



POLYPHONY AND REPRESENTATIVENESS IN *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*

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RESUMO: O objetivo deste artigo é discutir a maneira pela qual a forma de múltiplas vozes no romance *O Som e a Fúria* de William Faulkner se relaciona à questão de democracia, mais especificamente, ao tema de representatividade. As questões que buscamos responder incluem: até que ponto as vozes múltiplas são igualmente válidas; de que forma esta polifonia se remete à questão de representatividade; e de que maneira o romance constrói, pela ficção, as relações e conflitos sociais do contexto retratado. Nossa fundamentação teórica se baseia na concepção do romance polifônico e do discurso de dupla voz de Mikhail Bakhtin. Concluímos que o romance de Faulkner mostra que, tal como na vida real, não há representatividade, e, portanto, não há democracia.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: romance polifônico; discurso de dupla voz; representatividade; democracia.

ABSTRACT: The aim of this article is to discuss the way in which the form of multiple voices in the novel *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner relates to the question of democracy, more specifically, to the theme of representativeness. The questions we seek to answer include: the extent to which the plurality of voices equally valid; the way this polyphony depicts the question of representativeness; and the way in which the novel constructs, through fiction, the social relationships and conflicts of its setting. Our theoretical grounding is based on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the polyphonic novel and the double-voiced discourse. We conclude that Faulkner's novel shows that, as in real life, there is no representativeness, and thus, no democracy.

KEYWORDS: polyphonic novel; double-voiced discourse; representativeness; democracy.

William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* portrays a microcosm in which different points of view of the characters are presented by a diversity of speech and language. Through these multiple perspectives, the social attitudes of individual characters are explored. The aim of this article is to discuss the way in which the form of multiple voices in the novel relates to the question of democracy, more specifically, to the theme of representativeness.

According to the renowned American literary critic Francis Mathiessen¹, "democratic" literature is concerned with representing the "common people"; its aim is to render the authentic concerns of the common masses. *The Sound and the Fury* may be considered not only as literature "about the people", but also "for the people", in that the social concerns of the characters speak to global contemporary issues as well.

The term "polyphony", originally used in music, refers to autonomous melodies that are in sync. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin introduces his concept of polyphony to literary studies, arguing that Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novels achieved a polyphonic effect and innovated the novelistic genre. He states that, in Dostoyevsky's works,

A character's word about himself and his world is just as fully weighted as the author's word usually is; it is not subordinated to the character's objectified image as merely one of his

characteristics, nor does it serve as a mouthpiece for the author's voice. It possesses extraordinary independence in the structure of the work; it sounds, as it were, *alongside* the author's word and in a special way combines both with it and with the full and equally valid voices of other characters.²

In this concept, the polyphonic novel portrays a world of free autonomous subjects that are not bound by the author's sense of justice; an authorial moral vision is withheld, and the author's authority is deconstructed by the openness to the perspective of the characters.

It is relevant for us to point out here that Bakhtin makes an important connection between a "polyphonic" novel and a "dialogic" novel. For him, "The polyphonic novel is dialogic through and through" (emphasis in original). Taking dialogism as a fundamental characteristic of language, the author shows us that the characters in a polyphonic novel construct meaning from different perspectives and social dimensions, through dialogue. The polyphonic novel constitutes a synthesis of multiple voices, which form a chain of dialogues and meaning. As such, a polyphonic text is necessarily dialogic and vice versa.

Faulkner's novel may be considered polyphonic (and necessarily dialogic), as his patchwork quilt of perspectives presents a plurality of consciousnesses and voices that engage in

1. MATHIESSEN. *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*.

2. BAKHTIN. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 7.

dialogue. The novel represents a challenge to the authority of the author and of the first or third person omniscient narrator, as seen in the traditional novel. The questions we seek to answer in this article include: “to what extent are the plurality of voices in Faulkner’s novel equally valid?”; “how does this polyphony depict the question of representativeness?”; and “in what way does the novel construct, through fiction, social relationships among men, women, blacks and whites, in the south of the United States, in the latter part of the 1920s (place and time in which it is set)?”

The novel, which presumably focalizes a family of whites, the Compsons, is structured into four parts, each presented by a different narrator. The youngest son, Benjy Compson, a 33 year old mentally impaired man, narrates the first section. In spite of his childlike perception – evident also by his simple language –, his point of view is relevant and strategically positioned as he gives a relatively objective overview of the Compsons and their African American servants, the Gibsons. One may say that Benjy’s overview sets the stage for the other narrators who will present their points of view in the further chapters.

