

Ghent University  
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy



**A Comparative Study of William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and  
Graham Swift's *Last Orders***

Supervisor:  
Dr. Stef Craps

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## Introduction

The first novel I ever read by Graham Swift was his acclaimed third novel, *Waterland*, which also turned out to be his most complex one. Even though it was not always easy to follow the different storylines, I immediately liked Swift's style. A couple of months later, I started reading his fourth novel, *Out of this World*, and from the first page onwards, I noticed that this one was of another nature than *Waterland*. I believe it was an enjoyable novel, but stylistically, it was an enormous step backwards. This was also the opinion of the majority of critics, who labelled *Out of this World* as the least successful novel Swift had ever written. However, recent reviews show that this dubious honour should now be given to his latest novel *Tomorrow*. So when I found out that a possible subject for a dissertation involved Swift's Booker Prize-winning novel *Last Orders*, I did not need much time to reflect on the matter. The fact that it also involved a novel by another literary genius, William Faulkner, contributed to my decision. I had never read a novel by Faulkner before, so I saw this as a perfect opportunity to fill this gap.

Winning the Booker Prize for Fiction, or just being nominated, is a great achievement, but for some writers it is also a source for commotion. Ask Ian McEwan, whose novel *Atonement* was shortlisted for this prize in 2001. When a novel receives a lot of attention, more and more people are inclined to read it. This was definitely true for McEwan's *Atonement*, but not all reactions were positive. A number of critics claimed that the author had used elements from a memoir written by Lucilla Andrews without giving credit. Others believed that McEwan had simply plagiarized the work. Something similar happened to Graham Swift, who won the Booker Prize in 1996 for his sixth novel, *Last Orders*. Most critics and readers saw this as an acknowledgement of Swift's status as a contemporary English writer that should have been attributed earlier in his career. When an Australian academic, John Frow, expressed in an article his belief that Graham Swift had plagiarized the novel *As I Lay Dying*, written by the American author William Faulkner, more and more readers started to focus on the differences between the novels. The majority of critics and writers supported Swift and stated that Frow confuses plagiarism with pastiche, a legitimate postmodern technique. Others express their doubt and remark that Swift's rewriting of Faulkner's novel should be seen as plain plagiarism.

In the following chapters, I will focus on a number of themes that are prominent in *As I Lay Dying* as well as *Last Orders*. By looking closely at these subjects, I would like to find out whether or not John Frow was right in accusing Graham Swift of plagiarism.

In the first chapter, I will further elaborate on the practice of plagiarism, looking among other things at the different degrees that can be distinguished, how it can be avoided, and some famous cases in the history of politics, the academic world, and literature. Then I will introduce the comparative study of the two novels with which this dissertation is centrally concerned, namely William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and Graham Swift's *Last Orders*. Both novels evolve around the same plot: to fulfil the last wish of a deceased relative/close friend. But what about other similarities? Are there important differences that should be noted?

In the second chapter, I will look at the formal similarities between the novels, and especially at the multiple voices and viewpoints, three special types of chapters, and the language used by the characters. Apart from this, narrative techniques will also be scrutinized, for example whether characters are flat or round, and whether or not time follows a natural chronology.

The third chapter will deal with the geography in the novels and the mentalities that go with it. William Faulkner's novel is set in the American South, which has a long history of slavery and racial tensions. For his novels, Faulkner has created his own landscape, which is based on his native soil. He has called it "Yoknapatawpha County," a piece of land of which he is the sole proprietor. On the basis of his novels, it is possible to reconstruct a detailed image of the geography and population of this imaginative county. The family which is central in this story are the Bundrens, by some people defined as "white trash." The word "white" already signals the racial tensions that emerge in Faulkner's fiction. In *As I Lay Dying*, the theme of race is not so much present, but in other novels he has made some harsh comments that have given rise to controversy.

Graham Swift's novel is situated in Europe, and more specifically in South London, England. He addresses the notion of Englishness in a rather critical way as becomes clear in his representation of race. Contrary to Faulkner, he has moved from the period of the Civil War to the post-colonial era. Even though England now accommodates a lot of different minority groups, Swift does not give them a place in his literature. Because of this, his novels cannot be seen as an accurate reflection of contemporary English society. The traditional images of Englishness are incorporated in some protagonists like Jack Dodds and his best friend Ray Johnson. Jack refers to John Bull, the personification of England, and Ray is associated with the geography of the country. The most stubborn of old English

characteristics in Swift's novel, however, is class inequality. Like the Bundren family, Swift's protagonists belong to the working-class milieu, which for some of them leads to monetary problems. This can also be interpreted the other way around: because of their lack of money, they are not able to transcend their working-class status.

The next chapter focuses on the representation of gender in the two works. First, I will look at the way women are represented in the novels, whether they take up an important position or are rather assigned traditional roles. Related to this is the notion of performativity, i.e. taking on a number of roles. For a deeper analysis of this concept, I will first of all look at the names of the characters and the meanings they convey. Then, I will consider the roles that the characters are convinced they play. These roles can be chosen out of free will, but more often they are determined by the circumstances or social pressure.

In the fifth chapter, I will discuss the notion of religion in the novels. Do the characters tend to rely on their faith in God, or do they only depend on their own capacities? The Bundrens are not really a religious family, but because of the presence of the pious Cora and Vernon Tull, and Minister Whitfield, religion is a rather important theme in *As I Lay Dying*. Faulkner also makes references to biblical themes and names in his other novels, and thus makes use of a remarkable religious intertextuality. According to Daniel Lea, Graham Swift has written an "areligious religious novel" (166) in placing the religious and the profane next to each other. This is also the case in *As I Lay Dying*, yet I believe that its focus on religion is much more prominent; Swift deals with it in a more subtle way than Faulkner does. The characters never explicitly appeal to God, but they do express their desire to find out whether or not there is a spirit looking over them. The characters constantly make references to the fact that they have the feeling of being watched. Rather than being the subject of perception, the men are the object of the gaze (Craps 410). This gaze is sometimes connected to a higher spirit, sometimes to Jack or buildings like the Canterbury Cathedral.

In my final chapter, I will take into consideration the literary technique of intertextuality, which was introduced by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s. I will show that Graham Swift's novel has some things in common with the one written by Faulkner, but that there are also other works which form a basis for *Last Orders*, as well as for *As I Lay Dying*.

In my conclusion, I will look back at these themes of formal structure, mentality, gender, religion, and intertextuality and give my opinion on whether or not the similarities between *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders* are as apparent as John Frow claims them to be. However, it should be noted that the purpose of this dissertation is not simply to find out whether or not Swift has plagiarised Faulkner's novel, but to present a detailed and

comprehensive comparative analysis of the two novels. The kind of comparative study that I am going to undertake in this dissertation has not been attempted before. Most critics and readers that have compared *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders*, have focussed on the most obvious similarities like the concept of a funeral journey, or the one-sentence chapter. Of course, I will look at these correspondences, but I will also present a deeper analysis of themes that have not been taken into consideration in earlier comparisons.

## Chapter 1: Plagiarism

### 1. History

LXXXI. To Prowl The Plagiary.

Forbear to tempt me, Proule, I will not show  
 A line unto thee, till the world it know;  
 Or that I have by, two good sufficient men,  
 To be the wealthy witness of my pen:  
 For all thou hear'st, thou swear'st thy selfe didst doo.  
 Thy wit lives by it, Proule, and belly too.  
 Which, if thou leave not soone (though I am loth)  
 I must a libell make, and cosen both.

(Jonson, qtd. in Donaldson 123)

The term “plagiary” was introduced by Marcus Valerius Martialis, better known as Martial, and was later used by Ben Jonson, the first English author to take the problem of plagiarism seriously, in the epigram addressed *To Prowl the Plagiary*. Prowl the Plagiary takes a look at the writing of others so he can use it for his own purposes. However, the next time two witnesses will be waiting to catch the thief red-handed (Donaldson 123). Because of the origin of the word “plagiarism,” namely being derived from the Latin “plagiarius” which describes someone who steals slaves or children and alters their appearance so he is able to pass them off as his own, we make an analogy with theft of property while in fact nothing material is stolen (Hammond 43). The way in which plagiarism was regarded changed a lot through history. Until the second century AD, texts were written down on papyrus roles. In order to be read, these roles had to be held in both hands, which made it almost impossible to read and take notes at the same time. This changed with the arrival of the codex. Readers only had to use their hands to turn the pages and thus were free to copy the text (Kewes 7). In Classical Antiquity, literary theft was already rejected and forgeries were condemned. In the Middle Ages, however, there was not so much interest in individual authorial identity, and in the

Renaissance imitation of old texts was even praised rather than condemned (Kewes 6-7). In the fifteenth century, the invention of printing further facilitated the copying of texts. Printed materials were now flooding the market which supplied people with pamphlets, poems, texts, etc. which were ready to be read and copied. More recent inventions like the photocopying machine, the scanner and, of course, the Internet, have the same effect (Kewes 8). The abundance of reading materials makes it easier to plagiarize but also a lot harder to detect plagiarism.

Recently, this emergence of the market for print has been seen as the instigator that caused plagiarism to become an important matter in early modern England. It was only after the Renaissance that the question of the morality of literary imitation appeared in England (Ricks 31). An example of this can be found in the area of drama. In Shakespeare's lifetime, most theatrical scripts were not printed, which implies that there were not many accusations of theft or plagiarism against dramatists. In the seventeenth century, however, the number of charges became higher and higher because of the publication of new plays (Kewes 13-14). Since the Renaissance, there has been a lot of pressure on authors to produce something the audience has not seen before. This is not very easy, so they very often resort to the retelling of familiar stories (Rosenthal 7). Laura J. Rosenthal explored the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and found out that it is very hard to find an artist in this period who did not make use of materials that already existed (1). In this period, authorship was not just a matter of literary property, but also of social and cultural capital (Rosenthal 3). The man who introduced the concepts of "social capital" and "cultural capital" was the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (qtd. in Wolfreys). Next to social and cultural capital, there is still another important category, namely economic capital, which has to do with economic resources like cash and shares. Social capital consists in establishing a network with people surrounding you, like family, colleagues, etc. These people should be able to help you and in this way expand your capacities. Cultural capital, finally, includes education, skills which help you to get a higher position in society. This capital is often passed over from parents to their children, from one generation to the next. Cultural capital is closely linked to two important concepts in Bourdieu's theory: habitus and field. A field is a complex structure of social relationships and a battlefield for the positions that all have their own dispositions or characteristics. The set of dispositions can in one word be referred to as "habitus," which is something that differs from one person to another. Later, Bourdieu also added symbolic capital to the list, which is a subcategory of cultural capital. It refers to the amount of prestige

owned by a person, and this type of capital should be acquired accumulatively in order to be profitable.

Because of the increasing number of charges, the definition of plagiarism became a pejorative one (Ricks 37). It is the anxiety about the protection of one's property that led to the formulation of the Copyright Act in 1710. Since the eighteenth century, authors can claim infringement even when their work has not been copied entirely. From then on, the concept of "genius changed from something you could *have* to something one could *be*" (Rosenthal 19, my emphasis). It was, however, only in the early nineteenth century that the first prosecutions took place (Hammond 51).

## 2. *What is plagiarism?*

The practice of plagiarism has been increasingly facilitated with the rise of the world wide web. You are only one click away from thousands and thousands of sources that are relevant to a subject of your own choice. This high amount of easily accessible sources works in the plagiarist's favour. Even when you believe that someone is guilty of plagiarism, the sheer size of the Internet makes it difficult to prove. It is possible though, to enter a phrase or sentence that looks suspicious into a search engine on the Internet. To prove that you are really dealing with plagiarism, however, the words in the text have to be the exact same words that are used on a particular site or in an article. What a difference with only about a decade ago when most people did not have access yet to the internet in their private home sphere. Plagiarizing was a lot more difficult back then because there was only a limited number of books and articles you could consult, and they could seldom be found outside the local library. All of this belongs to the past for once and for all. Because of the Internet, plagiarism has become the rule rather than the exception for an increasing number of people.

But when do you actually speak of plagiarism? Can you distinguish a number of degrees? Are there certain boundaries which cannot be crossed? And what are the consequences of committing plagiarism? These are some questions on which I would like to focus in this chapter, in which I will also discuss a number of famous cases of plagiarism.

When you look up "to plagiarize" in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, you find the following definition: "to copy another person's ideas, words or work and pretend that they are your own." The word "plagiarism" is derived from the Latin word *plagiarius*, which is someone "who abducts the child or slave of another" (qtd. in Caterson).

This phrase clearly confirms the form of theft which plagiarism actually is. But plagiarism is not merely stealing. Of course, it includes stealing, but also buying or borrowing—the improper use of ideas that did not originate in your own mind. Brian Martin believes that there are more degrees of plagiarism to be distinguished than you probably can imagine. The first type of plagiarism that he mentions is “word-for-word plagiarism.” This type frequently appears with students since it entails copying of great amounts of text out of a published work without using quotation marks or acknowledging the source. There are a number of reasons why students seek solace in plagiarism. The most common ones are stress or plain laziness, but it can also be due to pure ignorance. A lot of students are never taught how to avoid plagiarism and are consequently not aware of the seriousness of their “crime” and the punishments that are attached to it. But I will come back to this later. Very painful and embarrassing for students can be the fact that they sometimes plagiarize without being aware of it. This is called “cryptomnesia” and implies that “[t]he unconscious plagiarist is not aware that a sentence, phrase, or image is coming from memory at all. They have a ‘false feeling of novelty’” (Schacter, qtd. in Goldberg). This does however not only happen with students; it can befall anyone on every moment of the day. A second type distinguished by Martin is “paraphrasing plagiarism” which means that you have changed the words of the text you wanted to use, but not appropriately. “Plagiarism of secondary sources” implies using passages from a source which in its turn quotes from another source. The plagiarist then refers to the original source in his bibliography without looking it up. This can be detected because of slight changes that are made in the punctuation or citation that are used. A more general type is “plagiarism of ideas” which means that a thought from someone else is used without depending on the words or form of the original source. The last type that Martin describes is “plagiarism of authorship.” This implies that someone puts his name on a work that was actually written by someone else and thus takes all the credit for it. This can be seen as one of the most serious types of plagiarism (qtd. in Martin).

The most common view on plagiarism, especially among intellectuals, is that it is a serious offence that should be punished accordingly. People who plagiarize do not always give a lot of thought to the seriousness of their actions. Plagiarizing someone else’s work can have serious consequences which even can damage a further career. For students this can range from failing a test or a task to being expelled from school or even being given notice of the offence on their disciplinary record. It can even go so far that they lose their chances for getting good college recommendations (qtd in Bushweller). For intellectuals, being found guilty of plagiarism can ruin their academic career, which consequently leads to credibility.

What happened to Doris Kearns Goodwin, an Overseer at Harvard University, clearly illustrates this, but I will elaborate on this case of plagiarism in the last part of this chapter. However, more important than punishing people, is teaching them how to avoid plagiarism. By just punishing them, people who committed plagiarism purely out of ignorance do not know what exactly they have done wrong. The next time they will make the same mistakes again. Only punishing is thus not a solution; more important is the prevention of plagiarism. From Karl Stolley we learn that the key to avoiding plagiarism is to make sure you give credit where it is due. He offers a list of the most important things that need to be credited or documented:

- Words or ideas presented in a book, magazine, web page, newspaper, or any other medium
- Information you gain through interviewing or conversing with another person, face to face, over the phone, or in writing
- When you copy the exact words or a unique phrase
- When you reprint any diagrams, illustrations, charts, pictures, or other visual materials
- When you reuse or repost any electronically-available media, including images, audio, video, or other media

So you give credit to every idea or wording that did not originate from your own thoughts.

Things that do not need any further crediting or documentation include:

- Writing your own lived experiences, your own observations and insights, your own thoughts, and your own conclusions about a subject
- When you are writing up your own results obtained through lab or field experiments
- When you use your own artwork, digital photographs, video, audio, etc.
- When you are using “common knowledge,” things like folklore, common sense observations, myths, urban legends, and historical events (but not historical documents)
- When you are using generally-accepted facts, including facts that are accepted within particular discourse communities (qtd. in Stolley)

The last item but one might need some further explanation. When do you speak of “common knowledge”? Generally speaking, you can consider something being common knowledge “if

you find the same information undocumented in at least five credible sources” (qtd. in Stolley). Something can also be common knowledge if you believe that your readers or listeners might already be familiar with the information you are offering, or that the information could easily be looked up (qtd. in Stolley).

There are also a number of other phrases that require some explanation. Brian Martin claims that in some intellectual circles plagiarism has become such an established practice that it is no longer considered worthy of mention. He therefore draws attention to two large subdivisions of plagiarism: “institutionalised” and “competitive” plagiarism (qtd. in Martin). According to Martin, too much attention is given to competitive plagiarism. In this situation, “plagiarism is breaking the rules of the game, gaining undue credit in a competitive intellectual endeavour” (qtd. in Martin). This means that you use someone else’s ideas without being given permission to do that. Institutional plagiarism, on the other hand, “is a feature of systems of formal hierarchy, in which credit for intellectual work is more a consequence than a cause of unequal power and position” (qtd. in Martin). It thus implies that someone who holds a higher rank than you can command you to write a text for him or her and that he or she will gain all credit. This type of plagiarism can also be subdivided in a number of categories. The first one that Martin distinguishes is ghostwriting, which is very common in the popular press. Ghostwriting means that when a “famous person” like a politician, actor or sports figure gives a speech or writes a book, the actual writing is often done by someone else who most of the time stays anonymous. Martin does however give an example of a book in which it is acknowledged that someone else did the writing. This happened in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which states that it was written by “Malcolm X with the assistance of Alex Haley.” The “with” here refers to the person who was responsible for most of the writing, he was not “just” an assistant. Ghostwriting can be seen as plagiarism of authorship since the contributions of others are not acknowledged. When it concerns a politician who relies on someone else to write his or her speech, we speak of political speechwriting (qtd. in Martin).

In the scientific domain, “honorary authorship” occurs rather often. Most of the time this term is used to refer to someone who merely supervised, and thus did not actually participate in the research, but still demands that his or her name has to be mentioned as co-author of the research paper. The people who did perform a lot of research are given little or no credit at all. Frequently, well-known names are put on the cover as co-author, so that people will be more inclined to buy the book in question (qtd. in Martin).

In bureaucracies like for example government, work that is done by junior workers is frequently signed by higher officials. By doing this they claim responsibility for the work or document and thus also gain credit for it (qtd. in Martin).

These practices are so accepted in everyday life that no one pays attention to them anymore, even though they fulfil all the conditions of being considered “plagiarism.” Martin calls institutionalised plagiarism also wholesale plagiarism, by analogy with wholesale terrorism, since they both involve “the systematic exploitation of large numbers of people as a matter of standard procedure” (qtd. in Martin). The opposite is thus competitive or retail plagiarism which “typically exploits the intellectual labour of a few people at the time” (qtd. in Martin).

