (Emphasis added). As such every act of not only producing but also reading reshapes a text according to "a chronotopic organisation", a new time-space configuration of the events of the story, which, in turn, transforms the chronotopic organisations of the producer and the reader. To go back to the heteroglossic text of "Barn Burning" one would find that the interaction between the reader and the text transforms this heteroglossic text into a dialogised heteroglossia by working out the relationship between the different discourses within the story. Through the character of Sarty Snopes and his interaction with and experience of his world the story presents an example of a heteroglossic text (place). Sarty's body, especially his senses, becomes a site upon which and through which are performed the conflicting and opposing voices (discourses) making Faulkner's place a web of voices. This place is a complex convergence of multiple voices or discourses of codes of race, class, age, gender and nature. It is then the interaction between the reader and the text that brings this fictional world into life as a dialogised heteroglossia. Thus a dialogic relationship between the voice of Ab

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<sup>100</sup> Owen Robinson, *Creating Yoknapatawpha: Readers and Writers in Faulkner's Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 2-3.

<sup>101</sup> Asif Agha, "Recombinant Selves in Mass Mediated Spacetime," *Language and Communication*, Vol. 27 (2007), pp. 320-335.

Snopes with its connotations of class and clan, the voice of de Spain with its connotations of justice, and finally the voice of nature (among others), all reconstruct not only diegetic place but also those of the writer and the reader. It is, then, through this act of reading (encounter between reader and text) that Yoknapatawpha is materialised into an ever new chronotope. As such, every individual act of reading means bringing the world of the story (Yoknapatawpha) into life and giving it meaning; the last transforms the space-time of those who construct and reconstruct the chronotope of the story.

### **Conclusion**

I have started this chapter by examining imagining and reimagining of place through the exploration of characters' engagement with history. Being torn by a conflict between the past and the present, Quentin Compson, the narrator of "That Evening Sun", idealises the history of his region. The argument here is that the South, or more precisely the old South, which many of Faulkner's characters (and also Southerners during the reconstruction era and afterwards) is founded on an idealised image of the past rather than on any essence. Since this idealised image of the past is interiorly contradictory, Faulkner's stories also emerge as an exploration of spatiality and temporality in a place. In his short stories there is no spatialized past that is completely separate from the spatialized present as there is no present that is separate from the past; one shapes the other.

In the second section, I have examined place in terms of community. The main argument here is that Yoknapatawpha is made of imagined communities. The focus here is on language and its role in constructing place and forming sense of place. As we saw, the townspeople are engaged in the process of defending a moral geography when faced by an outsider. Place identities are also constructed on a dialogic basis, in relation to other places against which people define themselves. A place might be said to embody a regional character which is created with a view to contrasting

some quality of the place (or region) with the qualities of other places. The meaning of a region or a place does not exist in isolation from the world around it. On the contrary, the meaning of a certain place or region is influenced by and also influences the adjacent places. Thus the sense of Southern identity is constructed through its contrast to the North. This well-known discursive creation of the South shapes Faulkner's fiction in specific ways examined in this chapter. The second section also explored what could be called interior places (exterior places in this case is the public place of the community), and their complex operation in Faulkner's stories as at once diegetic settings, character descriptors and metaphors, the interiority of Emily's house, a private and uncanny place dominated by the dead and memories, has been correlated to Joyce's "The Dead".

The third section explored Faulkner's fictional county as a heteroglossic place made up of diverse forces and discourses that exist side by side. Faulkner's texts allow an interaction between the reader and the text, an act that results in readers being active in creating and recreating the meaning of these texts and also of the represented places. The reader has to constantly modify and establish a dialogue between these various voices and narratives presented within the space of one story or even, by implication, one collection of stories. Through the interaction between readers and texts these diegetic places become alive—and the worlds of the producer of the text and of the reader are transformed, too.

## Conclusion

The previous pages have been dedicated to the topic that scholars in a variety of disciplines have found increasingly compelling in our assessment of global urban modernity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: place. This thesis has approached the conundrums of place from the perspective of its representation in a particularly charged moment of literary history—early twentieth century modernism. As the previous chapters have argued, the specific importance of the short story genre in general and its subgenre of the short story cycle in particular for our understanding of the handling of historical and fictional realities in modernism could be disclosed through a perusal of the ways in which the image of place is created in fiction. This process is inextricably linked to the construction of chronotopes. The last underwent a profound change in modernism, and it is this change that the preceding pages have attempted to identify and evaluate in relation to short fiction. The three writers I have selected for this doctoral project all engaged, to a certain extent, with what is often termed the “short story cycle” or “the short story composite”. This particular form enabled them to represent their experience of urban modernity and the role of place in both affective and discursive/ideological construction of identity in a new way. The short story cycle is characterised by a conglomeration of many fragmentary and short narratives that interact through relationships of agreement, continuation, parallelism, or disagreement and contradiction. As such, the short story cycle/collection, as utilised by James Joyce, Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner, provides a means for a “modernist” depiction of place as fragmented, fraught, inconclusive and often productively polyphonic. Anderson and Joyce are similar in their deliberate adoption of the short story cycle to depict their respective places with much intricacy. The short story cycle enabled both Joyce and Anderson to highlight the