The present time of Benjy’s narration, which is non-chronological and nonlinear, is the seventh of April 1928. On that day he is accompanied and guided by the teenager servant Luster Gibson, who is looking for a lost coin to

watch a show later that evening. Throughout his narration, Benjy’s line of thought seems to be interrupted and triggered by objects, such as a mirror, fire, rain etc. that remind him of an event. In the passage below, we can observe how seeing the fence he is about to cross takes Benjy back to another time and place:

We went along the fence and came to the garden fence, where our shadows were. My shadow was higher than Luster’s on the fence. We came to the broken place and went through it. “Wait a minute.” Luster said. “You snagged on that nail again. Can’t you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail.”

Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over, Benjy. Like this, see. We stooped over and crossed the garden, where the flowers rasped and rattled against us. The ground was hard. We climbed the fence, where the pigs were grunting and snuffing. I expect they’re sorry because one of them got killed today, Caddy said. The ground was hard, churned and knotted.

Keep your hands in your pockets, Caddy said. Or they’ll get froze. You don’t want your hands froze on Christmas, do you.

“It’s too cold out there.” Versh said. “You dont want to go outdoors.”

“What is it now.” Mother said.

“He want to go out doors.” Versh said.

“Let him go.” Uncle Maury said.

“It’s too cold.” Mother said. “He’d better stay in. Benjamin. Stop that, now.”³

We note that Benjy’s present time is the Saturday before Easter Sunday, and that crossing the fence triggers his memory back to a moment at Christmas, graphically highlighted by italics. Flashbacks and flash-forwards constantly occur in Benjy’s narration, as if, for him, past and present were one. In Bakhtin’s discussion on Dostoyevsky’s polyphonic novel, he points out that one of the important modes of artistic visualizing is coexistence and interaction, that is, the perception of all things as coexisting and their simultaneous portrayal “as if they existed in space and not in time”.⁴ Benjy’s narration has a similar effect, in which time does not seem to matter. This causes us to think about time differently from the way we conventionally do. Benjy’s narrative form is relevant for the polyphonic form as it enables the incorporation of others’ voices, irrespective of time and space.

Benjy does not develop a critical reflection on the events narrated; instead, he simply reports what he observes. We believe that this also contributes to a more objective portrayal of his family and their social context, bearing in mind that Benjy gives voice to the others’ voices or, perhaps one

should say, the others’ voices impose themselves in Benjy’s consciousness. Benjy seems incapable of ordering these autonomous voices in his mind. Thus, his consciousness becomes what Bakhtin would call a “field of battle for others’ voices”.⁵

It is through others’ voices, which invade Benjy’s consciousness, that we are able to perceive certain conflicts within the Compsons’ family. For instance, Mrs. Compson feels that she and her side of the family is undervalued and not recognized as they should by her husband, to whom she continuously complains: “My people are every bit as well born as yours [...]”.⁶ Initially, Benjy does not seem to understand that his family is falling apart, not only due to conflicts between his parents, but also in virtue of the country’s imminent financial crisis, which causes his parents to begin to sell parts of their land.

Other social conflicts are also made evident by others’ voices in Benjy’s narration. In the following conversation between Luster and a group of black young men, we observe that there is a racial divide between blacks and whites in that social context. Luster asks the young men if they would go to the show that evening. One of them replies in a hostile tone to express his refusal to support such an event organized by a white band:

3. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 2.

4. BAKHTIN. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 28.

5. BAKHTIN. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 88.

6. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 35.

“White folks gives nigger money because know first white man comes along with a band going to get it all back, so nigger can go to work for some more.”

“Ain’t nobody going make you go to that show.”

“Ain’t yet. Ain’t thought of it, I reckon.”

“What you got against white folks.”

“Ain’t got nothing against them. I goes my way and lets white folks go theirs. I ain’t studying that show.”⁷

At first glance, the excerpt appears to be a simple conversation between young men; however, it carries severe criticism regarding a kind of cycle of oppression of black people. The young man’s attitude may be understood as a form of resistance and desire to break that cycle.