### *3. Famous cases of plagiarism*

Brian Martin calls for more attention for institutionalised plagiarism, but I will focus on competitive plagiarism in the rest of this dissertation. Competitive plagiarism occurs in different fields of society, like the academic world, politics and literature. The first example I would like to give is situated in the academic world: author Doris Kearns Goodwin was accused of taking (almost verbatim) sentences from Lynne McTaggart’s book *Kathleen Kennedy: Her Life and Times* and using them in her own book *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*. Later on, Goodwin herself admitted that her use of uncited sources reached far beyond applying single sentences from McTaggart. As a well-known historian and Harvard University Overseer, Doris Kearns Goodwin has lost her credibility and the respect of her colleagues (qtd. in The Crimson Staff).

Also in politics, plagiarism is not an exception. The example I would like to give concerns the Iraq war: Chris Marsden wrote an article on the fact that Blair Labour government’s dossier on the Iraq War that was released on February 3, 2003, was plagiarism. The document was entitled *Iraq: Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception and Intimidation*, and was quoted by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who wanted to draw the attention of his colleagues to the “fine paper that the United Kingdom distributed ... which describes in exquisite detail Iraqi deception activities” (qtd. in Marsden). However, entire passages were verbatim taken from three different articles that were months or years old. The plagiarism was even done so in such an obvious way that it contained the same spelling errors as the original. And above all, one of the plagiarised articles was a description of the build up to the last Gulf War, and thus had nothing to do with the Iraq War (qtd. in Marsden).

Finally I will present a number of examples of plagiarism in the field of literature, since it is especially in this area that this practice is fiercely discussed. More than 25 years ago, Martin Amis showed that the line between flattery and theft can be very thin. He claimed that the young American novelist Jacob Epstein had plagiarised one of his novels. Epstein's acclaimed first novel, *Wild Oats* (1979) contained, according to Amis, more than 50 phrases or sentences—some word for word, others with some slight changes—from Amis's novel, *The Rachel Papers* that was published five years earlier. Amis said that he understood that authors can pay homage to the writers they admire themselves—like he himself was influenced by e.g. Saul Bellow—but that Jacob Epstein definitely had crossed the line. He has stolen rather than imitated Amis's work. Epstein himself later admitted that he indeed had taken sentences from *The Rachel Papers* and thus was guilty of plagiarism (qtd. in Kamysz Lane). My next example concerns the author Ian McEwan, who is considered to be one of the best contemporary novelists. He has been accused of plagiarizing a memoir of a Second World War nurse, Lucilla Andrews, in his Booker-nominated novel *Atonement* (2001). This is not the first time that such accusations have been made. It was said that *The Cement Garden*, his first novel, was very similar to Julian Gloag's novel *Our Mother's House* (1963). After that, it was alleged *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981) owed too much to *Don't Look Now* (1973), a short story written by Daphne du Maurier (qtd. in McCrum). And now McEwan has to deal with the accusations concerning his bestselling novel. He admits that he drew inspiration from *No Time for Romance*, but claims that he did not copy any words from another author (qtd. in McEwan). In his defence, McEwan admits he is indebted to her, but he did not steal ideas and sentences from her.

I have openly acknowledged my debt to her in the author's note at the end of *Atonement*, and ever since on public platforms, where questions about research are almost as frequent as 'where do you get your inspiration from?' I have spoken about her in numerous interviews and in a Radio 4 tribute. My one regret is not meeting her. But if people are now talking about Lucilla Andrews, I am glad. I have been talking about her for five years (qtd. in McEwan).

McEwan is known for the thorough research he does in order to write his novels as accurately as possible. That is why he turned to *No Time for Romance* in which Andrews described in great detail what happened in London hospitals during wartime. Since it was not easy to gather a lot of information, McEwan was very glad he found Andrew's biography in the

Wellcome Trust medical library in Oxford. It contained “a factual account of the rigours of Nightingale training, the daily routines and crucially, of the arrival of wounded soldiers from the Dunkirk evacuation and their treatment” (qtd. in McEwan). He used it because all of it was real, and this was one of the rare sources that gave such a factual account. A lot of fellow authors leap to McEwan’s defense and they use this as the reason why the writer cannot be accused of plagiarism. A great number of novelists – including John Updike, Martin Amis, Margaret Atwood, Thomas Keneally and Zadie Smith – believe that it is impossible not to rework the sentences of other writers. You cannot write history on your own, you have to rely on other sources (qtd. in Reynolds). All of them have admitted that they also borrow from the work of other people (qtd. in Bell). The fact that history cannot be invented and that you need other sources to construct your work, can also be found in my next example.

One of the most discussed trials of the last years must have been the one concerning the alleged plagiarism of Dan Brown’s successful novel *The Da Vinci Code*. Newscasts and newspapers worldwide have followed the trial very closely until the verdict fell on 7 April 2006. Even though *The Da Vinci Code* has sold more than 40 million copies and has been translated into almost 50 languages, the novel has been the object of criticism since its publication 4 years ago. First of all there were the continuing accusations coming from the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church who did not agree with Brown’s idea that Jesus Christ married Mary Magdalene and founded a royal bloodline. Later on, two accusations of plagiarism followed, the first of which became public in April 2005. The novelist Lewis Perdue sued Brown and his publisher Random House for plagiarizing his novels *The Da Vinci Legacy* (1983) and *Daughter of God* (2000), claiming “there are far too many parallels between my books and *The Da Vinci Code* for it to be an accident” (qtd. in Lara). On 4 August 2005, District Judge George B. Daniels ruled that this claim was unjust because “[i]deas and general literary themes themselves are unprotectable under the copyright law” (qtd. in Bailey). The second claim came in February 2006, when two authors of *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, said that “it’s not that Dan Brown has lifted certain ideas because a number of people have done that before. It’s rather that he’s lifted the whole architecture – the whole jigsaw puzzle – and hung it on to the peg of a fictional thriller” (qtd. in Caterson). Also the fact that one of the characters in the novel was named Leigh Teabing, was according to Leigh and Baigent (whose name is an anagram of “Teabing”) a proof that their work had been used. Leigh Teabing’s physical description - he walks with crutches - would refer to the limp of the third author of *The Holy Blood and the*

*Holy Grail*, Henry Lincoln. On 7 April 2006, the claim was again rejected, now by High Court judge Peter Smith, and Brown won the court case. The judge ruled that the central themes for Brown's novel were not the same as those of *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, and even if this had been the case, "they are too general or of too low a level of abstraction to be capable of protection by copyright law" (qtd. in Naughton). So it is very interesting to note that it seems to be the expression of an idea that is protected by copyright rather than the idea itself (Hammond 44). Dan Brown thus won two court cases in a row on the alleged plagiarism in his novel *The Da Vinci Code*.

The reason that I paid so much attention to this last case is that it shows some remarkable similarities to the case I am going to discuss in greater detail, namely the alleged plagiarism by Graham Swift. According to some critics, his novel *Last Orders* has too much in common with William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* for it to be coincidence.

Swift's novel was published in 1996, 66 years after the one written by Faulkner. For *Last Orders*, Graham Swift received the Booker Prize and it was only then that the controversy started. Swift can thus be seen as another "victim" of the Booker Prize. Once your novel suddenly gets a lot of attention, it is bound to attract negative comments. It happened to Ian McEwan, and it can also be compared to the moment when the alleged plagiarism of Dan Brown's novel became a hot item worldwide. When the novels were just published, no one paid a lot of attention to them. It was only when *The Da Vinci Code* became a hype because of the daring subjects, and *Last Orders* was awarded the Booker Prize, that a stream of reactions got going. Suddenly everybody had an opinion about both novels and accusations of plagiarism were bound to emerge. An Australian academic, John Frow, was the one who "revealed" the alleged plagiarism by Graham Swift. He was the first to make his accusations known in a letter to the Australian Review of Books, which was followed up by a controversial article in a London newspaper (qtd. in Kamysz Lane). By analogy with *The Da Vinci Code*, Frow's accusations seem to be architectural rather than purely textual. He claimed that

[t]he resemblance is not just a matter of the similarity of the story, which is a common one, or of the use of shifting point of view, which again is a standard in the modern novel, or of the representation of vernacular speech. The resemblance goes down to small details, including the use of first names as chapter headings, the use of a one-

sentence chapter, the attribution of one chapter to a dead person, and the organisation of a chapter by enumerated points. (qtd. in O'Mahony)

Frow could not understand that neither the judges that had to award the prize, nor the majority of reviewers, had noticed these obvious similarities to Faulkner's masterpiece *As I Lay Dying*. He acknowledged that "plagiarism would be the wrong word for this, but it's something stronger than unoriginality: 'direct and unacknowledged imitation' conveys a sense of the relationship between the two novels" (qtd. in Blackhurst). After these accusations, Graham Swift's former publisher, Peter Strauss, immediately leapt to Swift's defence by saying that "there are points of the book which are reminiscent of *As I Lay Dying*, but *Last Orders*' conception is unique to Graham. He has not written the same book but written about the same themes" (qtd. in Blackhurst). Also fellow author Kazuo Ishiguro defended his friend: "*Last Orders* does no more than what countless books, movies, paintings and musical works have always done, and will continue to do, that is, to allude to an established classic for its own purposes" (qtd. in O'Mahony).

But what does Graham Swift himself think of all this? Was he aware of the similarities between his novel and that of Faulkner? Or was it all purely coincidental? Swift understands that people are reminded of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* while reading *Last Orders* and admits there is a connection. In an interview that he gave even before the accusations of plagiarism, he says that he is a great admirer of Faulkner and that

there are obvious similarities between the narrative -- although I have my jar of ashes, Faulkner has his rotting corpse, and the setting is clearly very different. So without my having begun the book -- or continued writing it -- with that novel constantly in my mind, I think there is a little homage at work (qtd. in Rosenberg).

He acknowledges that his book was an "echo" of Faulkner's and that the author was a "ghostly presence" in his work, but "so were other writers" (qtd. in Cowley). Swift's reaction to John Frow's accusations in particular becomes clear in the following quote: "Professor Frow over-stresses the connection and makes it sound as though the whole point of *Last Orders* is to do a remodelling of Faulkner's book. Their worlds are completely different -- not just the geographical worlds but the mentality that goes with it" (qtd. in Blackhurst).

There are a lot of people who agree with Swift and give him the benefit of the doubt. They all think that Frow focuses too much on the similarities and ignores the parts in which the novels do differ. No one will ever state that the two novels are completely different, but claiming that Swift has been guilty of plagiarism goes too far. Both novels deal with life and death, two themes that go way back in literature. Columnist John Walsh describes this very accurately in his reaction to John Frow's accusations:

Of course it's a bloody cheek to walk off with somebody else's 'structure' and build oneself a house in its image. But if we are to snipe at Mr Swift for 'borrowing', ought we not to belabour Mr Faulkner's mouldering remains for doing some borrowing of his own? The plot of *As I Lay Dying* - a dead man's [sic] closest associates ferry his [sic] remains through a lovingly described landscape to a mysterious and fantastically symbolic final resting-place - is, of course, a total rip-off from *Idylls of the King*, a mournful Arthurian epic by Tennyson, who himself pinched it shamefully (and without any knowing winks and nods in the text) from Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Whether the dead person winds up in a barge, an urn, a Mercedes or a cart, it's the same narrative trajectory. But once you start looking into 'borrowings' in literary history, there's no stopping. I dunno. Next they'll be saying that Joyce got the idea for *Ulysses* from someone else. (qtd. in Walsh)

Walsh claims here that "borrowing" is part of literature in general. Jakob Winnberg draws the same conclusion in his book *An Aesthetics of Vulnerability: The Sentimentum and the Novels of Graham Swift*. He argues that Frow's accusations prove that "Professor Frow has apparently been left nonplussed by the notion of postmodernist pastiche and appropriation" (note 50, p 69). We owe the concept of pastiche to Thomas Mann, who uses it in *Doktor Faustus*, and in turn owed it to Theodor Adorno. It is defined by Fredric Jameson in the following way:

Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. Pastiche is thus blank parody, a statue with blind eyeballs: it is to parody what that

other interesting and historically original modern thing, the practice of a kind of blank irony, is to what Wayne Booth calls the “stable ironies” of the eighteenth century (17).

Pastiche is thus a literary technique which involves the imitation of someone else’s work, but it also involves original composition. The similarities are usually deliberately made so obvious, that it is impossible not to notice them. The imitation is thus done in a light-hearted way, but not with lack of respect.

Anastasia Logotheti points out that readers see pastiche and parody as accepted practices in present-day literature (2). Plagiarism, however, continues to be regarded as a crime. The last decades, it has become very difficult to make a distinction between all the different types of techniques that can be used to process words and ideas coming from other writers. Logotheti states that “[a]fter decades of incessant allusion and appropriation in literature and cinema, music and architecture, we may no longer be able to distinguish plagiarism from homage, pastiche, ventriloquism, parody, intertextuality, echoing, reference, sequels and prequels” (4). John Frow believes that Swift has plagiarised *As I Lay Dying*, Jakob Winnberg describes *Last Orders* as pastiche, and Swift himself says there was “a little homage at work” (qtd. in Rosenberg). Logotheti adds to this that Swift does not only pay an intertextual homage to Faulkner, but also to T.S. Eliot and Chaucer. Yet, *Last Orders* still remains “an original work of fiction” (Logotheti 6).

My purpose is now to find out whether or not Graham Swift has plagiarised Faulkner’s novel, like Frow claims, or rather used a legitimate technique like pastiche. In doing this, I will first of all look at formal similarities between the novels. Then I will analyse the mentalities that are put forward, namely Americanness and Englishness. Other subjects that will be looked at in greater detail are gender, religion, and intertextuality.

## Chapter 2: Formal similarities between *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders*

The novels *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders* show some remarkable similarities as regards their general framework. The similarities that immediately catch the eye concern innovations such as the multiple voices and viewpoints, and colloquial language. I will also look at two important narrative techniques applied by both authors, namely creation of characters, and time.

### 1. *Multiple voices and viewpoints*

The most obvious similarity between *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders* is the way in which the novels are built up. They are both divided in a rather large number of chapters, 59 and 75 respectively, that are told in a stream-of-consciousness technique. This can be defined as “a literary technique that records the multifarious thoughts and feelings of a character without regard to logical argument or narrative sequence” (qtd. in Columbia Encyclopedia). It is some kind of interior monologue that is not always easy to follow because of deviations in punctuation and syntax. These elements of language can especially be found in Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, but I will come back to them later. In Faulkner’s novel, the chapters are divided among fifteen characters, seven of which belong to the Bundren family. In *Last Orders*, on the other hand, only seven narrators can be distinguished throughout the entire story. This kind of narration is better known as multiple narration, and, according to Erich Auerbach, this multiplicity of voices suggests that we seek to examine “an objective reality” (536). To do this accurately, the character has to be approached “from many sides as closely as human possibilities of perception and expression can succeed in doing (Auerbach 536). Every chapter is headed with the name of the narrator (in *Last Orders*, some chapters are headed with place name but they can be equated with “Ray,” since he is always the narrator) and in that section we learn more about past and present events, other characters, but also about the narrator’s private thoughts and feelings. What is particular about the chapters in both novels is that they all are monologues which are not addressed to anyone in particular. No one hears the monologues; they all pass each other (Malcolm 14).

Related to this kind of narration is the fact that we are dealing with first-person narrators. The dominant narrator in *Last Orders* is Ray “Lucky” Johnson, the best friend of the deceased butcher Jack Dodds. He is responsible for the narration of 39 sections and thus narrates more than half of the novel. His chapters include the ones with his name, but also the seventeen sections which are headed with a place name. In Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, Darl Bundren is the main narrator. He is the second son of the deceased Addie Bundren and her husband Anse. As a consequence of their large contributions, our feelings toward Jack and Addie are largely guided by what Ray and Darl tell us. For Jack, this implies that we get a rather positive image since Ray has been his closest friend for many years. Their friendship goes back to the Second World War, which they fought in Egypt and in which Ray saved Jack’s life. Yet, we have to keep in mind that Ray may represent Jack in this positive way because he feels guilty. He has heavily betrayed Jack on two occasions. The first time, Ray offers Vince a patch of land to open his car dealership. This ends Jack’s hopes that Vince will follow in his footsteps and become a butcher. The second betrayal has to do with the camper-van that Ray has bought. Jack hoped he could buy it from Ray so that he could take Amy on a trip. Instead it becomes the vehicle in which Ray and Amy, Jack’s wife, make love when they visit June, Jack and Amy’s mentally handicapped daughter. In a way, Ray has taken Jack’s wife and son away from him. Darl, on the other hand, presents a negative image of his mother. They have a very problematic relationship since Addie practically denies Darl’s existence. She refused to acknowledge him from the moment he was born: “Then I found that I had Darl. At first I would not believe it” (172). Because of the fact that he was not loved by Addie, Darl also rejected her as his mother, “I cannot love my mother because I have no mother” (95). While the other children talk about Addie as “mother,” he only refers to and addresses her with her first name “Addie” or even “Addie Bundren.” The tensions between these two characters can be found throughout the novel, in Darl’s chapters as well as the one that is told by Addie.

Both Swift and Faulkner have a prototype for their protagonist and both Ray and Darl meet the requirements. For Swift this is “almost always a sad, self-scrutinizing man, middle-aged or older, delving into his unhappy past in order to try and work out how he got to the rather dispiriting situation in which he finds himself” (Malcolm 14). Daniel Lea gives a more elaborate description; Swift’s protagonists are “men of late middle age who reflect upon their lives as a series of compromises, and who rue their failure to have been more than they were; men who are commonly ineffective in interpersonal relationships and exhibit none of the

stereotypical characteristics of manly being; in conflict with other members of immediate family” (2).

All this is true for Ray, even though others refer to him as “lucky.” When he was a middle-aged man, Ray had a nice and easy life, possessing everything he could wish for. He had a stable job as an insurance clerk, he was married to Carol and they had a daughter, Susan, whom he loved very much. But now he is a man in his late sixties and all of this has disappeared. He is retired, he and Carol are divorced, and Susan went abroad to live in Sydney with her boyfriend. Now that his best friend also has died, he looks back at his life and wonders how it could have come to this. He comes to the conclusion that he wants more freedom and decides to go abroad to visit and re-establish the contact with his estranged daughter. Contrary to Swift’s characters who belong to the working-class, Faulkner draws his characters from three levels of society: the aristocrats, the country people, and the African Americans (Volpe 15). In *As I Lay Dying*, we are undoubtedly dealing with a poor family from the country. Faulkner again divides the country people in two large groups, namely the independent and morally upright people and the unscrupulous ones who live by their wits (Volpe 16). It is difficult to put Darl Bundren exclusively in one group because of his strange mental condition. He seems to be a mixture of the two groups and embodies the characteristics of two prototypical protagonists. In the course of the novel, we learn that he is very intelligent and eloquent, and that he can show warm feelings and concern toward his siblings. He is genuinely worried about Cash’s health when he breaks his leg and suffers a lot, and he cares for Vardaman as a responsible elder brother should. It is only these two characters that feel sorry for Darl when he is taken away to a mental asylum in Jackson. Darl’s relationship with Jewel and Dewey Dell is not so positive. He knows about their secrets, i.e. Dewey Dell is pregnant and Jewel is the result of a brief affair between Addie and Whitfield, and he tortures them with his knowledge. In doing this, he shows how unscrupulous he can be. He does not care about their feelings at all and only thinks of the best way to hurt them. Darl’s act of burning the shed in which Addie’s coffin is kept can also be considered as rather ambiguous. It can be interpreted as a way to save his mother from further humiliation. The corpse has been above the ground for nine days and because of the horrible smell the Bundrens get a lot of negative comments from the people they meet along the way. Also the fact that the coffin is surrounded by buzzards is very degrading for Addie. His act can also be interpreted as an act of revenge: he has been the unwanted son for far too long and now he wants her to really disappear for once and for all (Howe 55). An important thing that should be noted in Darl’s sections is that he in a sense is the author of the book because of his

omniscience and the use of the third person. The section he narrates from page 47 till 52 contains three italicised parts. In these parts he talks about what happens at home while he and Jewel are away and thus is unable to know what actually is going on. The first and third part show conversations between him and Jewel on a distance, but the second one represents what Peabody is saying to Dewey Dell and in this part, Darl refers to himself in the third person. The last section that Darl narrates is even more significant. Here Darl has gone mad and he seems to look at himself from a distance. We get a kind of conversation between Darl the author and Darl the character (Burnham 106):

Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on the train, laughing, down the long car laughing, the heads turning like the heads of owls when he passed. ‘What are you laughing at?’ I [Darl] said.