complexities of the notion of place as such (which urban modernity has brought to the fore) as well as to explore their fictional places from as many perspectives as possible. Faulkner's collection under discussion here could be described as a "post-production" gathering and regrouping of his stories in a new volume, but an edition that is also well thought out and has an ordering that clearly serves Faulkner's views and conception of place as multi-layered, diverse, and always (re)created in interaction with the reader.

These three writers concern themselves with different settings. Joyce's stories are set in the capital city of Ireland, Dublin, at the turn of the century; Anderson's stories are set in a distinct US Midwestern small town, named Winesburg, and the surrounding farms; and Faulkner's stories are set in an imagined county, encompassing a Southern small town or towns and the surrounding countryside in a kind of place-continuity. In spite of these differences, their fictional places have common characteristics, the most notable of which is their presentation as heterogeneous and interiorly contradictory. All three writers thus depict worlds that are diverse and varied in nature, but they achieve this heterogeneity in various ways. As we saw in the first chapter, Joyce's place, a modern and colonised city at the turn of the century, is a polyphonic world. Joyce carefully weaves his image of this place through a narrative walk from confined interiors such as houses or public room to open city streets, and from actual localities to imagined place-communities and zones of contact. The richness and contradictions of the city life, as well as the conflictuous image of the urban self, are exposed through characters (including the figure of the flâneur) that are both stationary and peripatetic, but ultimately disclosed, like the place itself, as "paralysed". While Joyce's place is constructed as a "direct" representation of a recognizable geographical entity, Anderson uses the toponym "Winesburg, Ohio" less to describe the actual place in Holmes County, Ohio, than to suggest the place where he himself grew up, namely, Clyde, Ohio. Thus "displaced", Anderson's place is heterotopic in the way in which Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault respectively assessed this and similar categories. Anderson's short story cycle is premised

on a specific distinction between space and place. His textual spaces create a contradictory world: the narratives of the imagined and longed-for golden age (pastoral) Winesburg and the Midwest are counterbalanced by the subversive textual strategies of place-representation, resulting from Anderson's use of the form of short story cycle and what he called "grotesque". In this way, the Midwestern myth of the pastoral is undermined and left uncertain, while not simplistically rejected. In this sense, while both Joyce and Anderson start their short story cycles with names (titles of their cycles) denoting real places that at first materialise through minute details such as streets names, other geographical details and even narratives of place, these fictional places become less material and more imagined as the cycle goes on. Therefore, what starts as seemingly material and real places turn out to be less so by the end of these story cycles. Yet Faulkner, as we have seen in the third chapter, creates an imaginary place with an entirely imaginary name but one with a paradoxically strong "existence" in the mind of the reader: a county called Yoknapatawpha. This place is developed out of the interaction of facts, snippets of memory, and myths about the South, in particular inspired by Lafayette County, Mississippi, and its county seat of Oxford, and their imaginative elaboration. But its true fictional nature as internally divided yet paralysed is most aptly captured in the created toponym—Faulknerian compounding of two Chickasaw words—"yocona" and "petopha", meaning "split land", which Faulkner himself argued should be translated as "water runs slow through flat land". The heteroglossic image of place thus created accommodates various voices/ discourses both at the level of a story and at the level of the collection of stories to signal an interiorly diversified community, often at odds with itself.

Inseparable from place is the dimension of time. This is particularly true in fiction where the two appear constructed together in what Mikhail Bakhtin called the *chronotope* and working together to establish and maintain connections with the writer's real place-time and his or her experiences thereof. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the three writers' stories, for all their differences, share an overwhelming narrative presence of the experience of and reflection on