Benjy’s narration makes the staging of such social conflicts possible, even though, initially, he seems not to understand their full dimension. It is interesting to note the comment made by Versh Gibson, one of the servants, to Benjy: “[...] You’s born lucky and don’t know it”.⁸ Perhaps Versh means that Benjy is lucky, not because he is white and has many privileges, but because he might not grasp, and thus, does not have to be concerned with, the social issues and conflicts of his society.

Dilsey Gibson – Versh’s mother and servant to the Compsons –, as well as the omniscient narrator seem to

think that Benjy does understand the cruelties within his social context, and that the only way he can express his concern and revulsion is through his “wailing”. As the narrator observes, “Ben wailed again, hopeless and prolonged. It was nothing. Just sound. It might have been all time and injustice and sorrow become vocal for an instant by a conjunction of planets”⁹. Dilsey says, “He smellin hit. Dat’s whut hit is.”¹⁰ In other words, Benjy seems to perceive and suffer from the inhumanity of the people around him.

Even though Benjy seems to have difficulty in sorting the multiple voices that invade his consciousness, which in fact makes his narration confusing at times, he does not cease to be the moderator of these voices; the narration does not cease to be his point of view as he must open the floor for the others’ to speak. Thus, we may say that, within the limits of his consciousness as narrator, Benjy orchestrates the others’ voices, giving visibility to them, or taking it away from them.

While Benjy seems to freely lay out his thoughts, Quentin, the oldest son and narrator of the second chapter of the novel, tries, although unsuccessfully, to get away from, and thus, cover up his consciousness. It is interesting that throughout his narration, he tries to leave his shadow behind, which may represent his consciousness: “[...] my shadow leaning flat upon the water, so easily had I tricked it that would not quit me. [...] if I only had something to blot it into the water,

7. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 11.

8. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 57.

9. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 244.

10. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 245.

11. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 75.

holding it until it was drowned, [...]”¹¹ His present time is the second of June 1910, which entitles the chapter. As in Benjy’s case, Quentin’s consciousness seems to acknowledge space but not time. In fact, Quentin is apparently trapped in his past, which may also be represented by his shadow, which he is unable to get away from. Initially, the flashbacks he presents are marked graphically by italics. However, as his interior monologues develop and his thoughts become more intense, punctuations and graphical markers disappear from the text, as seen in the following passages:

stop Quentin
 Caddy
 I got in front of her again
 Caddy
 stop it
 I held her
 Im stronger than you
 she was motionless hard unyielding but still
 I wont fight stop youd better stop
 Caddy dont Caddy¹²

12. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 130.

[...] you could not be in earnest and i you dont believe i am serious and he i think you are too serious to give me any cause for alarm you wouldnt have felt driven to the expedient of telling me you had committed incest otherwise and i i wasnt

lying i wasnt lying and he you wanted to sublimate a piece of natural human folly into a horror and then exorcise it with truth and i it was to isolate her out of the loud world so that it would have to flee us of necessity and then the sound of it would be as though it had never been and he did you try to make her do it and i i was afraid to I [...].¹³

In the first passage, we observe that there is still a certain structure, where the dialogue is separated to distinguish the respective speakers. In the dialogue, Quentin confronts his sister Caddy in relation to her feelings towards him and another lover. The form of the text symbolizes Quentin’s anxiety and despair as they become more intensified.

The second passage is completely chaotic, which represents Quentin’s thoughts at that point. It shows a plurality of voices – Quentin’s mixed with his parent’s – that discuss Quentin’s and Caddy’s incestuous relationship. The text seems to forecast Quentin’s drastic reaction to his problem: he is unable to face Caddy’s rejection, as well as his betrayal of his family’s values, and as such, ends up committing suicide.

Differently from Benjy, Quentin develops critical reflections in his narration – after all, he is a student at Harvard University. Through his reflections, we are able to grasp an understanding of his social context. Bakhtin states that, in a novel, the characters are not mere discourses about

13. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 150.

themselves, but also about their social context; they are not “only cognizant, but an ideologist as well”.¹⁴ It is relevant that at the very beginning of his narration, Quentin refers to his patriarchal genealogy in his reflection on a watch that he obtained from his father, who obtained it from his father, and so forth:

[The watch] was Grandfather’s and when Father gave it to me he said I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire; it’s rather excruciatingly apt that you will use it to gain the reducto absurdum of all human experience which can fit your individual needs no better than it fitted his or his father’s. I give it to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools.¹⁵