‘Yes yes yes yes yes.’ (253)

There is about it that unmistakable air of definite and imminent departure that trains have, perhaps due to the fact that Dewey Dell and Vardaman on the seat and Cash on a pallet in the wagon bed are eating bananas from a paper bag. ‘Is that why you are laughing, Darl?’

Darl is our brother, our brother Darl. Our brother Darl in a cage in Jackson where, his grimed hands lying light in the quiet interstices, looking out he foams.

‘Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes.’ (254)

Apart from the large number of sections narrated by Ray and Darl, I would like to discuss three remarkable types of chapters which are present in both novels: the chapter told by a dead person, the chapter consisting of enumerated points and the one-sentence chapter.

## *2. Chapter attributed to a dead person*

Both Faulkner and Swift try to tell a story that is realistic, that is based on an event that everyone has to deal with probably a few times in his or her life: saying good-bye to a loved one. With the strange and unexpected inclusion of a chapter told by a dead person, the writers seem to constitute “a radical departure from the verisimilitude that the novel[s] had seemed to be so anxious to preserve” (Craps 411). Graham Swift already applied this weird and

alienating effect before in his novel *Out Of This World* in letting Anna speak beyond the grave.

Before I go into a deeper analysis of both monologues, it is important to note that the chapters differ greatly in length. While Addie's chapter consists of almost eight pages, Jack's monologue only takes up about half a page. Because of this, it is easier to derive information from Addie's monologue than from the one told by Jack, and so learn something about their personality. For Addie's monologue, the place in about 2/3 of the novel is also more important than in Jack's case. Members of the family and a number of outsiders tell about Addie and the other characters, but their visions are not always very reliable. An example of this is Cora's opinion concerning Darl and Jewel. According to her Jewel is a real Bundren: "A Bundren through and through, loving nobody, caring for nothing except how to get something with the least amount of work" (22). Darl on the other was "the sweetest thing" (24) she ever saw. Cora believed that "with Jewel [Addie] had just been pretending, but that it was between her and Darl that the understanding and the true love was" (24). When we read chapters told by other characters, and especially the one by Addie, we learn that none of it is true. That is why Addie's monologue is so important: since we know more about the gradual decomposition of Addie's corpse than about her personality, it is only in this chapter that we learn who Addie really is and what she genuinely thinks of her family and her life in general.

Addie's soliloquy starts with some memories about the time she was a school teacher and the hatred she felt toward her pupils. Because of this hatred, she reflects on the words her father used to say: "the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time" (169). He warned her that life would not be easy and Addie admits she hates her father for putting her in this world. She displaces the hatred for the one on whom she was dependent unto the children in the school who are dependent on her (Bockting 98). She wants to rebel against her father and she does this by marrying Anse. Addie recounts this in a rather strange way: "And so I took Anse" (170). This is however exactly what she means, she did not wait to fall in love with him. The "took" in the phrase points to the unequal character of their relationship which becomes already clear in their first dialogue. Addie keeps on asking all sorts of questions and presents herself in this way as being a dominant woman, while Anse feels uncomfortable. This also becomes clear in the word game that Addie is playing concerning her kin (Bockting 100):

Later he told me, 'I aint got no people. So that wont be no worry to you. I dont reckon you can say the same.'

‘No. I have people. In Jefferson.’

His face fell a little. ‘Well, I got a little property. I’m forehanded; I got a good honest name. I know how town folks are, but maybe when they talk to me. . . . .’

‘They might listen,’ I said. ‘But they’ll be hard to talk to.’ He was watching my face.

‘They’re in the cemetery.’

‘But your living kin,’ he said. ‘They’ll be different.’

‘Will they?’ I said. ‘I dont know. I never had any other kind.’ (171)

The fact that Addie was not in love with Anse when she married him can be compared to Amy’s love for Jack Dodds in *Last Orders*. She was actually in love with Romany Jim, a gypsy whom she met while hop-picking in Kent, and she was jealous of the freedom those gypsies had. Amy however repressed her desire to start a relationship with Jim and turned to a boy she knew: Jack Dodds (Craps 415):

*My mother said I never should*

And I didn’t, though I might’ve. I played with Jack Dodds instead, Jack Dodds from the other end of Bermondsey. (235)

Amy knew that Jack was in love with her, while Romany Jim would not even give a sign of recognition when he saw her. So she allowed Jack to spend time in her presence, even though she “did not fancy him, not that much, not so much” (237).

After referring to the start of her relationship with Anse, Addie turns to telling about the birth of her five children. Her oldest son is called Cash and after his birth she “knew that living was terrible and that this was the answer to it” (171). She thus has a positive feeling about Cash and Cash has the same warm feelings towards his mother. But the positive thoughts and feelings make place for a kind of hatred when Darl is born. Addie refuses to acknowledge the existence of her second son and makes this very clear: “Then I found that I had Darl. At first I would not believe it” (172). She feels as if Anse has tricked her and even experiences the desire that she would like to kill him. He is responsible for the misery that comes over her now. She did not ask for the children, it was Anse who wanted them. Feeling betrayed, she turned to sin by having a secret affair with Whitfield. The child coming from this relationship was named Jewel, and that name immediately shows the value he represents for his mother. Jewel is the only child that is Addie’s alone; this son is her own precious “jewel.” Jewel also

feels very closely connected to his mother. In the only chapter of which he is the narrator, we learn that the only thing he wants for her is some peace and quiet. He hates Cash for hammering the coffin right in front of her and Dewey Dell because she keeps on fanning. Jewel has an intense desire for Addie and this becomes obvious in his Oedipal fantasy. In his dream world, it would just be him and her, no other members of the family. In Olga Vickery's work we can read that "he [Jewel] imagines the two of them defiantly and violently isolated from the world and its interference. Most of Jewel's subsequent actions are, in effect, attempts to make this fantasy a reality and so to claim exclusive possession of Addie" (60). Their love for one another also plays a role concerning the place that was given to Addie's monologue in the novel. Addie tells that Jewel is "[her] cross and he will be [her] salvation. He will save [her] from the water and from the fire." (168) This part comes immediately after the chapter in which Jewel really did save her from the flood. This stresses the love between them: Addie knew that Jewel would do anything for her when she would be in trouble, dead or alive. The reader knows now that Jewel has fulfilled the first part of the prophecy, and keeps in mind the possibility that Jewel might have to save Addie from a fire as well. About Dewey Dell and Vardaman, Addie is very short: "I gave Anse Dewey Dell to negative Jewel. Then I gave him Vardaman to replace the child I had robbed him of" (176). This implies that Dewey Dell and Vardaman had to grow up without being loved by a mother, just like their older brother Darl. Bockting claims that Dewey Dell and Vardaman "are of her body but not of her soul" (Bockting 104).

From this short chapter we thus can derive a lot of information about Addie as a person, which is not really the case in Jack Dodds' monologue. What we get in this section are actually the words of his father, not his own words. This makes it an elliptical monologue because we learn nothing about Jack's psychic terrain, how his mind works. His father keeps on leaving his mark on him, repressing his son's subjectivity (Lea 174). This part of the novel can be compared to Shakespeare's famous play *Hamlet*. Like Jack speaks from the grave, the same is true for Hamlet's father, whose ghost wanders around the castle to warn his son. The ghost tells Hamlet that his mother was adulterous with his uncle and that it was that same uncle who also murdered his father. He wants Hamlet to revenge his death, "his foul and most unnatural murder" (90). In his monologue, Jack recalls the words of his father who warned him that the trade of a butcher is not that easy. Large supermarkets are rising everywhere in the landscape which makes it harder for small butcher shops to survive the competition. It is a tough profession since you cannot profit from everything you buy, so you have to keep a constant eye on your wastage. You have to know what will cost you and what will pay you.

However, as far as money is concerned, Jack admits that he never was great with sums. This implies that he neglected the advice of his father, and consequently he has to beg his son Vince for money and ask Ray to put a bet so that the money will increase spectacularly. His wife Amy does not know that he has severe debts and he does not want to leave her in the lurch with debt collectors knocking on her door. This is a rather literal, economic interpretation of the sentence “You got to keep a constant eye on the wastage, constant. What you’ve got to understand is the nature of the goods. Which is perishable” (285). Stef Craps and Janet Kay Blaylock both interpret these words out of their economic domain. While the former believes “it can be understood metaphorically as sanctioning an integrated, closed community with no use for outsiders” (Craps 411), the latter states that it has to be interpreted that “life is short, so be careful of what you choose to keep and what you choose to throw away” (qtd. in Blaylock). Both insinuate that the protagonists form a group that is socially too restricted. Vince, for example, shows a deep sense of hatred towards Hussein, the Arab who wants to buy one of his cars. Because Hussein is a potential customer, Vince has to put aside his racial prejudices and remain polite in order not to scare him off. Jack goes even further and abandons his own daughter because she is mentally disabled and thus not “like the others.” They refuse to take in people that are different from them, but eventually those people are needed and you cannot abandon them just because it suits you better.

It is rather odd that Jack recalls these words since he did not want to be a butcher at all; it was his father’s decision. The fact that his father obliged him to take over the business makes it very peculiar that Jack himself tries to convince Vince to take over the butcher shop. He knows how it feels, doing a job you did not choose out of interest. If Jack had been allowed to make his own choice, he probably would have become a doctor. His reason for this was: “Cure the sick, chase after nurses, that sort of thing. I’d say live meat’s better than dead meat any day.” (208). He seems to have come to an insight, however, realizing that leaving a business from father to son has a sentimental value. Vince, however, does not share Jack’s opinion, and does not want to have anything to do with the shop. He despises Jack when he tells him that as a butcher he was his own man: “Your own man? You never were your own man. You were your old man’s man, weren’t you?” (24). Because of the pressure that Jack puts on his son, Vince starts hating Jack and his trade, ending up becoming a dealer in second-hand cars.

### *3. Chapter consisting of enumerated points*

Both novels contain one chapter that has the form of a list which has to do with the things that interest Cash (82-83) and Ray (202) most: craftsmanship and betting. They both have their own ways of doing what they do best and they share their rules with the readers.

Cash Bundren is not an eloquent man and this already becomes clear in his first section in which he explains why he makes his mother's coffin on the bevel. Instead of using full sentences, he applies numbers followed by a couple of words. He does this because he is very obsessed with balance, which is repeated frequently throughout the novel. By stating why the coffin has to be made on the bevel, he tries to avoid imbalance. His work on the coffin is the centre of his world now and the reader already becomes aware of that while reading the previous sections of his siblings. They all comment on the work he is doing and this commentary is not always very positive. Jewel is jealous because Cash is so keen on doing something for their mother and also a little irritated since he is making the coffin right in front of her window, confronting her with her imminent death. The only thing he wants, is that his mother can die in some peace and quiet, without having to listen to the noises of the saw and the hammer all the time. And he is not the only one who thinks this, also Darl cannot always hide his irritation. In general however, Cash's craftsmanship is appreciated very much. This becomes clear when his family shows that they know how important his work and his tools are for him. When everything falls into the water while crossing the river, Jewel and Darl almost risk their lives trying to save Cash's equipment. At this moment in the novel, Cash is lying with a broken leg on the bank of the river. From then on, he is unable to do his work as a carpenter and he has to focus more on his language. In his following monologues, we learn that Cash is an intelligent and eloquent man who does notice what is going on around him even though he does not always give that impression.

David Rogers discusses Ray Johnson's formal alignment with Cash in his essay on Englishness. In the chapter "Ray's Rules," Ray explains how you have to gamble successfully on horses. In contrast with Cash, he limits himself to only eight rules or principles. Remarkable is that Ray puts six of these eight rules in the negative. According to Rogers, rules imply the idea of duty, and this is undermined because of the negatives (183). Ray states "it's not the wins, it's the value," "it's not the betting, it's the knowing when not to," "it's not the nags, it's the other punters," "old horses don't do new tricks," "never bet shorter than three to one," "never bet more than five per cent of your kitty, except about five times in your

life.” His last rule, however, which is expressed in the positive, overturns everything that has been said before: “You can blow all the rules if you’re Lucky.” The destruction that becomes apparent in this sentence also refers to the final paragraph of *Last Orders*, which shows the renewal of the characters and the avoidance of closure. Margate turns out to be a shedding of the past and Vince, Vic, Ray and Lenny became new people as if taking their “Last Orders.” As he speaks as “Margate” in the final chapter, Ray does this in a way that suspends the idea of closure itself (Rogers 183):

The sky and the sea and the wind all mixed up together but I reckon it wouldn’t make no difference if they weren’t because of the blur in my eyes ... the ash that I carried in my hands, which was the Jack who once walked around, is carried away by the wind, is whirled away by the wind till the ash becomes wind and the wind becomes Jack what we’re made of. (294-295)

#### *4. One-sentence chapter*

##### 4.1. “My mother is a fish”

Vardaman is the youngest child in the Bundren family and experiences a lot of neglect from both Anse and Addie. Addie gave Vardaman to Anse “to replace the child [she] had robbed him of” (176), but Anse does not pay much attention to his son. Vardaman gets some attention however from Tull, who in this way expresses his own desire to be the father of a son (Bockting 127). Deep down, Vardaman is a very confused child that does not seem to understand what is going on around him. He is rather insecure and looks to those around him for affirmation of what is appropriate behaviour (Bockting 131). Vardaman is very attached to his family and idolises especially his brothers. That is why he often stresses the relationship between them: “Jewel is my brother. Cash is my brother. Cash has a broken leg. We fixed Cash’s leg so it doesn’t hurt. Cash is my brother. Jewel is my brother too, but he hasn’t got a broken leg” (210). When Darl is taken away to Jackson, Vardaman feels sorry for him and he keeps on repeating that Darl is his brother. He is his brother now and will continue to be his brother, even though he will have to stay in a mental institution for a while:

*Darl went to Jackson. Lots of people didn’t go to Jackson. Darl is my brother. My brother is going to Jackson (250)*

*Darl he went to Jackson my brother Darl (250)*

*Darl is my brother. My brother Darl (251)*

His confusion becomes especially clear with his obsession with the fish he caught. Even though Addie never loved him, Vardaman sees his mother as a very important person in his life, and this is shown by the fact that he immediately wants to bring his fish to her. She should be the first one to see what he is capable of. But when he is cleaning the fish, he learns that his mother is dead, and from that moment on he starts identifying Addie with the bleeding fish. In his mind, Addie and the fish become one. This identification goes so far that he believes that it is his mother that is “cooked and et” (57) rather than the fish. The following passage makes clear how the fish evolves from being just a fish to being his mother: “And now it’s all chopped up. I chopped it up. It’s laying in the kitchen in the bleeding pan, waiting to be cooked and et. Then it wasn’t and she was, and it is and she wasn’t. And tomorrow it will be cooked and et and she will be him and pa and Cash and Dewey Dell and there wont be anything in the box and so she can breathe” (66-67).

What follows then is rather strange. Since he believes that his mother has been eaten by the entire family, he should be convinced that the coffin is empty now. Yet Vardaman gets confused and he starts panicking because Cash is going to nail the coffin, and he is afraid that Addie will not be able to breathe in there. He recalls the moment when he himself was stuck in the crib. He felt as if he could not breathe because the rat was breathing up all the air. Vardaman wants to spare his own mother this destiny and decides to make some holes in the lid so that she will get some fresh air. He is a little too enthusiastic and two holes reach Addie’s face, so that her face is wounded. Vardaman is not aware of this since he again believes that his mother is a fish, and this feeling will continue throughout the rest of the novel. When the coffin falls into the water on their way to Jefferson, Vardaman knows that his mother will save herself because she can swim away very fast. He does however not want his mother to swim away from him and depends on Darl for catching her and bringing her back. At first, Darl seems unable to do this and Vardaman is very disappointed: “Where is ma, Darl?” I said. “You never got her. You knew she is a fish but you let her get away. You never got her. Darl. Darl. Darl.” (151)

Eventually the boys manage to retrieve the coffin from the water, but some moments later Vardaman persists that Addie has escaped through the holes he drilled for her. He cannot believe that his own mother would smell so badly, so he keeps on imagining her as a fish:

My mother is a fish. Darl says that when we come to the water again I [Vardaman] might see her and Dewey Dell said, She's in the box; how could she have got out? She got out through the holes I bored, into the water I said, and when we come to the water again I am going to see her. My mother is not in the box. My mother does not smell like that. My mother is a fish (196)

So Vardaman keeps on saying that his mother is not dead and that she lives on as a fish. This is what is least painful to him. It is only when Jewel returns without his horse that Vardaman learns to accept Addie's death and knows that she will never come back. Since Darl once told him that Jewel's mother is a horse, it is not possible that Jewel's mother is alive, while his mother is dead. So it is only when Jewel does not have his horse anymore that Vardaman understands that they have lost their mother. The fish disappears completely from his mind now and he focuses again on what is real.