time—historical, mythic, socio-political and “inner” time. The engulfment of the present by the past, by historical and mythified time, is a common feature in the stories of all three writers. Such treatment of time also reshapes the represented places. There is an emphasis on the gap between the present and the past, as well as on the painful maintaining of a tenuous link with the past in the characters’ imaginings of their places as well as in specific figurations of the chronotope. It is not surprising, since all these places, real-fictionalised and imagined, are represented as being at a standstill in a time of drastic changes in national histories. Joyce’s place is increasingly being urbanised and modernised; Anderson’s place is irretrievably transiting from agriculture into industrialisation as the movement of George from his small town to the city indicates; and Faulkner’s place is represented as being forced to negotiate the history from the Civil War to modern(ised) times. In this context the presence of the past in the lives of characters is strong and it creates palpable differences in the perception of place among them and between them and the narrator. As I have elaborated in the first chapter, Joyce’s characters are preoccupied with the past, whether the past of a nation exemplified in the figure of Parnell or with their own personal past as in the case of Gretta in “The Dead”. The presence of the past in Anderson’s stories is manifested through his characters’ compulsive use of the chronotope of the pastoral in their oral tale-telling, bespeaking a belief that there was once a “better time” and a better community. This self-fashioning belief is relayed in Anderson’s stories by characters’ emphasis on present alienation from nature and the absence of old handicraft. Faulkner’s fictional communities as well as his isolated individuals are preoccupied with history and a certain image of the past; the Faulknerian place is reconfigured through the clash between that image of the past and the reflection in the present, as explored in my discussion of “that Evening Sun” in the third chapter.

Another point worth highlighting in a concluding comparison is related to the identity of place. In their preoccupation with place identity, the three writers invoke what might be called “contact zones”, places in which there is one form or another of intense contact between two

places or more. Both Joyce and Faulkner are similar in their treatment of the identity of their places, a nation in the case of Joyce and a region in the case of Faulkner, in that both places are dialogically constructed in relation to another place, Argentina in the case of Joyce (see my discussion of “Eveline”) and the North in Faulkner’s case. In the latter’s dialogic treatment of place, however, we also find the remarkable foregrounding of interior contact-zones such as represented in the ditch that separates the “white” world from that of African Americans in “That Evening Sun”. This tendency to configure place in relation to, or through, a contact-zone also occurs in Anderson’s stories, although in a less emphasised manner than in Joyce’s and Faulkner’s fiction. The “contact zone” in Anderson’s case is exemplified in the interstice-place between the town and the city, the exact point where we see Georg Willard on the train.

One final point of comparison between the stories of these writers which I would like to highlight here pertains to the writerly and readerly nature of their texts. In such texts, the role of the reader in the creation of fictional place is emphasised and this is a strategy which, this thesis argued, has implications for the meaning of place in the stories of these writers. In all three writers, the reader has to be active in order to reconstruct the meaning of the stories and, by implication, the meaning of an uncertain place. Joyce’s economic yet symbolic language and frequent shift of registers from the ironic to the descriptive to the sentimental creates a text where the reader has to fill the many gaps and ellipsis in order to form meaning. Anderson’s text is characterised by hesitation and uncertainty in the use of language which allows the reader a more active role. In Anderson’s stories, the role of the reader is significant in working out the interaction between recurrent motifs and ideas in various forms and different tones. Faulkner’s heteroglossic texts demand an active participation by the reader to order and reorder the relationship and interaction between various discourses and voices and create, as a result, an image of this space. This act of reading involves the combination of various chronotopes that eventually result in transforming

Faulkner's text into dialogised heteroglossia. Therefore, each individual act of reading is an engagement with the meaning of place; it brings place into being and makes it come alive.

As visible from the preceding all three writers create dialogic places but in various ways. These places are constructed and reconstructed through a net of relationships and interactions ranging from those between individuals and place such as one can read in both Joyce's and Faulkner's short stories; between one place and another such as we have identified in all three writers; between divided people inhabiting the same place, as memorably recorded by Faulkner; through imagined communities (in all three writers) or even between readers and the texts of these writers. This rich variety of modes of perceiving and representing place becomes available to a scholar only through a comparative inquiry, in which writers, texts, and interpretations intersect and inform each other. The purpose of comparative studies in general is to study creative works by writers from different cultures, backgrounds or across boundaries. As such, a comparative study is a way of approaching creative works from a perspective that helps make certain tendencies or ideas in the work of a writer more visible in a comparative context—trends and conceptualisations which could have been obscured when studied within the context of the same culture. This doctoral study, in turn, shows the importance of a comparative approach and a cross-cultural examination in investigation of the concept of place, especially in modernism. Aside from generating many insights about the works in question and their interrelation, what this comparative study has shed a specific light on is the significance of the subgenre of the short story cycle for the modernists' strategies of place-representation; it is this form of organising narrative that enabled Joyce, Anderson and Faulkner to interiorly heterogenize and "destabilize" the places they depict, and thus create a suitable correlative to the interiorly heterogenised, destabilized, inconclusive world.

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