In the excerpt, Quentin draws on his father’s discourse about time. The author’s consciousness seems to appear in the final sentence. In this double-voiced discourse, which, according to Bakhtin, “inevitably arises under conditions of dialogic interaction, that is, under conditions making possible an authentic life for the word”,¹⁶ the narrator seems to “ventriloquize” the author’s voice. For Bakhtin, with the

double-voiced discourse, the author takes advantage of other people’s words to articulate his objectives. Here, we understand author not as a historical person but as the authoring consciousness associated with the artistic form.¹⁷

The specific resource that Bakhtin expounds on in relation to the double-voiced discourse, which applies in the case above, is “stylization”. This phenomenon occurs when the author’s thought does not interrupt the other’s thought but simply coexists with the purpose of the discourse which it occupies: “the author’s thought once having penetrated someone else’s discourse [...] does not collide with the other’s thought, but rather follows after it in the same direction.”¹⁸ In Quentin’s interior monologue, in which he brings his father’s discourse regarding time, the author’s intrusion appears to be in line with his intentions, that is, not to deny time, but to reduce the power and importance given to it.

It is relevant to point out that, throughout his narration, Quentin seems to give great value to his father’s discourse. He repeatedly refers to his father’s opinions and worldview, not only regarding time, but life in general: “Father said a man is the sum of his misfortunes.”¹⁹ It seems that his father’s discourse has a driving force on the development of Quentin’s worldview.

In addition, the passage about the bequeathing of his watch, in which Quentin constructs a patriarchal genealogy,

14. BAKHTIN. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 78.

15. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 63.

16. BAKHTIN. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 185.

17. BAKHTIN. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*.

18. BAKHTIN. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 193.

19. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 87.

portrays his attitude of looking to his forefathers, to the past. We may say that perhaps he represents the “old South”, not only in virtue of his focus on his forefathers, but also by his formal language and conservative values.

Quentin seems to value his father more than he does his mother, which represents an influence from the patriarchal social context in which the characters are placed. His mother appears in his narration when her voice seems to invade Quentin’s consciousness, and she is usually voicing a complaint. In fact, throughout the novel, Mrs. Compson is constructed as a delicate, sickly, self-pitying woman, who is always on the defensive, as Quentin’s reflection shows:

To leave Harvard *your mother’s dream for sold Benjy’s pasture* for what have I done to have been given what have I done to have been given children like these Benjamin was punishment enough and now for her to have no more regard for me her own mother I’ve suffered for her dreamed and planned and sacrificed I went down into the valley yet never since she opened her eyes has she given me one unselfish thought at times I look at her I wonder if she can be my child except Jason he has never given me one moment’s sorrow since I first held him in my arms I knew then that he was to be my joy and my salvation I thought that Benjamin was punishment enough for any sins I have committed I thought he was my punishment for putting aside my pride and marrying a man who

held himself above me I don’t complain I loved him above all of them because of it because my duty though Jason pulling at my heart all the while but I see now that I have not suffered enough I see now that I must pay for your sins as well as mine [...].²⁰

In the excerpt, we note how Quentin’s consciousness is invaded by his mother’s voice. In Bakhtin’s concept, this variation of the double-voiced discourse would be “parody”, in which the consciousness that invades a discourse acts in a hostile fashion, forcing the inhabited discourse to serve objectives that differ from, and thus, transform the original intention. “Discourse becomes an arena of battle between two voices. In parody, therefore, there cannot be [that] fusion of voices [...]; the voices are not only isolated from one another, separated by a distance, but are also hostilely opposed”.²¹ Mrs. Compson’s discourse does carry intentions that differ from that of her son Quentin, and as such, their voices do appear to be isolated from one another in the text. Nevertheless, despite the “battle” of voices, he remains the orchestrator of these voices, bearing in mind that they develop within the limits of his consciousness.

If Quentin is a kind of epitome of the “old South”, Jason – the second youngest son – characterizes the “new South”. His speech is colloquial and simple, and his values differ from those of Quentin. His main goal is to become wealthy and

20. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 85-86.

21. BAKHTIN. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 193.

he believes that by investing in the stock market he will be successful. He steals large sums of money from his mother and sister Caddy, and as he himself states, “I’m glad I haven’t got the sort of conscience I’ve got to nurse like a sick puppy all the time”.²² The imminent threat of the Great Depression symbolizes Jason’s, and the new South’s, future of calamity.