#### 4.2. "Old buggers"

With just these two words, Vince "sums up the disillusion of his generation and the failure of empathy between England's fathers and son" (Cooper 35). Since Vince is the youngest male on the journey, the word "old" clearly refers to his dad Jack, Lenny, Ray and Vic. This is not the first time he refers to his companions as being older. Another example can be found on page 110, when he is ordering food for everyone: "Three old codgers to look after, and one extra who aint eating." It is not exactly clear what this sentence really means and why he is saying it, contrary to Vardaman's "my mother is a fish." Since this last sentence was repeated frequently throughout the novel and since we could follow which events were leading up to the utterance of these words, we could easily interpret what was implied. This is not really the case for Vince's sentence. However, we can note a negative attitude coming from the utterance which implies that it is first and foremost directed toward his "father" Jack. Vince cannot forgive and forget the troubles and feelings of hatred that were standing between him and Jack while Jack was still alive. He keeps on thinking about the fact that Jack wanted to force him to become a butcher, about his refusal to acknowledge June as his daughter, about the trips to the seaside when he had to go into the back of the meat van because there was not enough room for Sally and him together, etc. He deeply despises Jack as a person and he does not seem to care much that he is dead now. According to Daniel Lea, the quarrel about the butcher shop shows a "fundamental breach between the war generation and that which succeeded it" (Lea 177). We get an opposition between duty and voluntary mobility. This

one-sentence chapter is Vince's only contribution to the visit to Chatham Memorial, which precedes the fight between him and Lenny that takes place in Wick's farm. "Old buggers" thus also includes Lenny and gives an impression of the tension that is rising between them. According to Pamela Cooper, their fight "is based on wounded pride, grief, and the desire for revenge" (35). Lenny has always been jealous of the fact that Jack could take Amy and Vince to Margate every week, while he was unable to give that to his daughter Sally. But what really caused Lenny to hate Vince, is the fact that he made his daughter pregnant. Lenny forced her to have an abortion, and since that moment he and Sally have become estranged from one another. He still seems to keep on blaming Vince for all this, even though he does not say this to him directly. Lenny expresses his negative feelings by calling him "tosshead" (116), "toe-rag" (145), and by stressing that Vince is not Jack's real kin so he has no more rights than the rest of them. Vince stays rather calm under the circumstances, but there is one moment in the novel that he also really tries to hurt Lenny, after he made another remark concerning his adoption:

'I don't know about you, Lenny, but I'm here to take something to Margate, that's what we're all here to do. ... Gone two fifteen. Now if you want to stay here drinking all afternoon' – he sweeps his gaze round the table as if we're all suddenly included in some plot against him, it's not just Lenny – 'that's your business. But I'm going to the car right now and I'm driving to Margate. If you don't want to come too, you better find out where the station is.' (115)

Vince however cannot take pleasure in his little victory for a very long time, since in his hurry to get out of the pub he forgets the bag which contains the jar with Jack's ashes in it. Lenny immediately takes advantage of this by catching up with Vince and saying: "Forgot this, didn't you? Forgot your coffee. You might think you can go without us but you'd look a bloody fool going to Margate without this" (116). From this moment on, Vince does not verbally compete with Lenny anymore and his suppressed feelings become apparent in "Old buggers." Vince does not seem to have any problems with Ray or Vic. He always had a good relationship with Ray, and Vic always leaves his options open, he does not easily intervene. These three men do not clash with one another on the journey to Margate. It is especially Lenny who causes a lot of strife.

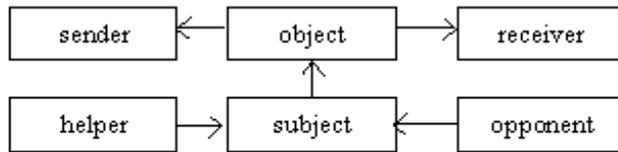
This type of narration using multiple voices is not new for either writer. Faulkner experiments with it in his major novels and the multipersonal narration is his strategy for making sense of the complex reality of the South (qtd. in Shin). Swift used it only once before, more precisely in his novel *Out of this World* (1988). In this novel he divides the majority of the chapters between the two main characters, Harry Beech and his daughter Sophie. *Out of this World* is generally considered to be his least successful novel so far, because “the voices had a lot of pen in them, and the daughter’s never carried conviction” (qtd. in O’Mahony). Swift developed the technique further, and it blossomed in his Booker Prize-winning novel.

### *5. Narrative techniques*

I believe it could be useful to take a closer look at some techniques that are used to build up a story, and to do this I will follow Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan’s book *Narrative Fiction*. First I will discuss the characters, whether they are flat or round, and the roles they fulfil in the story. Then I will take a closer look at the use of time, and more specifically order, duration and frequency. First of all, however, it is important to note that there are two main principles that need to be combined to get a plot, namely temporal succession and causality. For temporal succession you need to look at the way events follow one another: does this happen chronologically, in a “natural chronology,” or do they deviate? This is coupled with the principle of causality: reasons are given why certain events follow each other (“therefore”) (Rimmon-Kenan 16-17).

#### 5.1. Characters

In both novels, the characters are represented as “real” people, which means that it may be productive to use mimetic theories to analyse them. Mimetic theories are theories “which consider literature as an imitation of reality” (Rimmon-Kenan 33). According to A. Greimas, characters can fulfil six different roles or actants: sender, helper, object, subject, receiver, and opponent. The way they are related to one another is presented in the scheme below:



**Fig. 1** The actantial model

Source: <http://www.hum.aau.dk/~scharfe/narratology/cana.htm>

The subject is very often the protagonist of the story who has some kind of wish, desire (object). The helpers are the persons or objects who help the subject to fulfil the desire, while opponents do everything they can to prevent the subject from reaching his or her goal. The sender is the one that instigates the action, and, finally, the receiver is the one who benefits from it. It is possible for a character to fulfil more than one role, and one role can also be performed by more than one character.

In *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders*, Addie Bundren and Jack Dodds fulfil the role of subject. They both have the same wish (object), namely to be buried at Jefferson and Margate respectively. Addie had uttered the wish to be buried among her people already when Darl was born. Jack, on the other hand, made his wish known through a letter that was addressed “to whom it may concern,” and which was written only a few days before his death. Since both subjects are dead, they have to rely on other people to fulfil their last wish. For Addie, those helpers are the members of her family (Anse, Cash, Darl, Jewel, Dewey Dell and Vardaman), but also outsiders like Tull and Samson who offer the Bundrens mules and food to continue the journey. Jack Dodds gets the support from his adopted son Vince, and his friends Ray, Vic and Lenny. Here there are no outsiders whom they have to rely on to reach their goal. That one character can perform multiple roles becomes clear when one member of each group of helpers tries to sabotage the journey. In *As I Lay Dying*, the opponent is Darl who tries to set fire to the barn in which Addie’s corpse is kept. He wants to put an end to the journey because they have become the joke of the neighbourhood, and because it is too humiliating for Addie. In *Last Orders*, Vince fulfils the role of opponent, since he wants to scatter some of Jack’s ashes at Wick’s Farm instead of scattering them all at Margate like Jack wanted. This leads to a fight with Lenny, but eventually Vince wins. The sender is the one who instigates the action and the characters who perform this role are again Addie and Jack. In *Last Orders*, Amy can also be seen as a sender. Because the letter is not addressed to anyone in particular, it is Amy who asks Ray whether he would like to accept the task of taking Jack’s ashes to Margate.

She looks at me. ‘Will you do it, Ray?’ Her face looks emptied out. ‘That way it’s done, isn’t it? That way his wish gets carried out. He only says, “To whom it may concern,” doesn’t he?’

I pause for just a bit. ‘Okay, I’ll do it. Course I’ll do it. But what about Vince?’

‘I haven’t told Vince. About this, I mean.’ She nods at the letter; ‘I’ll tell him. Maybe you and him—’

I say, ‘I’ll talk to Vince.’ (14-15)

The receivers, finally, are the ones who benefit from the action. In a way this is true for Addie and Jack, but since they are both dead, they do not really “benefit” from it. The task they gave to their family and friends has been performed, but they are not aware of it. As Vic says to Amy: “Amy, if you want to do it, do it. If you want me to do it, I’ll do it. I’ll see it doesn’t add too much on the bill. But on thing’s certain...if you don’t do it, Jack won’t ever know” (13). For Addie, the journey is her way of taking revenge on Anse. According to Edmond L. Volpe, Addie “believes that Anse is incapable of responding to her real being, her reality, during her life, and she vindictively forces him to cope with the reality of her dead body” (Volpe 131). In tricking her family into undertaking a difficult journey, Addie shows that, as a dead person, she still has power over the living; it is a triumph. She wants the members of her family to be confronted with death in all its horrible aspects, so that they will not soon forget it (Malin 18). Addie is however not the only one who benefits from the journey. Other members of the Bundren family have also other goals to achieve in Jefferson, apart from burying Addie. Anse wants to get the new teeth he had already longed for for a long time, Cash wants to purchase a phonograph, Dewey Dell’s reason to join the rest of her family is to get abortion pills, and Vardaman longs for a toy train. It is, however, only Anse who gets what he wants: he finally has his new teeth, and he even finds a new wife. Darl is the one who benefits the least from the journey: he is taken to a mental institution in Jackson after setting the barn on fire. In Swift’s novel, all men benefit from the journey, not in a materialistic way like Anse, but more spiritually. The men return from their journey as enriched people. Ray, Vince and Lenny even realize that they want to restore the contact with their daughters and make the most of life. Nobody lives forever, so you better enjoy your life while you can.

Next to performing the roles posited by Greimas, the characters are also constructed around a number of traits or ideas that form their personality. Depending on what these traits exactly are, the characters can be defined as being flat or round. The personality of a flat character

only depends on a single quality and he or she generally does not develop in the course of the action. A round character, on the other hand, has a complex personality with a number of equally important traits, and he or she develops in the course of the action. I will give two examples of flat characters in *As I Lay Dying*, one belonging to the Bundren family and one outsider: Dewey Dell and Cora Tull. In the first section told by Dewey Dell, we learn about her first encounter with Lefe and how she got pregnant. Throughout the rest of the novel, Dewey Dell is only concerned with getting to Jefferson as soon as possible to get abortion pills. This becomes clear, for example, when Samson suggests that they should bury Addie at New Hope since it is almost impossible to reach Jefferson because of the destroyed bridges: “And so I says [sic], ‘You stay here tonight and early tomorrow you can go back to New Hope. I got tools enough, and the boys can go on right after supper and have it dug and ready if they want’ and then I found that girl watching me. If her eyes had been pistols, I wouldn’t be talking now. I be dog if they didn’t blaze at me” (115).

Dewey Dell is really terrified that they might not get to Jefferson, so she talks to her father and tells him that he has to keep his promise to Addie:

‘You promised her,’ she says. ‘She wouldn’t go until you promised. She thought she could depend on you. If you dont do it, it will be a curse on you.’

‘Cant no man say I dont aim to keep my word,’ Bundren says. ‘My heart is open to ere a man.’

‘I don’t care what your heart is,’ she says. She was whispering, kind of, talking fast.

‘You promised her. You’ve got to. You—’ then she seen me and quit, standing there. If they’d been pistols, I wouldn’t be talking now (115).

When they finally arrive at Jefferson, Dewey Dell rushes to the drugstore, but Moseley cannot help her. When she goes to another drugstore, she meets MacGowan, who rapes her and gives her wrong medicines. So from the first section she narrates to the end of the novel, Dewey Dell is preoccupied with her pregnancy, and she seems to be oblivious of the world around her. It turns out that nothing changes for her: she is pregnant at the beginning of the novel and continues to be that until the end.

Cora Tull is another flat character in Faulkner’s novel. Only her religious trait is presented to the reader, so we regard her as a pious woman throughout the story. Everything she does or says is performed with God in mind. I will come back to this when I take a closer look at the presence of religion in *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders*.

The most obvious example of a flat character in *Last Orders* is June Dodds, Jack and Amy's mentally handicapped daughter. Jakob Winnberg describes June as one of the stock characters of melodrama: the mute (173). She has not produced a single word or deliberate gesture in fifty years, and this makes Amy desperate. Amy hoped her daughter would become able to utter at least the word "mum;" her hope was in vain. This means that Amy is a round character: she realizes that she may not cherish any hopes for her daughter anymore. In the course of the novel she learns to distance herself from her past with Jack and June and to start a new life:

What I'm trying to say is Goodbye June. Goodbye Jack. They seem like one and the same thing. We've got to make our own lives now without each other, we've got to go our different ways. I've got to think of my own future. . . . I've got to be my own woman now. But I couldn't have just stopped coming without saying it to your face: Goodbye June. (278)

Amy thus undergoes an important development, as do the male protagonists. The men (except for Vic) make some important decisions with regard to their family life. They want to re-establish the contact with their "lost" daughters. The men have undergone some kind of cleansing during their journey; because of the travelling they are not the same people anymore as when they left. This is true for the men as well as the women. Even Jack, who used to "stick like glue to what he knew" (132), travels more in death than he has ever done in life. So, "[i]mmovable in life, Jack Dodds travels in death, eventually leaving the earth itself—first in a kind of flight, as his ashes are taken by the wind, and then for the water, as they are flung into the sea" (Cooper 45). He ends up in sea which is a symbol for the first and last station in human life: birth and death. At the beginning and the end of the novel, movement and change are seen as signs of renewal. Amy and Jack had the intention to move to a bungalow in Margate where they would enjoy the final years of their lives in all peace and quiet. In the end, however, Amy started to get cold feet and she did not want to move anymore. She admits this in a conversation with Ray, some days after Jack's death:

'In the end I [Amy] was the problem. I was the obstacle. Didn't you know? When I knew he was serious, when I knew he really meant to pack it all in, I said, "What am I going to do about June?" He said, "That's just the point, girl. If I can give up being

Jack Dodds, family butcher, then you can give up going on that fool's errand every week." That's what he called it: "fool's errand".'

She looks again at the water. 'You know how when he had a change of mind, the whole world had to change too. He said, we're going to be new people.' She gives another little snort. 'New people.' (15)

At the end of *Last Orders*, the hope for renewal is expressed by the image of winged ash. The seagulls circle around the four men when they are scattering Jack's ashes. This image of "bringing together flight and ash, expresses the fervent hope for regeneration and new life—for beginnings discovered within endings—which pervades *Last Orders*" (Cooper 46). The majority of the characters longs for newness, the possibility of becoming "new people," just as Jack and Amy. Ray, Lenny, and Vince come to the insight that they want to solve the problems with their daughters. Both Ray and Lenny make this decision when visiting Canterbury Cathedral, a place that appears to be symbol for redemption. Ray realizes that he wants to visit his daughter in Australia:

. . . and I'm gazing, I'm staring, I'm peering hard, but I can't see it, I can't make it out. The next world.  
But I reckon I could fly to Australia. Cross this world. Money I've got. Save Sue the trouble of doing it, other way. When. If. (207)

Lenny comes to the same insight, standing inside the cathedral, that he wants to resolve the difficulties with his daughter Sally: "Maybe the first thing I ought to do after we've done our duty by Jack here is go and pay Sally a visit. It's me, girl it's your old dad, remember? It aint just another passing prick" (209).

Cash and Darl are the two Bundrens who develop most in *As I Lay Dying*. For Cash this is a positive development, while Darl slides into madness. At the beginning of the novel, Cash is always referred to in terms of his craftsmanship. He is not a man of words, but of action. This changes when he breaks his leg in the flood, and from then on his voice becomes much more prominent. He shows now that he is intelligent and eloquent as well as handy with his tools. Darl, on the other hand, enters a downward spiral. He is often considered "queer" and "the one that aint bright" (152), and this is because he always seems to know things that other people do not, and because of his laughing:

. . . but we hadn't no more than passed Tull's lane when Darl begun to laugh. Setting back there on the plank seat with Cash, with his dead ma laying in her coffin at his feet, laughing. How many times I [Anse] told him it's doing such things as that that makes folks talk about him, I dont know. . . . and I turned and looked back at him and him setting there, laughing.

'I dont expect you to have no respect for me,' I says. 'But with your own ma not cold in her coffin yet.' . . . And Darl setting on the plank seat right above her where she was laying, laughing (105-106).

This was the first sign of Darl losing his mind and it only escalates after he has set the barn with Addie's corpse on fire. The family decides that it is best for him that he is sent to a mental institution in Jackson where he will get the good care that he needs. Darl is disappointed in Cash because the latter has not told him anything, but he keeps on laughing his crazy laughter:

It was bad so. It was bad. A fellow cant get away from a shoddy job. He cant do it. I [Cash] tried to tell him, but he just said, 'I thought you'd a told me. It's not that I,' he said, then he begun to laugh. The other fellow pulled Jewel off of him and he sat there on the ground, laughing.

I tried to tell him. If I could have just moved, even set up. But I tried to tell him and he quit laughing, looking up at me. . . . 'Better,' he said. He begun to laugh again. 'Better,' he said. He couldn't hardly say it for laughing. He sat on the ground and us watching him, laughing and laughing (238).

In the final section that Darl narrates, he refers to himself in the third person, which shows that he has completely lost touch with reality. And again, he keeps on laughing, even though is already on the train on his way to Jackson: "Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on the train, laughing, down the long car laughing, the heads turning like the heads of owls when he passed. 'What are you laughing at?' I [Darl] said." (253).

The development of the different characters can thus range from not developing at all to developing in a rather inconspicuous way to undergoing a radical change. This contrast between flat and round tells us more about the characters and the text in general. However, it should be noted that the opposition between "flat" and "round" is not always a clear division.

They are rather problematic notions that show some weaknesses: “flat” suggests, for example, that the character is two-dimensional, “devoid of depth and ‘life’” (Rimmon-Kenan 40). It is, however, not unusual for flat characters to be “felt as very much ‘alive’” and even “create the impression of depth” (Rimmon-Kenan 40). Characters may have a certain degree of psychological complexity yet show no development at all. This is true for the majority of the characters in *As I Lay Dying*. Take for example Jewel, who is a very troubled character because of his obsessions with his mother Addie and his horse. His emotions find a release in schizophrenic behaviour, which is most obvious in his attitude towards the horse: he does not know whether to love or to hate it. This is also true for his relationships with human beings. He continues to behave like this throughout the novel, so he does not undergo a change in personality.

The flatness of the majority of the characters in Faulkner’s novel symbolizes their circumstances in life. The Bundrens live in poverty, and because of this they have a pessimistic, fatalistic view on life. Their thoughts are characterized by despair, which is, for example, very clear for Dewey Dell, who is terrified she will not reach Jefferson in time to abort the baby. Her despair at the passing of time becomes clear in the following utterance: “That’s what they mean by the womb of time: the agony and the despair of spreading bones, the hard girdle in which lie the outraged entrails of events” (121). None of the Bundrens seems to have positive expectations for the future; they even do not seem to have any expectations at all. It seems as if they are aware of the fact that nothing essentially will change for them. They are poor farmers and will continue to be so for the rest of their life. There is no reason for them to believe otherwise.

In *Last Orders*, the characters, except for June, are complex characters that undergo important changes. Their stories are based on hope and optimism; they embody the idea that change is always possible. You just have to allow yourself to see this, and be willing to do something about your present situation. The characters in Swift’s novel realize that their contemporary predicament is not what they really want, and they accept that they have to change if they want to be happy again.

## 5.2. Time

When a story is written down, the text-time, i.e. the disposition of elements in the text, is almost always linear. It is characteristic of language to “prescribe a linear figuration of signs and hence a linear presentation of information about things” (Rimmon-Kenan 45). If the text-time is not linear, it is very hard for readers to reach understanding. Because of this linearity,

it is not common for text-time to correspond to the multilinearity of story-time, i.e. the time in the story. It is possible, but then only in very simple narratives, like bed-time stories. The three most important aspects related to time are the well-known notions introduced by Gérard Genette: order, duration, and frequency. Frequency means the “relations between the number of times an event appears in the story and the number of times it is narrated in the text” (46). Three types of frequency can be distinguished: singulative, repetitive, and iterative. Singulative telling is the most common form and means that something which happened once is also told just one time. Repetitive means that you tell several times what has happened just once. Iterative, finally, means that something which happened several times is told only once. Duration concerns the relations between the time the events are supposed to have taken to occur (measured in “real time” like minutes, hours, days, years, etc.) and the amount of text devoted to their narration (lines and pages) (Rimmon-Kenan 46, 52). While *As I Lay Dying* covers the nine days from Addie’s death to the end of the journey over 261 pages; it takes Graham Swift 295 pages to cover a trip which does not even last an entire day. The two main forms of deviation from normal pace are acceleration and deceleration. Acceleration means that a long period of the story is only referred to briefly, only given a short segment of the text. This can lead eventually to ellipsis or omission, meaning that a particular event that has taken place is not mentioned at all. Deceleration, on the other hand, implies that a long segment of text is devoted to a short event. The aspect that is most important for my analysis, however, is order. There are two deviations which play a significant role when you analyse the succession of events: flashback and foreshadowing. Flashbacks are important because the past makes the characters to the persons they are today. Foreshadowing, on the other hand, should especially be noted in relation to Ray and Darl, whose luck and clairvoyance respectively are important themes in the novels.