Jason is outright prejudiced. He repudiates his mentally impaired brother, Benjy, whom he wishes to send to a psychiatric asylum. He discriminates against, and seeks to oppress, blacks, foreigners and women. He thinks his family members owe him and in his discussions with his mother, we perceive that she is partly responsible for his way of thinking. In the following conversation between both, Jason’s mother expresses pity for him, due to Caddy’s failure to keep her husband Herbert, who had intended to provide a post for Jason in an important bank.

“I know you haven’t had the chance the others had, that you’ve had to bury yourself in a little country store. I wanted you to get ahead. I knew your father would never realize that you were the only one who had any business sense, and then when everything else failed I believed that when she married, and Herbert... after his promise...”²³

It is important to highlight here the expectations of female roles not only by Jason, a male chauvinist, but also by

his mother. Caddy is expected to sustain a relationship with a man she is apparently unhappy with, so that her brother may get ahead in life.

Jason paints a negative picture of all the women around him. He feels that Caddy deprived him of an important job; Quentin, his niece is “a little slut of a girl”²⁴; Dilsey is “not worth a damn”²⁵; and his mother is an “invalid”²⁶. It is relevant to note that in his narration, Jason – in contrast to Benjy and Quentin – does not permit these women to speak.

In Jason’s narration, there are no flashbacks marked by italics, and time seems to regain its chronology. Jason does not allow other voices to invade his consciousness and discourse; he does not open the floor for the others to speak for themselves. He maintains control over the dialogue throughout his narration, which demands tremendous effort. It is interesting that he develops a racking headache by the middle of his narration, which lasts until the end.

On one occasion where Jason seems to lose himself in a profound interior monologue, the text begins to reflect his thoughts more closely. There are no punctuations, and thus, no pauses; ideas are not logically organized:

Selling land to send him to Harvard and paying taxes to support a state University all the time that I never saw except twice at a baseball game and not letting her daughter’s name

22. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 194.

23. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 188.

24. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 206.

25. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 176.

26. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 209.

be spoken on the place until after a while Father wouldn't even come downtown anymore but just sat there all day with the decanter [...]she says You have no respect for your Father's memory and I says I don't know why not it sure is preserved well enough to last only if I'm crazy too God knows what I'll do about it just to look at water makes me sick and I'd just as soon swallow gasoline as a glass of whiskey and Lorraine telling them he may not drink but if you don't believe he's a man I can tell you how to find out she says If I catch you fooling with any of these whores you know what I'll do she says I'll whip her grabbing at her I'll whip her as long as I can find her she says and I says if I don't drink that's my business but have you ever found me short I says I'll buy you enough beer to take a bath in if you want it because I've got every respect for a good honest whore [...].²⁷

Here, Jason's consciousness is chaotic and he seems to have lost himself in his thoughts. In spite of this, we perceive that he has not completely lost focus, since he still controls the others' voices that threaten to invade his consciousness. They do not become autonomous and free; instead, they are moderated and restricted by Jason's voice. The text resembles what Bakhtin calls the "hidden polemic" in relation to the double-voiced discourse: the other's discourse does not penetrate the narrator's discourse; however, it is the object of a hidden polemic, which influences the narrator's voice.

"Another's discourse in this case is not reproduced with a new intention, but it acts upon, influences, and in one way or another determines the narrator's discourse, while itself remaining outside it".²⁸ Even though the others' voices do not invade Jason's consciousness, they do have an impact on it. Perhaps that is why Jason's thoughts here become confusing and develop in an illogical sequence.

We can note that the form of Jason's narration represents its content: his relative one-sided and self-focused narration portrays his egotistical and individualistic personality. As a dominant character, who is given a voice, he does not represent the others; he speaks for himself.

In the final chapter of the novel, naturally one expects Caddy, the second oldest of the Compson children, to be the narrator, since her three brothers narrated the previous chapters. It would only seem fair and logical that Caddy is given a voice here in order to expose her point of view and to defend herself against the allegations made by the others' voices. However, as we have seen in the novel thus far, "logic", as we understand it, does not apply to this book. It seems that Faulkner creates another logic, in which the form of the novel depicts one of the issues he intends to highlight: Caddy, as a woman, does not have voice in her patriarchal, chauvinistic social context. In the chapter narrated by Quentin, when Caddy's voice seems to constantly invade his, this may

27. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 198.