Order shows “the relations between the succession of events in the story and their linear disposition in the text” (Rimmon-Kenan 46). The best known deviations here are flashback, i.e. returning to a past point in history, and foreshadowing, i.e. predicting what will happen next. Rimmon-Kenan states that, in general, first-person narratives make more use of foreshadowing than other narratives, because their future very often already has become a past (48-49). This is however not true for *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders*. All the characters in Faulkner’s novel experience the journey at the moment they tell about it; it is present to them. They are thus not able to look into the future and see what will await them during the rest of the trip, except for Darl. He has the special gift of knowing and talking about things

that happen at home when he is not even there, and he can predict the future. An example of this can be found at the start of the journey when Jewel refuses to join the rest of the family. Anse is very disappointed in Jewel since it is the least he can do for his dead mother. Darl knows however that he will catch up with them: “He’ll cut across and meet us at Tull’s lane” (104). On the next page, the reader already knows that Darl’s prediction was right: “. . .we hadn’t no more than passed Tull’s lane when Darl begun to laugh. . . . “Yonder,” Cash says, jerking his head toward the lane. The horse is still a right smart piece away, coming up at a good pace, but I dont have to be told who it is” (105-106).

Addie Bundren had also been able to make a prediction about the future. In a conversation with Cora Tull, Addie says this:

‘I know,’ she said. ‘I—’ Then she stopped, and I said, ‘Know what?’

‘Nothing,’ she said. ‘He is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save me from the water and from the fire. Even though I have laid down my life, he will save me.’

‘How do you know, without you open your heart to Him and lift your voice in His praise?’ I said. Then I realised that she did not mean God (168).

Addie is referring here to her favourite son, Jewel. She knows that Jewel will always protect her, even after her death. And also this prediction turns out to be right. When the coffin with Addie’s corpse in it falls off the wagon into the water, it is Jewel who is able to retrieve it. It is remarkable that this part of the prediction has already taken place before we know that Addie has ever made it. In this way, a kind of suspense is built up for the readers. You know now that, for the prediction to be true, Addie’s body has to be stuck in a fire. A couple of chapters later, this also turns out to be the case, and we know now for certain that Addie was right having so much confidence in Jewel.

Vardaman does not really make a prediction about the future but he warns the reader that something is about to take place: “*And I saw something Dewey Dell told me not to tell nobody. It is not about pa and it is not about Cash and it is not about Jewel and it is not about Dewey Dell and it is not about me*” (215). The following chapter then starts with Darl’s description of how the barn is on fire and Jewel who tries to save everything that is in it, including Addie’s corpse.

Finally, Ray “Lucky” Johnson can in a way be seen as being capable of predicting the future. He always makes the right bet, even though it seems the most unlikely one he can

make. The most striking example here is the horse on which he bets to multiply the thousand pounds he got from Jack. He starts by looking at his book and making calculations, but eventually he turns out to be betting on a name: Miracle Worker. "Rank outsider, twenty-to-one the field" (232); nobody believes in its chances to win the race. But it wins, just as Ray had predicted.

As I have already mentioned in the introduction to this part dealing with time, Ray's luck and Darl's clairvoyance are significant aspects in the larger context of the stories. These magical elements appear to be rather odd in the novels of writers who aim to present a realistic view of society. While Ray's luck serves a clear purpose in *Last Orders*, Darl's clairvoyant powers appear to be useless, and, according to Charles Palliser, even non-existent. Ray's luck has a positive function, because he is always able to help his friends when they have financial problems. He has helped Vince with his business, Lenny with his daughter's abortion, Jack and Amy to avoid debt-collectors, and his own daughter Susie to move abroad. As a kind of Messiah, Ray brings good things to the world and creates a community around him. This is not really the case for Darl, who is always considered to be the odd one out. This becomes for example clear when Cora Tull reproaches her husband Vernon: "And you're one of the folks that says Darl is the queer one, the one that aint bright" (152). It is not very clear whether or not Faulkner intended Darl to be seen as endowed with clairvoyance. Charles Palliser is convinced that Darl has no supernatural gift. He believes that his supposed clairvoyance can be reduced to a rational explanation: it is just the result of guesswork based on the knowledge he has of the past. If Darl is clairvoyant, he needs to have access to three types of supernatural means of perception: prophecy, telepathy, and "second sight" (Palliser 623). According to Palliser, this is not the case. Darl's "predictions" are solely based on the knowledge he has of the past behaviour of the members of his family. He does not foresee a single event that has nothing to do with human will. He figures out, for instance, that Anse will sell Jewel's horse to buy a new team of mules, but he is unable to predict the accident to the wagon that will delay them when delivering the load of wood, the log that strikes the wagon while crossing the river, and, what is most important, his own committal to the mental institution (Palliser 624). Another passage, one that seems to be proof of Darl's "second sight," is not so supernatural at all when you look at it more closely. The section I am referring to is the one in which Darl recounts the moment that Addie dies, while he and Jewel are actually on their way to deliver a load of wood. In this section three parts are printed in italics: the first and the last one show how Darl tells Jewel that their mother is dead; the second one registers a

conversation between Dewey Dell and Peabody. This part seems to show that Darl can truly see what is going on inside the house. However, this is not actually true. The presenting of the part in italics and the shifting of the tense from present to future are used to indicate that what Darl is saying does not happen simultaneously with the actual event, but will take place in the future. It is just a guess which in the monologue narrated by Dewey Dell is proven to be accurate. Palliser believes that Faulkner himself even gives a clear hint that Darl derives his insight into the behaviour of his parents and siblings from his understanding of them, not from supernatural powers. Darl witnesses his mother crying over a sleeping Jewel after she has found out that her son has worked at night to earn money to buy a horse of his own. Darl realizes, however, that that is not the only reason for Addie's sadness. Jewel's deception resembles her own deception in the form of adultery (Palliser 628). Addie does not know whether to love or hate her son, the only one who is able to affect her emotions: "She cried hard, maybe because she had to cry so quiet; maybe because she felt the same way about tears she did about deceit, hating herself for doing it, hating him because she had to" (136) At this moment, Darl "knew that [he] knew. [He] knew as plain on that day as [he] knew about Dewey Dell on that day" (136). Darl seems to understand the obsessive behaviour of his mother and how it is responsible for the contemporary predicament of the family. The present thus continues to be dominated by decisions that were made in the past.

Neither of the novels is fixed in time; *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders* are set in 1930 and 1990 respectively, but they move freely back- and forwards in time. Flashbacks are very common and important in both novels, since the past is what makes the characters what they are today. Most characters in *Last Orders* are a lot older than the Bundrens, so obviously they can move further back in time, sometimes even fifty or sixty years.

*As I Lay Dying* appears to be more chronological than *Last Orders*, since it starts with Addie lying on her deathbed, followed by her actual death and the journey to take her body to Jefferson. Also each monologue, with the exception of the one told by Addie and the two monologues surrounding hers, by Cora and Minister Whitfield, is a continuation of the previous one in terms of time (Kartiganer 433). *Last Orders*, however, opens with Ray sitting in the pub waiting for Lenny, Vince and Vic, who will bring Jack's ashes with him. Jack's illness, his stay at the hospital and his death are only looked back upon during the trip to Margate. These parts of the story belong to the flashbacks, while Addie's death takes place in the Bundrens' present.

Addie's section is one long flashback, talking about her father, her first encounter and marriage with Anse, and the birth of her five children. Also other characters take a closer look at events in the past that had an important influence on their lives now. Dewey Dell for example tells in her first section how she met Lefe and how Darl knew what was going on between them. Darl devotes one of his sections to the summer when Jewel was fifteen, and "took a spell of sleeping" (128). Jewel fell asleep every moment of the day, no matter where he was: on a cow and even in his plate. This section is especially important because of its ending, which shows that Darl knows about the fact that Jewel is not Anse's son, but the result of an affair.

A final important memory in *As I Lay Dying* is the one by Whitfield, who just like Addie narrates only a single chapter. He recalls how he wanted to confess his sin to Anse, but he believed that Addie's death was a sign of God to prevent him from telling the truth. He was convinced that God had mercy on him, and so his (and Addie's) sin would remain unspoken forever.

In Swift's novel, we get an overall linear progression, but nobody tells the story chronologically. During the journey that only lasts for a couple of hours, the four pilgrims recount events from the 1930s to 1990, and in a succession that bears little relation to the traditional sequence of years (Malcolm 15-16). Swift breaks the chronology in a lot of his novels for a reason, but he does not see this as a narrative technique; it is just more logical:

I don't feel at home with straight, sequential narrative. This partly because I think that moving around in time, having interruptions and delays, is more exciting and has more dramatic potential, but I also think it's more truthful to the way our minds actually deal with time. Memory doesn't work in sequence, it can leap to and fro and there's no predicting what it might suddenly seize on. It doesn't have a chronological plan. Nor does life, otherwise the most recent events would always be the most important. (qtd. in Vianu)

A lot of memories are related to the Second World War, which takes a prominent place in the majority of Swift's novels. Jack, Ray and Lenny all served in Egypt during that war, and, according to Emma Parker, the constant presence of memories related to that time suggests "a nostalgic longing for the last historical moment when the nation still had a secure sense of its own identity" (101). Vic and Vince are also shaped by the war: Vic through his experiences in

the Royal Navy and Vince because of the death of his parents. When Vince had just been born, a bomb was dropped on their house. Vince survived, but he had to grow up without his parents, or any family at all. When Vince becomes an adult, he sees the army as an escape. He served in the Middle East just to be away from Jack for a while, even though there was no call-up anymore. Lenny cannot understand why Vince did this: "I reckon a tour in the Middle East was a hard price to pay for not being a butcher's apprentice and for learning how to fix a jeep. Lad might even have had his arse shot off" (44). Because of their memories of war, they make a significant detour to the Chatham Memorial, a navy memorial, at Vic's suggestion. This is done to remember not only Jack that day, but also those men who gave their lives for their country in the First World War, but also from 1939 onwards. Apart from the reminiscences of war, there are also other memories present in *Last Orders*. For Vince, for example, the recollections include the trips to the seaside with Jack and Amy, but also with Lenny's daughter Sally; his relationship with Mandy; and his discussions with Jack about the butcher shop. Ray's main memories deal with his ex-wife Carol and his daughter Susan who moved to Australia, but also with his affair with Amy. Lenny, eventually, is especially focussed on his daughter and his failures in life.

Being not fixed in time, the novels show us important things concerning the past of the protagonists, but also make references to the future to appeal to the readers' desire to continue reading. Flashbacks and predictions are not only useful to learn more about the characters' personality, but also serve an important purpose in the larger contexts of the novels. While Ray's luck is used to build a community and to give the novel a hopeful overtone, Darl's clairvoyance is rather ambiguous. Charles Palliser is convinced that Darl's clairvoyance does not even exist, but if it does, it does not have such a clear function as Ray's luck. It is also not used to provide the reader with a feeling of optimism and hopefulness. If it is designed to have a particular function, it is to stress Darl's pessimism and fatalism.

## 6. Language

William Marling claims that "modernist writers deliberately challenged and questioned the traditional notion of language as a transparent representational medium" (qtd in Marling). This can clearly be noted in both novels, since both Swift and Faulkner deal with the problem of inadequate language.

Marling states that it is especially Addie Bundren who finds it hard to deal with language. Addie believes that language is only a “shape to fill a lack” (172), and has a very sceptical view with regard to the representational function of language. This can be derived from her use of the blank space: “I would think: The shape of my body where I used to be a virgin is in the shape of a \_\_\_\_\_ and I couldn't think Anse, couldn't remember Anse” (173). Addie is convinced that language cannot convey accurately the meanings of her own experiences such as motherhood, marriage and sexuality. To her, words are always ineffectual. She learns this after she has given birth to Cash: “That was when I learned words are not good; that words dont ever fit even what they are trying to say at. When he was born I knew that motherhood was invented by someone who had to have a word for it because the ones that had the children didn't care whether there was a word for it or not” (171). Addie is not the only character who has trouble with language. Jewel is unable to utter the word “coffin,” Vardaman realizes that “he couldn't say it” when he finds out that Addie will be placed in the coffin, and his childish utterances are sometimes incomprehensible; Cash is a man of action rather than a man of words, and Darl is frequently described as hardly speaking (qtd. in Marling). This is rather strange since he narrates almost half of the story. Yet Cora states that he “just stood and looked at his dying mother, his heart too full for words” (25). Also Tull mentions that Darl does not say much: “He is looking at me. He dont say nothing; just looking at me with them queer eyes of hisn [sic] that makes [sic] folks talk” (125). The breakdown of language is most apparent in Vardaman's speech, and it is characterized by irregularities in spelling (e.g. darl for Darl), absence of punctuation, and the dislocation of syntax. The effort to overcome the inadequacy of language, on the other hand, can be found with Addie and is represented through the coffin pictogram and blank space (qtd in Marling). Faulkner's own awareness of the limitations of language is clearly represented in Addie's monologue.

Graham Swift acknowledges in an interview that he has based the language of his characters on the dialect spoken in South London (qtd in Rosenberg). The men are however not very articulate and rather have to be seen as men of action. This can be derived from the fact that they all have answered the call to public service (Lea 181). Even Vince, who was not obliged to do this anymore, joined the army. He did this because he did not want to talk to Jack anymore; he wanted to avoid the confrontation. The syntax and vocabulary are rather colloquial and informal because of the limited education of the characters. Yet Swift believed that even though he was dealing with working-class characters, their language was capable of eloquence (qtd. in Rosenberg). This is especially clear with Vic, who makes more use of

utterances which are correct in terms of Standard English than the other men (Malcolm 165). Yet his language is still colloquial, and the syntax is marked by fragments and run-ons, which is the case for all characters (Malcolm 165). Typical of the characters in Swift's writing is that their language often suffers from severe breakdowns and incomplete utterances. This phenomenon is called "aposiopesis," and occurs when a person is unwilling or unable to continue speaking, often when he or she is overcome by emotion. Richard Pedot refers to the concept of aposiopesis in his article dealing with deadlines in *Last Orders*. He describes aposiopesis as a kind of dead line that asks for completion, restoration (67). The silence that follows when a person breaks off his sentence, is not a void, but a force. There is more meaning behind it, than would be the case if the sentence was finished. The clearest example in *Last Orders* is the avoidance of the word "death" or derivatives of the word. The most obvious example here is Amy's aposiopesis when she wants to tell June that Jack has died. At first, she is beating around the bush, but when she finally finds the courage to say it, she is not able to:

I've got to be my own woman now. But I couldn't have just stopped coming without saying it to your face: Goodbye June. And I couldn't have said the one thing without saying the other. It won't mean anything to you but someone's got to tell you, no one else is going to. That your own daddy, who never came to see you, who you never knew because he never wanted to know you, that your own daddy (278)

Amy is also overcome by emotion when she thinks about June, "flesh of my" (274), who was already abandoned by Jack from the moment she was born: "*Best thing we can do, Ame, is* " (275, italics in original). Amy's reaction to this was: "You bastard, you butcher" (275). From that moment on, it was already clear which side Amy would choose.

Both Ray and Vince also have a moment of aposiopesis, a moment when they find it hard to deal with certain memories. Vince finds it difficult to look at Jack's naked dead body at the "Chapel of Rest," while thinking "naked we come and naked we" (199). Vince is probably remembering his dead parents here, and now he is again confronted with the death of someone who took care of him. Like Amy, he is unable to say that Jack has died. The most crucial moment for Vince, however, is situated at Wick's Farm, when he wants to scatter some of Jack's ashes. "This is where," he says, wiping his face. "This is where" (151). Wick's Farm is the place where Jack and Amy met, and where June was conceived. Pamela Cooper mentions that it is a scene of primal loss for Vince, since he realizes that this very place of

“his parents’ happiness was also the place of their losing it” (34). Their love did not survive the accidental pregnancy, and the birth of a child that was unwanted to Jack. Ray, on the other hand, is troubled when he looks back at his life, his failures: “Never rains but” (59). To the outer world, he seems to have a perfect life; he is always “lucky.” On the inside, however, Ray suffers from his failed marriage and the fact that he never sees his daughter anymore. A final example I would like to give, is taken from the final chapter of *Last Orders*, when the men are preparing to scatter Jack’s ashes. At this moment, all the men are overcome by emotion, especially Ray. It is not really aposiopesis, because there are no lines that are broken off, but I believe it is relevant since Ray openly acknowledges that he is unable to speak: “We don’t speak. We can’t speak, strung out from each other, but I [Ray] couldn’t speak anyway. Because there’s something swelling up inside me, in my chest, where I’m holding Jack under my car-coat, like there’s waves beating at my own harbour wall” (289).

None of the protagonists is able to express him- or herself adequately with the use of language; they all prefer action rather than words. The use of colloquial speech, the hesitations, and the often severe breakdowns of language prove this. Some characters, like Cash, make a positive evolution in applying language. The majority, however, remains at a status quo and does not make any progress.

## Chapter 3: Mentality

William Faulkner and Graham Swift present prototypical landscapes in their novels. Faulkner describes the old American South, which is not an image that the majority of the English people like very much since it is rural, anti-capitalist and anti-modern (Rogers 175). Swift on the other hand focuses on the representation of England, more particularly the working-class in South London. One can compare England and the American South since they are both characterized by strict hierarchies and divisions of class, gender and race. In both cases, there is one dominant class, the ethnic majority has a sense of superiority, and the men tend to play the most important role while women are regarded as inferior.

### *1. Americanness*

Michael Millgate describes William Faulkner as the “most deeply Southern of Southern writers” (2). As Granville Hicks puts it: “He has not only watched the people of the South carefully; he is one of them and he knows them from the inside” (156).

An important part of American history that has a resonance in Faulkner’s work is slavery and the racial problems between black and white. Patrick O’Donnell states that Faulkner in his novels recounts the tragic personal pasts of his characters against the background of a landscape that is cursed by slavery and the Civil War (O’Donnell 33). This is especially the case for the novels dealing with the history of the Compsons, Sutpens and Sartoris. Slavery was a national institution in America, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first slaves arrived from Africa at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The slave trade forms a triangle which first goes from Europe to Africa to pick up slaves; this is called the “outward journey.” From Africa the slaves are brought to America where they were changed for goods; i.e. the “middle passage.” During this part of the trip, the slaves were chained together with no place for movement. This caused a lot of diseases with the result that a lot of them did not survive the journey. The “return passage” goes from America back to Europe with the goods. This slave trade was abolished in 1808, and from then on the Domestic trade became important. Even though the slaves had to endure a lot of hardship, this did not prevent them from having children. The rate of natural growth of slaves was at the time one of the greatest in the world. By 1800, slavery was abolished in the North. In the South, however, slavery still was very important to maintain the large plantations. The

“Fugitive Slave Law,” enacted in 1850, stated that runaway slaves may succeed in escaping from the Southern (slave) states to the Northern (free) states, but if they were caught, they were sent back to their masters. Slaves escaped with the help of Underground Railroad operations, a network of clandestine routes via the secret safe houses of people who objected to slavery. The Fugitive Slave Law led to a lot of upheaval, thousands of blacks lived in constant fear. Not only the slaves but also the free blacks were afraid since they could be claimed as an escaped slave as well; nobody would listen to them. From 1855 onwards, political and social changes emerged and the proposition of the North to abolish slavery everywhere in America angered the South. This conflict escalated and led to the Civil War that started in 1861. The Reconstruction period between 1866 and 1877 readmitted the Southern states to the union so that whites and blacks had to learn to live together without slavery.

Faulkner’s novels can be seen as very homogeneous since they are all situated in the South, and the majority of them are set in a small town called Jefferson. Henry Nash Smith states that Faulkner always pays a lot of attention to his setting and especially to “visual values” and all the “minutiae of sound and odour” (131). The fictitious setting in the South created by Faulkner in which almost all his stories are set is Yoknapatawpha County, a land full of poverty. Faulkner makes it very clear that it is his own piece of land. On the map he drew for *Absalom Absalom!* he wrote “William Faulkner, Sole Owner and Proprietor” (Millgate 3). Sean Latham believes that this map is very exact in describing a place that actually does not even exist. It is cut in almost perfect quarters by the roads that run in and out of Jefferson, and it is bounded on the north by the Tallahatchie River and on the south by the Yoknapatawpha River (Latham 258). Edmond L. Volpe has presented a very detailed image of how the population of this piece of land in north-western Mississippi should look, based on what Faulkner reveals in his novels:

Yoknapatawpha County covers an area of 2,400 square acres and contains, according to Faulkner’s count, 6,298 whites and 9,313 Negroes. Of these 15,000 inhabitants, Faulkner identifies by name about six hundred. Approximately half of the identified inhabitants are white residents of Jefferson and the surrounding plantations; about a hundred are Negroes; and the rest are country people, most of whose farms are located around the hamlet called Frenchmen Bend. The majority of Faulkner’s important white characters are members of a few country or pioneering families. Rural families: Ratliff, Varner, Snopes, McCallum, Bookwright, Armstid, Bundren, Quick, and Tull.

5 pioneers, Sartoris, Compson, Sutpen, McCaslin, and Stevens, sire the elite families in the county. In the Yoknapatawpha County fiction, the same characters appear again and again, but the novels are not unified by an overall historical or social plan. Most of his major characters are drawn from only three social levels: the aristocrats, the country people, and the Negroes. The intermediate social groups provide only background characters (Volpe 14).

Geographically speaking, Jefferson and Yoknapatawpha County are in a way based on the Oxford and Lafayette County. We can however not say that Jefferson is the same as Oxford since Jefferson is bigger and the population is smaller (Millgate 3). Jefferson and the county are thus in essence fictional constructs, “grafted imaginatively onto the real space of Mississippi” (Latham 258).

In Faulkner’s imaginary world, there is not a genuinely wealthy class, nor an industrial proletariat or a coherent intelligentsia, only a couple of provincial intellectuals. There are social classes, yet they are either remnants of an old aristocracy or forerunners of a new commercial ruling class (Howe 7-8). It is in this setting that Faulkner introduces his readers to characters like the Bundrens, which are by a number of critics defined as “poor whites” (Howe 53) or even “white trash” (Wetherill Baker 96). *As I Lay Dying* highlights the differences between town and country, but also between the white trash to which the Bundrens belong, and the so-called “more deserving poor” (Leyda 166). The difference between town and country becomes already clear in the second section of the novel, which is narrated by Cora Tull. She had to bake cakes for a rich town lady, but when they were finished the lady simply refused to take them. Cora’s daughter Kate reacts to this by saying: “But those rich town ladies can change their minds. Poor folks cant” (7). Moonsu Shin claims that in *As I Lay Dying* Yoknapatawpha County is presented as a society in which oral folk tales take a central place (qtd. in Shin). This becomes clear in the beginning of the sections told by town narrators like for example MacGowan and Moseley. They start their stories in a way that is typical for an oral narrative, which implies that they have turned the journey of the poor Bundrens into a story that is meant to be spread and entertain people (qtd. in Shin). These two narrators are also clear examples of how townspeople act in a denigrating manner towards people that come from the country. They both see Dewey Dell as a stupid country girl, and both react to her in their own way: Moseley humiliates her by refusing her the pills, while MacGowan violates her innocence. They do not bother to try and hide their prejudices against countryfolk and act as if those people have no feelings.

The multiple voices that narrate in the novel thus not only include the Bundren family, but also a number of observers. These figures include among others Vernon and Cora Tull, Armstid, Peabody, and Moseley. They judge the members of the Bundren family on the basis of appearance, behaviour and origins, and this is especially the case for Anse Bundren. He is often described as a parody of a patriarch since he is lazy and tricks his children to get what he wants. The fact that he is from rural poor origins also plays an important role throughout the novel. He is presented as a parody of the myth of the self-made man who works hard to achieve the American Dream, and moving from rags to riches (Leyda 167). It is only through hard labour and determination that you can reach enjoyable life standards. However, since Anse refuses to work, his entire family cannot climb up higher on the social ladder. Throughout the novel, we can follow the family's negative mobility, socio-economically and geographically. In portraying Anse and his family as "white trash," the other farmers can look at themselves as being from a higher class and thus more deserving (Leyda 167). They believe that people who work hard and use their money in a wise way will earn success. Anse obviously lacks the capacities to become successful, so he will stay in the lower ranks. However, the ones who claim that the Bundrens belong to the lowest rank of society are actually those who stand in positions close to the Bundrens, and they hope to see their progress in the Bundrens' backwardness (Leyda 168). It is, however, clan rather than class forms the basic social unit in Faulkner's world. Pride in family and reverence for ancestors are far more important than any involvement with class (Howe 8). David Minter agrees with this. He believes that the Bundrens are "held fast by the close-knit circle of their family" (Minter 119). He gives three examples to illustrate this. First of all it is very clear that Cash and Darl do not make any effort to establish a stable relationship beyond their family. Eula, Cora Tull's daughter, is interested in Darl Bundren but instead we can see that Darl cherishes deep feelings for his sister Dewey Dell. Dewey Dell, in turn, lets Darl come in between her and Lafe when she discovers she is pregnant.

It's because I [Dewey Dell] am alone. If I could just feel it, it would be different, because I would not be alone. But if I were not alone, everybody would know it. And he could do so much for me, and then I would not be alone. Then I could be all right alone.

I would let him come in between me and Lafe, like Darl came in between me and Lafe, and so Lafe is alone too (58-59).

The last example has to do with Jewel. He has worked very hard to be able to buy a horse of his own. But when the family needs mules to continue the journey to Jefferson, he sells it. In doing this, he “serves the selfish request of his mother and the selfish wants of his father” (Minter 119).

Even though the Bundrens are often defined as being close to trash, some of them have possibilities, especially Jewel. In general, however, they all seem very hopeless. Howe believes that the Bundrens deal with plagues that are very often associated with “poor whites” (53). This is especially true for Anse. The patriarch of the Bundren family is very lazy and expects that his children do all the work for him since he already feeds them and buys them clothes. He even claims he would die if he were ever to sweat. Darl’s words confirm this claim: “The shirt across pa’s hump is lighter than the rest of it. There is no sweat stain on his shirt. I have never seen a sweat stain on his shirt. He was sick once from working in the sun when he was twenty-two years old, and he tells people that if he ever sweats, he will die. I suppose he believes it” (17).

From other people in the story we learn that Addie died because of the trouble she had trying to make Anse work, and the work she herself had to do for him. Tull claims “[s]he kept him at work for thirty-odd years. I reckon she is tired” (33). Doctor Peabody is also of this opinion: “When Anse finally sent for me of his own accord, I said ‘He has wore her out at last’” (41). All people who are involved with the Bundrens describe Anse as a lazy and selfish person who profits from the work done by others. Yet it also has to be said that he is proud enough not to accept any food or money offered by others. He refuses the supper made by Samson’s wife saying that he and his family do not want to discommode them. The same is true for Jewel, who does not want to take the free hay offered by Samson for the horses; he rather pays for it. They do not want to depend on people from outside their own family. Darl is also the only one who describes the physical effects a lifetime of hard work as a child has on the adult Anse. His disabilities are due to a previous bout of heatstroke, which is the cause of Anse’s not working in the sun anymore, and bad shoes as a child labourer (Leyda 168): his feet “are badly splayed, his toes cramped and bent and warped, with no toenail at all on his little toes, from working so hard in the wet in homemade shoes when he was a boy” (11).

Also the majority of the children deal with plagues that are associated with being “poor whites”: Jewel and Vardaman are obsessed by their mother and the animals that represent them, Dewey Dell is a promiscuous girl and Darl is mad (Howe 53). What is remarkable here is the stress on being “white,” since they are the minority in the South. It is not very common for a story dealing with the South to focus on poor whites. With a history of

slavery, you would normally expect either a rich white family or poor blacks. Faulkner does not make a lot of use of black characters in his novels, and if he introduces them, there is not as much variety as is the case for his white characters. Volpe states that Faulkner's chief black characters are shown with skill and with respect for their individuality, but the majority of blacks are reduced to the traditional stereotypes (17). Millgate refers in his work to Max Geismar's *Writing in Crisis*, who puts it in a more radical way: "Faulkner focuses his hatred on 'the Negro and the Female,' whom he uses as scapegoats for the South's defeat" (Millgate 105). With charges like this, it is not surprising that Faulkner has long been accused of being racist, both for his use of the word "nigger" and for his politics. Faulkner grew up being white in Mississippi in the beginning of the twentieth century, in a nation then deeply concerned with racial differences. The colour line was very sharply drawn, and the "one-drop rules" determined social life at that time. The "one-drop rules" were "those legal standards that determined how much African ancestry an individual could have and still be 'white'" (Ladd 133). The definition of "the fatal drop" differed greatly before and after the Civil War: before the Civil War, it was generally accepted to be one-fourth or one-eighth part African ancestry or more; after the Civil War however, this changed to be as small as one-thirty-second (Ladd 133). In his earliest novels, Faulkner establishes a consistent treatment of race. A statement by Quentin Compson in Faulkner's first novel *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) foreshadows already what Faulkner's opinion is concerning race: "That was when I realised that a nigger is not a person so much as a form of behavior; a sort of obverse reflection of the white people he lives among" (Hale and Jackson 34). In *Light in August*, it is Joe Christmas' blackness that plays an important role. For himself, Joe does not know whether to cherish or deny his black ancestry, and because of this, he does not feel at ease with anybody from the community he lives in. But the white community also does not really accept him: it alienates him and it even kills him at the end (Hale and Jackson 34):

When they approached to see what he was about, they saw that the man was not dead yet, and when they saw what Grimm was doing one of the men gave a choked cry and stumbled back into the wall and began to vomit. Then Grimm too sprang back, flinging behind him the bloody butcher knife. "Now you'll let white women alone, even in hell," he said. But the man on the floor had not moved. He just lay there, with his eyes open and empty of everything save consciousness, and with something, a shadow, about his mouth. For a long moment he looked up at them with peaceful and unfathomable and unbearable eyes. Then his face, body, all, seemed to collapse, to fall

in upon itself, and from out the slashed garments about his hips and loins the pent black blood seemed to rush like a released breath. It seemed to rush out of his pale body like the rush of sparks from a rising rocket; upon that black blast the man seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever. They are not to lose it, in whatever peaceful valleys, beside whatever placid and reassuring streams of old age, in the mirroring faces of whatever children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes. It will be there, musing, quiet, steadfast, not fading and not particularly threatening, but of itself alone serene, of itself alone triumphant. (406-407)

In this passage, Faulkner combines violence and peace, and forms a bridge between death (Joe Christmas) and birth (“mirroring faces of children”), past and future, “old disasters” and “newer hopes.” This passage also shows allusions to the just and unforgiving God from the Old Testament and the redemptive, human God known from the New Testament (Hale and Jackson 37).

In *As I Lay Dying*, the novel that was published between *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*, Faulkner does not make many references to the racial problems that were raging at the time. The only time that black people make their appearance is when the Bundrens have almost reached Jefferson: “Three negroes walk beside the road ahead of us; ten feet ahead of them a white man walks. When we pass the negroes their heads turn suddenly with that expression of shock and instinctive outrage. ‘Great God,’ one says; ‘what they got in that wagon?’ Jewel whirls. ‘Son of a bitches,’ he says” (229).

The feeling of hatred and violence that grows in Jewel has not really to do with the skin colour of the people they pass, but with the insult that they make towards Addie. She has been dead for about nine days now, so her rotting body really starts to smell. The three black men were not the only people to comment on the stench, but they were the only ones who made them while Jewel was able to hear them. Because of the love he still feels for his mother, Jewel considers the insult as directed to himself as well, and that is what enrages him. It does not matter that the three men are black; he would have reacted in the same way with white people.

In *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*, Faulkner makes rather harsh statements about race, but it is in *Absalom Absalom!* that his most radical statement can be found: the novel deals with Henry Sutpen, who murders his mixed-race half-brother Charles Bon, probably because he wants to keep the mixed blood out of the white family. It is however only Quentin who describes Charles as being black; others see him as a white

Creole. He transforms in *Absalom Absalom!* from a good white man with a Martinican grandfather to “a nigger that’s going to sleep with your sister” (Ladd 526). Barbara Ladd claims that the idea of passing was very important to writers like Faulkner, but also Grace King and Mark Twain. In short, “passing” means that people present themselves as being from another race than they actually are. Most common is that people from black ancestry try to pass as whites, but also the other way around is possible. This can have several reasons: mixed-race people may feel more at ease among white people and want to forget about their black ancestry; or this can be done out of safety. Because of the racial problems in that period, people became afraid to admit that they are actually black. The writers I mentioned earlier present their characters often as “quadroons” or “octoroons” to indicate that they have more white ancestry than black (Ladd 525).

Faulkner once even admitted in an interview that he would oppose to enforced integration “even if it meant going out into the street and shooting Negroes” (qtd. in Polsgrove). This is the most racist comment Faulkner ever gave “in real life,” and not through fictional characters in imaginary settings. According to Grace Elizabeth Hale and Robert Jackson, “[t]he single race remains for Faulkner imaginable only from the white perspective, and its redemptive power comes from the invocation of blackness in an integrated white space” (38).

## *2. Englishness*

According to David Rogers, there are not only great similarities between Faulkner’s novel and the one written by Graham Swift at the level of formal characteristics, but also when dealing with the notions of race and gender (Rogers 179). Also in *Last Orders*, there is no real ethnic diversity, and the women are in the minority. The setting is however different: from the American South we move to Europe, and more precisely to England. Jakob Winnberg claims that Swift’s *Last Orders* reshapes *As I Lay Dying* and that Swift “turns Faulkner’s mythical South into the working-class London of Bermondsey—or reclaims the working-class London of Bermondsey from its exclusion from *As I Lay Dying*” (175).

Born in South London, Graham Swift has a special interest in England and the representation of Englishness. Even though most of Swift’s novels are set in South London, we have to keep in mind that they are not autobiographical. According to David Malcolm, there is a discrepancy between the depicted worlds and the authorial background (2). Malcolm claims

that *Last Orders*, published in 1996, belongs to the post-1980 British fiction which can be defined in the light of four main aspects, namely a fascination with historical events, a cosmopolitan opening out to settings and characters which are situated beyond the geographical limits of the British Isles, a mixing of genres within individual texts, and metafictional concerns (8-9). Three of these four characteristics can be found in *Last Orders*, and in Swift's work in general. I will not elaborate on all four aspects but only say more about the fascination with history, and the one aspect that is absent: the cosmopolitan outlook. There are almost no references to the United States, Asia, Latin America, etc. The only references that are made are to Egypt, where the men fought during Second World War, and to Australia. Ray's daughter, Susan, left England and moved to Sydney. *Last Orders* is predominantly limited to South London, more particularly Bermondsey, and especially to less glamorous parts where the focus is on the working-class milieu. All characters "stick like glue" to Bermondsey and always take the village with them in their minds. This is especially the case for Ray, who seems to have a permanent bond with his home district. He is for instance afraid of visiting his daughter in Australia, and when he went to Egypt to fight there the only person that really became a friend was Jack Dodds, also from Bermondsey. A final example is his connection to his camper-van, which allows him to go everywhere he wants, but also gives him the feeling of being home. It is only at the end of the novel that Ray realizes that he needs to broaden his horizons and he considers travelling to Australia to visit Susan.

When you compare Swift's novels, you can draw the conclusion that the protagonist is almost always a somewhat older, white Englishman. According to Emma Parker, *Last Orders* "exposes the sexual and economic exploitation of women and racial tensions engendered by a hegemonic masculinity that takes whiteness as its norm" (89). There is only a small number of female characters, who very often play a minor role (but I will deal with this aspect when I discuss gender), and Swift also excludes other nationalities or presents them negatively (Malcolm 18). In the post-war decades there was a lot of immigration which led to a new multicultural English population (McLeod 3). This becomes however not very clear in Swift's novels. *Last Orders* presents a community, but this community tends to repress "the multicultural other" (Craps 413). The only non-white characters are Mr. Hussein, a wealthy Arab businessman, and the gypsies, whom Amy met while hop-picking in Kent. Hussein is presented as a rich Arab who is interested in buying one of Vince's cars. Vince really dislikes this man, but because he wants to sell him a car, he allows the businessman to abuse his daughter Kath. Hussein is portrayed as a caricature; he seems to embody only negative characteristics, being among other things deceitful and lecherous (Craps 413). He undermines

the myth of English pre-eminence, which is based on assertions of imperial greatness. The Arab countries used to be colonized and were subject to social, cultural and economic exploitation (Parker 101). Now, that is, in post-colonial England, Vince needs Hussein to buy a car to keep his business flourishing. A role-reversal has thus taken place in the course of the last decades. The other non-white characters are the gypsies, and in particular Romany Jim. When Amy spent the summer in Kent, she started to feel sexually attracted to this man, even though she has never had the opportunity to make contact with him. Just as Hussein, Romany Jim is defined in terms of prejudices, but they are of a different kind. He is presented as being exotic and mysterious, and is related to a life-style that is devoid of worries and modern “diseases” like materialism. Because of these characteristics, the gypsies are also seen as not suitable for joining the integrated community. *Last Orders* is not the only Swiftian novel which deals with a socially restricted group of characters. In *The Light of Day*, for instance, Swift presents only the Patels as non-white characters. All this seems to present us with the idea that Swift is dealing with the issue of Englishness in a rather conservative way (Rogers 179). However, Stef Craps does not completely agree with this: he believes that Swift rather deconstructs old-fashioned notions of Englishness. The sympathy that keeps the community together, does not extend to those people who are different from them. The way in which the community of Bermondsey is represented in *Last Orders* is rather ambiguous. Craps states that “[w]hereas a naive or innocent reading sees a sympathetically portrayed, authentic organic community, a critical reading reveals ruthless determination, violence, and exclusion trying to hide from view” (415). Both readings are equally valid: “the novel continues to advocate sympathy as an ideal worth pursuing, but at the same time it urges the reader to adopt a critical attitude toward this ideal by exposing its limits” (Craps 416). The reader thus has to decide which attitude he or she wishes to adopt. There are two characters that represent England in a particular way. First of all there is Ray “Lucky” Johnson. He is the one who narrates the chapters which are headed with place names, which implies that he is associated with the geography of the country. Ray and England are one. He represents the places that the men have to pass to reach Margate (Rogers 183). He does not only represent the places along the way to Margate, but also the racetracks that he has visited during his lifetime. When he goes to the gents in Rochester, Ray admits that when he has trouble falling asleep, he “ticks off in [his] head all the racetracks [he’s] been to, in alphabetical order, and [he] see[s] the map of England with the roads criss-crossing. AscotBrightonCheltenhamDoncasterEpsom” (112). Towards the end of the novel, when he has mentioned them all, he starts to make variations on this theme, for example “*BurgersHotdogsIcesShakesTeasPopcornCandyflossRock*” (269).