28. BAKHTIN. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 195.

represent Caddy's resistance and resilience in an oppressive society. Since she was a child, she refused to take up roles that may be considered as submissive, as Quentin points out in his narration, which also brings Caddy's voice: "You know what I'd do if I were King? she never was a queen or a fairy she was always a king or a giant or a general".²⁹

The final chapter of the novel is narrated by a third person omniscient narrator that brings Dilsey's perspective. Like Caddy, Dilsey cannot narrate. The oppression she faces is a threefold interface related to gender, race and class. She is not just a woman, but also black and poor. The shift of focus from the Compsons' family to Dilsey, her children and her grandson Luster, is significant because it not only highlights the importance of race relations in the Southern culture, but it also brings a more just representation of these people who suffer the most profound oppression in that society.

Some African American literary critics, such as Joseph M. Flora (*et al*), feel that Faulkner's portrayal of Dilsey and her family is a negative stereotype. Flora (*et al*) states that Dilsey is a recreation of the "mammy" figure, that is, "a black woman defined by service, loyalty to her white family, and maternalism."³⁰

Yet, there are other African American critics that think differently. Thomas C. Holt writes that,

William Faulkner was at the forefront of white writers who confronted the region's racial realities and sketched memorable characters beyond stereotypes. [...] and Dilsey in *The Sound and the Fury* represent a range of black characters centrally positioned in Faulkner's work. The burdens of Southern history preoccupied Faulkner, and he saw race relations as at the center of the region's history.³¹

In our reading of the chapter, we find that it does bring Dilsey and her family's point of view, and that the narrator has a positive attitude towards Dilsey and seeks to represent her as brave and resilient. Differently from Jason's mother, who apparently remains oblivious to her son's ruthlessness (or turns a blind eye) and always tries to pamper and gratify him, Dilsey is not only capable of seeing who Jason really is, but she also faces and defies him. On one occasion, narrated by Jason, when he refuses to give Luster a ticket to a show that he, in fact, received from a colleague, Dilsey stands up to Jason, who threatens to throw the ticket in the fireplace:

"Hush, Luster," Dilsey says. She jerked him back. "Go on," she says [to Jason].

"Drop hit in. Go on. Git hit over with."

"You can have it for a nickel," I says.

"Go on," Dilsey says. "He aint got no nickel. Go on. Drop hit in."

"All right," I says. I dropped it in and Dilsey shut the stove.

"A big growed man like you," she says.³²

29. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 147.

30. FLORA (*et al*). *The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People, Movements and Motifs*, p. 469.

31. HOLT (*et al*). *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 24: Race*, p. 84.

32. FAULKNER. *The Sound and the Fury*, p. 217.

It is important to note here too that through her brave reaction to Jason, Dilsey is educating her son to boldly face one's oppressor and to become a resisting and independent person, which are characteristics that black people in their society must have to survive.

Dilsey is also presented as compassionate and humane, whose strength kept the Compsons' family together for years. When Benjy's family refuses to spend time with him or to be seen with him in public, Dilsey and her children include him in their family as if he were one of their own: Dilsey takes him to church, celebrates his birthday, and so on. It is significant, then, that the novel focusses on Dilsey's family at the end, when The Compsons' family has fallen apart. Perhaps Dilsey and her children represent the hope of a better humanity.

In conclusion, we have seen that, through a plurality of consciousnesses, Faulkner reconstructs some of the social conflicts in the South in the late 1920s. This was a time when women in general and black people had to continuously fight against the different forms of oppression they faced; and, even though these forms of oppression are gradually changing, they are still quite present today. Caddy and Dilsey's defiance and refusal to submit themselves to the oppressor represent the women of their time and women in contemporary society, whose resilience have continued and will continue to persevere.

In relation to our core question, regarding representativeness in the novel, it is to our understanding that, because the narrator of each chapter holds the power to give visibility, or not, to the others' voices, the multiple voices in the novel are not equally valid. Moreover, the narrators are "more-of-the-same": white males – except for the third person omniscient narrator in the final chapter –, who represent the patriarchy. Thus, Faulkner's novel shows that, as in real life, there is no representativeness, and thus, no democracy.

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