According to Emma Parker, Jack can also be seen as “being England.” Since Jack is a pet name for John, you can say that he resembles John Bull, the personification of England. Like Jack, John Bull is a figure who believes in law and order and is conservative (Parker 99). Parker also sees England as a nation of shopkeepers, and this is certainly the case for Jack, Vic, Vince and Lenny, who are all tradesmen. Jack has his own butcher shop, Vic works as undertaker, Vince is a used-car salesman and Lenny has a fruit-and-vegetable stall. Ray is the odd one out here since he works as an insurance clerk, but Parker believes that this is compensated by his interest in horse racing and betting, which is regarded as something typically English (100).

One clichéd image of “Englishness” occurs throughout the novel, and is mostly related to Amy: that of Kent as the “Garden of England”:

Doing it for free, getting it for free, down there in the garden of England, with the sunshine and the fresh air and the haystacks and the hop-bines, and that feeling, though it was stay-put and keep-at-it-work, bins all in a row, three or four to a bin like a factory outdoors, of being set loose. On the loose. Living in huts and tents like natives, living on the land, no fixed abode. (234)

Amy presents it as a very idyllic place; to her it equals freedom, liberty, but also sexuality. It reminds her of the summer she spent hop-picking, during which she met the gypsy Romany Jim. At first she felt envy because the gypsies were “a stage further at being outlaws than us” and because when she would be back in Bermondsey, “they’d still be wandering the woods and lanes” (235). But then she admits that “you could say it was more than envy” (235). Amy started to feel attracted to Romany Jim even though he did not pay any attention to her at all. Being in Kent was a welcome contrast to her city life in London; it can be seen as a kind of escape (qtd. in Hartung-Brückner). However, instead of turning to Romany Jim, Amy chose Jack, the boy from Bermondsey. In a way, the escape from London was undone again. And it was then that their daughter June was conceived, in the Garden of Kent. The freedom that Amy associated with Kent did however not have the same effect on June. She was born being mentally handicapped and has to spend the rest of her life locked up in an asylum.

The most stubborn of old English characteristics, which is very apparent in Swift’s novels, is class inequality (Rogers 182). We only get representatives belonging to the working-class, people who through hard work earn enough money to live a normal life. This is however the ideal; not everyone is always that successful. Some of them, like Jack, have

debts and have to borrow money from family and friends. Others, like Lenny, earn enough money to buy food and clothes, but they cannot afford for example little trips to the seaside. And there is still another group of people who have sufficient money to live without fear of debts, but who earn some extra pounds in activities that have nothing to do with their job. This is the case for Ray. As an insurance clerk, he does not have to be avaricious, but because of his successful gambling he can afford more than the others, like for example a camper-van. He does not use his luck only for his own purposes. He helps Lenny to pay for Sally's abortion, for his own daughter's emigration to Australia, for Vince's first car and, most importantly, he placed a large bet with the money that Jack borrowed from Vince so that Amy can have a future without having to worry about debts.

Swift focuses on the notion of Englishness, but he debunks it in presenting it very limited in geography (the men feel very closely connected to their home in Bermondsey), and in mentality (he portrays England and Englishness in terms of the stereotypes that continue to be associated with them). *Last Orders* presents a society that shows an enormous void as far as multiculturalism is concerned. The characters refuse to take in people that are different from them, like Hussein and the gypsies, and treat them as exotic people who do not stand a chance of being accepted in their community. As Lewis MacLeod argues in his article on *Last Orders*: "It is impossible to argue that *Last Orders* is an inclusive, multi-cultural novel reflecting on London's diversity, yet Swift's cultural politics of his characters, and the smallness of the world Jack and his friends inhabit frequently seems to be part of Swift's point" (149). In doing this, Swift deconstructs the old-fashioned notions of Englishness and makes the readers aware of the limits that a community tend to take on when they are confronted with people who are different. According to MacLeod, Jack, his son, and his friends are presented as "figures with very clear and very limitations, and the novel focuses on their various attempts to deal with those limitations" (149).

William Faulkner makes rather harsh comments on race in his novels and in real life; he is not as subtle as Swift is. However, he does not only comment on black people in his work. In *As I Lay Dying*, his main focus is on the Bundren family who is not presented very positively. Anse Bundren is presented as being a parody of the American Dream, which states that you can only achieve wealth and respect through hard work. In putting forward poverty and racial tensions in his work, Faulkner seems to show how American life has become after the Civil War and the Reconstruction period. It was meant that black and white people would live together on equal footing, without slavery. Yet these intentions have failed. The tensions

will keep on existing and there are still a lot of monetary problems. Black people and poor farmers like the Bundrens are the victim of those people who own large patches of land. It will not be easy to find a solution to close the gap between rich and poor.

Both Faulkner and Swift thus present a clichéd image of the American South and England respectively to make the readers aware of the limits of society and encourage them to look at the world around them with an open mind.

## Chapter 4: Gender

Gender is an important theme in *As I Lay Dying* as well as *Last Orders*. What immediately leaps to the eye when you look at the different narrators is the unequal division of male and female narrators. *Last Orders* has two female narrators, Amy and Mandy, while *As I Lay Dying* has three, Cora Tull, Dewey Dell and, last but not least, the deceased Addie Bundren. The male narrators are however better represented (five in *Last Orders* and twelve in *As I Lay Dying*). Before going into further detail about the importance of gender in these novels, it is first of all useful to explain the notion of performativity. Swift suggests that “masculinity is a matter of signification by highlighting the ‘performativity’ of gender” (Parker 93).

Performativity is a rather complex notion according to Judith Butler, since many have given it their own formulation and interpretation (xiv). Anna Carline defines how she interprets the notion of performativity as presented by Butler. She states that “performativity is the compelled repetition of regulatory regimes of intelligible genders, it is, however, a constrained performance, a continually repeated performance based upon exclusions or prohibitions” (Carline 12). Performativity is thus “not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual” (Butler xv). Butler’s concept of performativity can thus in a way be considered as being related to iterability, the word that Jacques Derrida introduced in his essay “Signature, Event, Context,” included in *Limited Inc.* Iterability means that a word, or text in general, can be repeated in another context. In doing so, the meaning of the words involved can be altered. Butler applies this notion of iterability to identity and the concept of gender. She states that it is impossible to see performativity outside the process of iterability and the repetition of norms it embodies. The idea of repetition is crucial here and it should be noted that it is “not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject” (Borgerson 70, italics in original). Through this repetition, we become subjects rather than taking on a role (Jackson 680). The compulsion to repeat does however not mean that we are forced to repeat everything in the same way, as some kind of automatism. It should be noted that we still have an agency, which guides us to do the things we are used to do, but in another way.

The example that Butler gives to illustrate how performativity works, is the notion of heterosexuality, which “engages in ‘compulsory repetition’.” Heterosexuality is presented as a norm and “an ideal of itself.” But because of homosexuality, the “Other,” heterosexuality is exposed as an “incoherent” and “unstable” category (Jackson 679). Butler refers in her

*Gender Trouble* to the theory of Monique Wittig, who believes that the terms “masculine” and “feminine,” and “male” and “female” only exist in heterosexual relationships (Wittig, qtd. in Butler 141). We are, however, not born with a gender; it should be acquired through repetition when we grow older (Wittig, qtd. in Butler 142). Wittig notes that a woman only can exist in a binary and oppositional relation to a man, and that relation is heterosexuality (Wittig, qtd. in Butler 143). So Wittig actually claims that a lesbian is neither a man nor a woman. Since you become a woman or a man, female or male, a lesbian can be seen as a third gender in that she decides to become neither female nor male (Wittig, qtd. in Butler 144). The male gender is seen as unmarked and universal, while the female is its Other and thus marked. Because of the fact that the female seems to be ignored, there is an enormous increase in identity possibilities, like the lesbian that I already referred to earlier, but also the drag queen and the tom-boy (cf. Dewey Dell) (Nayak and Kehily 461). Dewey Dell is forced to make herself noticed in the male-dominated environment she lives in. Contrary to Nayak and Kehily, Butler claims that gender does not even exist: being a “proper boy” or a “proper girl” is an illusion, an imaginary ideal. It is some kind of “fantasy that is both hankered after and embodied through an approximation of its norms” (Nayak and Kehily 465). People only present “repetitive displays that resemble masculinity and femininity but can never be it” (Nayak and Kehily 471). In short, gender is “an act of problematic being and unfulfilled becoming” (Nayak and Kehily 471). In a way it can be compared to the problem of identity in William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. His soliloquy of “To Be or Not To Be” (124) resembles Jackson’s value of performativity: “The power to act—or not to act” (686).

This notion of performativity is important for the explanation of the roles that the characters are convinced they are playing. I will take a closer look at the deeper meaning of their names and the roles they perform (sometimes out of free will, sometimes out of duty), but first of all I will look at the way women are portrayed in both novels. I am aware that “gender” does not really exist, but I think it is useful to look at the representation of men and women and to see why Faulkner and Swift have presented their characters in that way.

### *1. Representation of women*

In *As I Lay Dying* as well as *Last Orders*, the female characters are very clearly in the minority. In the title *As I Lay Dying*, the “I” refers to Addie Bundren, Anse’s wife and mother of five children. It was Addie who took Anse to be her husband, and she also had the most authority over Cash, Darl, Jewel, Dewey Dell, and Vardaman. She is even empowered to hold

them together after her death. Addie Bundren is thus the most powerful of the women and seems even to outweigh the men, which is very unusual. *Last Orders*, however, places the characters in a patriarchal social order, according to Emma Parker. At the immediate level, “Last Orders” obviously refers to Jack Dodds’ last wish, but at the same time it refers to male-dominated institutions like the pub and the army. In a pub, “Last Orders” refers to the last round of drinks one can get, and also the names of the pubs are all masculine, for example Lord Nelson, The Bull, the Prince of Windsor. Finally, “Last Orders” suggests the men’s service in the army: according to Lenny “[i]t takes the Army to put a finish on a man” (66) (Parker 90).

In Faulkner’s work, women are generally stereotyped and presented rather superficially. Malin believes that Faulkner is more interested in the conflict between father and son (46) than in a complex portrayal of women. This is not really the case in Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, in which the father-figure is a weak man that is often made fun of. The most dominant figure in this novel is Addie Bundren, even though she is very ill at the beginning of the story, and even dead during the rest of it. We can only learn aspects of her character through her monologue and the comments of her family and neighbours. The fact that at the moment she was going to die her voice was described as being “harsh” and “strong” gives us a hint about what kind of person she was when she was still healthy. Because of that and the contributions of the other characters, we can conclude that Addie during her life was a proud and hard-working woman, but she also felt lonely and found it hard to experience feelings of love. From her monologue, we learn that her life has not always been easy, and this only got worse after the birth of her children. It was then that she found out that words are no good because they can never express what you really want to say. Her life was an accumulation of disappointments, so her death turned out to be a liberation.

Dewey Dell is Addie’s daughter and the only girl in the family. She is however not really treated as a girl by her parents and brothers; she has to do the same work as the men in her family—and vica versa: the boys also have to do things that normally could be seen as feminine activities. Vardaman, for example, believes that it is normal that Dewey Dell cleans the fish he has caught. Anse, however, obliges his youngest son to take care of it himself. Boys and girl thus occupy equal positions in the Bundren household. As an insecure girl, Dewey Dell feels as if she is invisible to the world. This feeling is confirmed by those around her, since she is often stereotyped and made anonymous (Bocking 121). She is referred to as a “tom-boy girl,” “that near-naked girl,” or just “the girl.” It is as though the other people who know her name refuse to pronounce it. By her brother Darl, she is also fragmented, seen in the

light of parts of her body: he talks for instance about her arm, face, eyes and leg. The relationship between them thus seems to be determined by her sexuality (Bockting 114). The feelings Dewey Dell had towards Addie were however more positive than was the case for Darl. After Addie's death, she seeks comfort in erotic experiences (Bockting 124). According to Irving Howe, Dewey Dell is a deranged child, one who is only concerned with her own ease (179). She only wants to get to Jefferson to purchase abortion pills with the money she got from Lafe, her lover and the father of her unborn child. At that moment Dewey Dell does not seem to be interested in Addie anymore, even though she was very disturbed when her mother died. When she finally arrives in Jefferson, she goes to the drug store owned by Moseley, but he refuses to help her. MacGowan, on the other hand, is very eager to help Dewey Dell. He wants to take advantage of this girl and makes fun of her because she is a poor and naive country girl.

The third and final female narrator in *As I Lay Dying* is Cora Tull, who turns out to be the most unreliable one. She is obsessed with her religion and gives the reader wrong information about the relationships within the Bundren family. She claims for example that Addie cares Darl than for Jewel. When you proceed in the story, you find out that this is not true at all. Because of her unshakeable faith in God, Cora is very much stereotyped, just like Dewey Dell. She is always seen in the light of her religion, and this makes her a flat character, as I have discussed earlier. Cora Tull is also a more feminine woman, contrary to Addie and "tom-boy" Dewey Dell. She cares a lot for her husband Vernon and their daughters Eula and Kate because she believes that it was God who has given them to her. In the first section she narrates, she is situated in a domestic activity: baking a cake. Her faith, her motherly love, and the cooking thus give her more feminine qualities than Addie and Dewey Dell.

Contrary to the men in *Last Orders*, the male characters in *As I Lay Dying* are more masculine men. All of them (except for Anse) work really hard around the house and in the fields, but it is especially Cash who is often described as being at work. He is obsessed with building the coffin for Addie and is often referred to in connection with the snoring of his saw and his tools in general. Twice he and his brothers (especially Jewel) have to perform almost superhuman actions. The first time is when they have to save Addie and Cash's tools from the flood, time and again facing the current. The second time, it is a fire that has to be overcome. Addie and some animals have to be rescued from the barn that Darl had set on fire. Again it is Jewel who is the hero here. He almost single-handedly drags the horses and the cows out of the barn, and even manages to carry Addie's coffin into safety.

One deviation, however, from this traditional manliness is the latent homosexual relationship between Darl and Jewel (Malin). This can be partly autobiographical, because Faulkner was not innocent, but rather experimental as far as sexuality was concerned. Before his marriage to Estelle Oldham, he had a lot of gay friends and possibly even lovers. When he lived in Greenwich Village, he resided in neighbourhoods that were often seen as the most famous “gay enclave” in America (Jones 54). After his marriage to Estelle, his sexual preferences narrowed and he only had extramarital affairs with women. This did not have as a consequence that Faulkner also narrowed his imagination: in his work, he kept on exploring sexual relationships, complexities of ideologies and gender (Jones 54).

The relationship between Darl and Jewel is indeed a complex one. The hatred that Darl feels towards Jewel is caused by the fact that Jewel is Addie’s favourite child. Malin believes that the “Faulknerian son,” who has a troubled attitude toward the father-figure, adopts an indifferent attitude to the world that is surrounding him (82). His relationship to another masculine character that is experienced, violent, or sophisticated, is never satisfactory. Because of his indifference and passivity, the Faulknerian son becomes sexually attracted to another man who is presented as a father-surrogate. The hatred that I already referred to earlier, arises because Darl is afraid to express his hidden desires towards his (half-)brother (Malin 82). Darl often refers to Jewel in his sections and talks about Jewel’s body and his physical activities like the beating of his horse:

Inside the barn Jewel slides running to the ground before the horse stops. The horse enters the stall, Jewel following. Without looking back the horse kicks at him, slamming a single hoof into the wall with a pistol-like report. Jewel kicks him in the stomach; the horse arches his neck back, crop-toothed; Jewel strikes him across the face with his fist and slides on to the trough and mounts upon it. . . . ‘Eat,’ he says. ‘Get the goddamn stuff out of sight while you got a chance, you pussel-gutted bastard. You sweet son of a bitch,’ he says. (13)

A description of Jewel’s body can be found when he saves Addie’s corpse and Gillespie’s animals from the barn that Darl had set fire to. “The stall door has swung shut. Jewel thrusts it back with his buttocks and he appears, his back arched, the muscles ridged through his garment as he drags the horse out by its head” (219).

The male narrators thus may be more dominant, but the female narrators should also be taken into account, especially Addie, around which all the events evolve.

Graham Swift represents his women in traditional roles, subject to sexual and economic exploitation. In this way, manhood is presented as being destructive and restrictive (Parker 92). This becomes especially clear in the relationship that Jack, Vince, Lenny and Ray have with their daughters. Take for example Vince, who forces his own daughter to sleep with customers so that they would buy a car. And Lenny forces his daughter into taking an illegal abortion and later abandons her when she becomes a prostitute. Because of the men's attitude towards their daughters they destroy the relationship between them. As a result they get totally estranged from one another and eventually lose all contact. There are four daughters in *Last Orders* and none of them has been given a voice.

In *Out of this World* and in *The Sweet Shop Owner*, Swift presents Sophie and Irene respectively as important narrators. In *Last Orders*, it is the first time that there are two women who are given a strong voice: Amy and Mandy. Amy is the most important one of the two, being the wife of the deceased butcher around whom the entire story is built up. She has been given six sections allowing her to give her account of the events, and her voice has been orchestrated very carefully: after her first section on page 19, we have to wait for more than 200 pages before we get to hear the second part of her story. From then on, however, her voice becomes more prominent and returns with regular intervals.

Swift seems to put forward a male-dominated society because of the majority of male narrators, and the detours they make on their way to Margate. In letting his male characters make a detour to a public monument like Chatham Memorial and referring to Nelson's column, Swift shows that national history is especially shaped by the accomplishments of men (Parker 100). Yet, the writer uses his characters "as representatives of a conservative and stereotypical version of national identity in order to offer a post-colonial critique of the limits of white, English masculinity" (Parker 100). So, just as with the depiction of the notion of Englishness, masculinity is presented in a conservative way in order to criticize it. This aspect can also be found in the dominance of the men and the traditional roles of the women that I mentioned earlier. In presenting the male protagonists as destructive and restrictive, and the woman as being subject to sexual and economic exploitation, Swift is denouncing the notion of patriarchal oppression.

When we look at the theme of movement, we can see that history favours the women. We get a contrast between the evolution of women during the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s, and men who seem to be stuck in the conventions of masculinity. This male stasis is shown in Ray's favourite joke: "They calls it the Coach and Horses but it aint never

gone nowhere” (6) (Parker 96). According to Emma Parker, women are associated with movement especially at the beginning of the novel, with Amy envying the gypsies’ freedom, Sue going to university, and Mandy being called “Blackburn Rover” because of her journey (96).

Another way of debunking masculinity can be found in the fact that the men in the novel are not as masculine as they seem to be at first sight. In securing manliness, size appears to be an important matter. The manliness of Jack and Ray is however undercut by their names. Even though Jack is described as a “big man” and a “real man,” his name tells us something else. “Jack” is often used to refer to something that is little, smaller than normal size. I will further elaborate on the several other meanings of Jack’s name in the next part of this chapter. Ray is a small man and Jack used to make jokes about that: “How d’you get so small anyway? Someone shrink you in the wash?” (87). He is often referred to as “Lucky,” a name which has feminine connotations. The fact that he does not take a leading position and refuses to use violence contributes to this. The image of Jack (and in a way also that of Ray) as a hero is reduced when we found out that during the war they rode camels in Egypt and also visited prostitutes there (Parker 94).

Vic also has some feminine characteristics which makes him different from the other characters. Emma Parker gives six examples: he does not drink pints but shorts; does not order meat like the other men; he joined the navy instead of the army; like Ray, he stays out of fights and acts as a referee; in short, he is “a male identity that incorporates feminine aspects and subverts binary categories of gender as the most successful route to health and happiness” (Parker 95). Vic is the only male protagonist who is respected by his entire family and his friends, and he definitely is the only one who is genuinely happy with his life.

The two remaining characters, Lenny and Vince, are the most masculine ones. They are the ones who express their aggression and get involved in verbal and physical fights. Before starting a fruit-and-vegetable stall like his father, Lenny used to be a boxer. During that time, people called him Gunner Tate because of the temper he used to have. The aggression he had in him during that period of his life still seems to haunt him. He keeps on making sarcastic remarks concerning the journey and his companions, which leads them to call Lenny a “stirrer” (21). He always seems to want to evoke confrontation, almost compulsively, even though there is no real reason to do so. Pamela Cooper believes that Lenny draws “to the surface the hidden tensions among the friends, stirring up the remnants of the past out of which the story is woven” (26). Vince is his most important victim, probably not coincidentally the other clear-cut masculine character, and Lenny often attacks

the symbol of masculinity that Vince represents: the car. Vince is a dealer in second-hand cars, and one of his mottos is: “A man aint nothing without a motor” (71) He does not see himself as being just a car dealer but also a “car tailor,” because a “good motor’s like a good suit” (51-52). His love for cars and motors goes incredibly far, sometimes he even devotes almost entire chapters to it. But what it all comes down to, is this:

It’s the best thing that’s ever invented. If it hadn’t been invented we’d’ve had to invent it. And it aint just a seat on wheels. It’s a workmate. It’s a mate. It won’t ask no questions, it won’t tell no lies. It’s somewhere you can be and be who you are. If you aint got no place to call your own, you’re okay in a motor. (73)

Lenny knows that Vince is obsessed with cars and that he is proud of what he has accomplished, and yet he continues to makes jokes about it. One of his first comments is for example “Still, aint no car built yet that’ll beat a jam, is there, Big Boy?” (21). He also keeps on referring to Vince’s business as a “garage” even though he knows perfectly well that Vince prefers “showroom.”

Something that counts for all four travellers is that they act more like children than adult men at times. The most obvious example concerns the urn that contains Jack’s ashes. It seems to be especially Ray who is irritated when some of the other men carry it too long. He believes he has as much right as them to keep Jack with him for a while. But when he finally has it, he often does not know how to act, how to deal with it: “Vic’s holding the box. I don’t think he should hold the box all the time” (30); “Vic’s still holding the box. He shouldn’t keep hogging it” (46).

When Ray finally has the courage to give a hint that he likes to keep the urn for a while, he feels uncomfortable holding it, and is rather embarrassed for acting like a little child instead of a grown-up man.

I say, ‘That box must be getting heavy, Vic, you want to pass it back here?’” (47)

. . . “I say, ‘So if you want to pass him over here, Vic.’

Vic says, ‘Sorry, Raysy,’ like he’d forgotten. ‘You want to hold him for a bit then?’ he turns and smiles gently, as if he don’t want to upset any feelings. (48) . . . He looks at me, quick, with the box on my lap, and I feel a fool now for asking for it, for sitting holding it like a kid needing its toy. (49)

While William Faulkner provides his male protagonists with typically masculine characteristics, it is clear that the majority of male narrators in *Last Orders* rather hides behind their feminine qualities. At first sight, Swift seems to put forward the men as being the dominant gender. The male protagonists narrate most part of the novel and there are a lot of references to pubs with masculine names, as well as to public monuments related to manhood. Swift has done this deliberately to attack the patriarchal society that is generally accepted in everyday life. That could be the reason why it is the most prominent female narrator in the novel, Amy, that makes the most important decision. While the men seek to undo the mistakes they have made in the past and try to return to the life that has been, Amy is determined to break with her past, even if it means giving up her only biological child. So while the men move backwards or remain stationary, Amy makes a number of life-changing decisions and looks at a completely new future.

## 2. Names

It is not only gender that counts, also the names of the characters reveal more than seems to be the case at first sight. The meaning of the names already gives us a hint about the roles they play in the story.

The names of the four men who bring Jack's ashes to Margate are all abbreviated. Ray is actually called Raymond, Vic is short for Victor, Vince for Vincent, and Lenny is born Lennard. According to Emma Parker, these abbreviated names imply truncated lives (Parker 92). As I already explained in the section about Englishness, Jack is a pet name for John, which is very common in English-speaking countries.

Because Ray is known for his instincts, he is not only referred to as "Lucky," but also as a "lovely man," a "lucky" one; and even a "ray of sunshine," a "ray of hope" (Rogers 183). He is the one that all the characters rely on, whom they trust and whom they tell their problems to. Ray will do the best he can to help the people around him, and that is why he is so much appreciated by the others. Ray accepts his luck and never questions it; it is just part of who he is, a gift that he treasures very much. He denies however that he only wins on the horses because he has a lot of luck. There is more to it than that:

People think I'm Lucky Johnson and it's all done by sixth sense, and sometimes it is, sometimes a flutter's flutter. But the reason why I'm quids-in, just about, with the nags, and Jack Dodds and Lenny Tate won't ever be, is because everyone wants to

believe in hunch bets, and it may look like luck but it's ninety-per-cent careful clerking, it's ninety-per-cent doing your sums. I aint worked in that insurance office for nothing. People think it's horses from heaven, answering your prayers, but it's learning how to beat the bookie, and if you want to beat the book-keeper, keep a book. (231)

It is however not always easy to be "Lucky," because sometimes it gets Ray into situations he would rather avoid. Jack asks him for example to place a bet so that Amy would never have to worry anymore. If his luck will abandon him just this time, it would cause Amy but also him a huge burden. "Lucky" is thus both weightless (when it is a ray of light) but it can also be very heavy if he has to carry the fate of others on his shoulders (Cooper 47).

Vince Dodds was born as Vincent Ian Pritchett ("V.I.P. Blame his parents" (42)). After a bomb attack he was the only Pritchett to survive the war. He was adopted by Jack and Amy and his name was changed into Vince Dodds. Since Jack refuses to acknowledge June as his daughter, he needs someone to fill the vacancy in the shop's name "Dodds and Son." Another name that is used to refer to Vince is Big Boy: this name is often used by Lenny. In this way there is a kind of analogy between Jack and Vince. Jack is often seen in terms of his size (Big Jack) and the same reference is now made to his "son" (Parker 93). Vince's identity is the most ambiguous one in this novel. He calls himself Vince Dodds, but he wants people to know that his real surname is Pritchett. His business goes by the name of Dodds Motors, and later Dodds Auto Showroom (68), but he also has a tattoo with the initials of the name he was born with: "I [Mandy] started to lick his tattoos. One of them said 'V.I.P.', with a fist and a thunderbolt. I said, 'It says "Dodds" on you kit-bag. So what are you going to be, Vince? What do you want to be?' And he said, 'Motors.'" (159)

Vince does not really know which name he wants, where he really belongs. The most important things in his life are motors and cars, and that is where his heart really belongs.

Vic as being short for Victor suggests victory, not only of death, but of love over despair. Vic realizes that his name can have an importance: "First name, Victor, good name in a war" (126). All the other characters desire newness, fresh starts, and the chance to become new people (Cooper 46). This is however not the case for Vic; he is truly happy with his life. Vic is the only one with a stable family life, he has a flourishing business and two sons who are ready to take over. At the end, Ray makes another allusion to Vic standing for victory. When they are walking toward the end of the pier at Margate, it is Vic who will reach it first:

“We move on, slipping back into our own separate spaces, Vic several yards ahead now. It looks like Vic’s going to win this race. Victor” (290).

Jack Dodds is always seen as a “real man,” a “big man” too. A lot of attention is paid to his masculinity, because in terms of the dominant ideology of gender, size is very important. The status that is implied by his stature is however undercut by his name. “Jack” can also be used to refer to a thing that is smaller than normal size. Throughout the novel, there are moments when Jack is reduced figuratively. The most radical form of reduction can be found on page 201, where Jack is compared to being nothing. This is however not so far-fetched since in slang “jack” means “nothing” (Wheeler 65). Amy also makes a comment on his small-mindedness, telling everyone that Jack was not a big man at all (Parker 94). Jack also gets reduced in the more literal sense of the word. Through the sections of especially Ray, Vince and Amy, we witness the steady disintegration of Jack’s body. He used to be a large man full of life, but suddenly he became dependent on the machinery of life-support, and “you had to look close to see if there was really a human life, a human component still there somewhere” (152). After his death, the only thing that is left of the loud and generous butcher are his ashes. He is then no longer referred to as a “big man,” but seen in the light of the “large instant-coffee jar” (3) in which these ashes are kept. His ashes are also said to fill only a pint glass. The final pun on Jack’s name that is presented by Emma Parker is that the men scatter Jack’s ashes in some kind of no-man’s land, and at the same time they relinquish, or “jack in,” the model of masculinity that is represented by him (Parker 98).

June Dodds is given the same name as the sixth month of the year, but while in springtime flowers start to grow, life and futurity cannot spring from June. In a way she can be compared to the aborted child of Vince and Sally; this child is the life that is “chucked” to make way for other lives, stories and wishes (Cooper 56).

Mandy Black is the only one who has entered the story under a truly false name. When she is picked up by a trucker, she wants to defend herself in a way and tells him her name is Judy Battersby. When she moves to Jack’s meat van, she admits that she has lied about her name. And from that moment on the new life began for Mandy Black. She felt at home with her new family and found a husband in Vince.

Amy is often referred to as “Ame,” which means soul. This emphasises the fact that she undertakes her own pilgrimage (Wheeler 64). She does not follow the men on their journey but continues visiting the person that means most to her: her daughter June. Even though she was married to Jack, she feels more connected to her mentally handicapped daughter.

According to Wendy Wheeler, “Dodds” is the only meaningful surname that Swift has chosen for his characters. She believes that this is a combination of “dads” and “Gods” (Wheeler 62). But I will come back to this religious connotation when I discuss the presence of religion in *Last Orders* and *As I Lay Dying*.

We also have to keep in mind the names of the horses on which Ray bets. I already explained that even though he is often referred to as “Lucky,” Ray claims that his bets have nothing to do with sheer luck. John Marsden does not agree with this; he believes that the names of the winning horses prove otherwise. The horse Ray chooses for Vince is called “Shady Lady,” a reference to Vince’s daughter Kath. Vince prostitutes his own daughter to the costumers, and especially Hussein, so that they will sooner be persuaded to buy a car. “Conquistador” is the horse that wins the race when Ray and Amy for the first time make love in the camper-van. For the most important bet he had to place, the one for Jack, he opted for a complete outsider called “Miracle Worker.”

Also in Faulkner’s novel some hidden meanings can be derived from the names of the characters, and this is especially the case for the children.

First of all, I would like to take a closer look at the last name shared by almost all characters in the novel: Bundren. This name is closely related to “burden,” which represents the misery, the weight of the world that the characters have to carry on their shoulders. William Faulkner himself makes clear which burden he puts on the shoulders of the Bundrens: “I took this family and subjected them to the two greatest catastrophes which man can suffer – flood and fire” (qtd. in Kartiganer 430). Life has not always been easy, with them working hard and still living in poverty. But according to Faye Friesen and Charles Peek, more attention has to be paid to the stem of the name, namely “bund,” which means league or association. In fulfilling Addie’s last wish, the Bundren family does form an association; they need to co-operate to make the journey and burial a success. It is impossible to perform the task alone, so it is important to work together. Addie has succeeded in uniting her family, even in death.

The fact that there are not many direct indications of the way Addie behaves towards her children does not mean that her voice does not have an important influence (Bocking 95). This becomes especially clear with the names she gives them. Ineke Bocking believes that the name of a child has important consequences for its further life. When you give a child a traditional name, it will grow up with a clear sense of its place in the world. When you give a

child a special name that has a distinct meaning in the world, this will become a factor in establishing its sense of self (Bockting 96).

In my opinion Cash is the only one who belongs to the first category. He is the oldest child and the only one who has a normal relationship with his father as well as his mother. He is responsible and does not behave in a peculiar way like his siblings. Addie adores her eldest son, and Cash shows the love he feels for his mother through his actions. He works very hard to build a coffin and he is irritated when it gets out of balance. When the coffin topples into the water, he risks his life to save it. He suffers a lot to bring his mother to her final resting-place.

Darl can be interpreted as being short for “Darling.” Addie must have loved him for just being her child, but the problems with Anse made everything rather complicated. After Cash’s birth, Addie started to feel a deep sense of hatred towards her husband. After a while, she just rejected him and when her second son, Darl, was born, her sense of outrage and betrayal was so great that she abandoned him as well (Millgate 37). Darl’s name does show however that there was love involved, even though this love will never be expressed in his further life.

Jewel is Addie’s true “jewel” and this is very clearly shown throughout the novel. Jewel is the result of a brief but passionate affair between Addie and minister Whitfield. Because of this Addie and Jewel have a very special bond; we can almost talk of an Oedipal relationship. They worship each other and exclude the others from their relationship.

Dewey Dell is the only girl in the family and yet Dewey is actually a man’s name (Bockting 124). She has short hair and is described by Cora Tull as a “tom-boy girl” (8). In her family, Dewey Dell is treated just like the boys. She has to do the same harsh work as her brothers, no exceptions are made. “Dew” can be seen as symbolizing youth and how quickly it vanishes. This is certainly true for Dewey Dell, whose youth ends with her pregnancy. She is forced to join the world of adulthood and leave the care-free period of her life behind. Dell, finally, is a young girl from a vagrant class (qtd. in Friesen and Peek). Even though the Bundrens are not really vagrants, they take on this role during their journey to Jefferson.

Vardaman is the youngest child of the family and may be named after James K. Vardaman, who was an American politician from the state of Mississippi. From 1904 to 1908, he was governor of Mississippi, and from 1913 to 1919, he even was a United States senator (qtd. in Vardaman). This can be interpreted as if Addie had high hopes for her last son. Vardaman also tends to turn to those around him for approval and for models of appropriate behaviour (Bockting 131). Friesen and Peek believe that an interesting aspect of Vardaman’s

name, is the first part “vard,” which appears to be the old Scottish form of “ward.” It could refer to an under-age orphan, and this is certainly a way in which Vardaman can be perceived. Since he does not really exist for Addie (“Then I gave him Vardaman to replace the child I had robbed him of” (176)), and Addie figuratively has killed his father Anse (“And then he died. He did not know he was dead” (174)), Vardaman has been left alone.

### 3. Roles

In the light of Swift’s imitation of Faulkner’s novel, it is interesting to look at the importance of impersonation in his novel, since the characters are all convinced that they play a role (or even multiple roles). According to David Malcolm, the characters are “all aware of the roles as roles although others might have been possible” (176). Next to the underlying meaning of the protagonists’ names, there are other elements that determine the different roles they play in the novels. Michael Zeitlin mentions that in William Faulkner’s fiction you discover what it feels like to be another human being (93), in other words, what it feels like to play another role. Vardaman states this very beautifully in one of his monologues: to be “an *is* different from my *is*” (56, italics in original). According to Faulkner, identifying with someone else is a repositioning of the self rather than transcendence (Zeitlin 93). This makes it possible for one person to fulfil more than one role.

William Faulkner makes some of his characters appear in more than one novel. This is the case for some of the narrators in *As I Lay Dying* that do not belong to the Bundren family. The interaction between them is part of the novel’s narrative power, but it also “contextualizes their own appearances in other novels, in different *roles*” (Robinson 130, my emphasis). The Tulls and Doctor Peabody also featured in *Sanctuary* and *Sartoris* respectively. In *Sanctuary*, Vernon and Cora Tull’s telephone is used by Ruby to report Tommy’s death. They are hardly mentioned in that novel, so in *As I Lay Dying* the readers are given a much richer picture of their character. Peabody is a somewhat comic character in *Sartoris*, and this has an influence on the way he is perceived in *As I Lay Dying*. The readers see him as a positive character, an enjoyable man who is genuinely concerned about his patients. The only one who does not share this opinion is Vardaman, who believes that Peabody is responsible for the death of his mother.

The Bundrens are supposed to take on the role of mourners during the days covering the time between Addie’s death and her burial. Anse is the only one for whom this role seems suitable, with his tragic face and the reciting of his grief (Vickery 52). For once in his life, he

is treated as someone important because of his severe loss. He now wants to show the people around him that he is able to take on such a responsibility.

It is especially in *Last Orders* that it is important to distinguish between the different roles performed by the characters, since it is remarkable how many roles are forced upon them, as if they have no free will. Their identities are determined and shaped by others, especially their fathers. The male protagonists in the novel are first and foremost known by their occupation. Because of the fact that they are what they do for a living, they are fixed in life and unable to renew themselves, which is symbolized by Vic's job as a mortician. Duty is equated with immobility in the novel (Rogers 182). They all perform their roles out of duty, even though those roles do not always fit the characters comfortably. According to Daniel Lea, there is "discordance between consciousness of performance and desire for an authentic being beneath that veneer" (8). This is for example obvious for Jack Dodds who has taken over the butcher shop because his father wanted him to do so. Instead of following his own heart and becoming a doctor, he yielded to his father's wishes. Because of this, Jack keeps on being defined and delimited in the light of his job, "provided with a part to play and then trapped in character for life" (Lea 174). Not only does Jack decide to take over the business, he takes over his father's role as oppressive patriarch as well. He wants to restrict Vince and make him become a butcher against his will, even though he knows how it feels to get bound to family tradition. Because he rejects June as his daughter, he needs someone else to fill the vacancy in "Dodds and Son," so he turns to Vince. Vince, however, refuses to obey Jack and in this way resists the immobility in which his stepfather finds himself. Rather Vince can be associated with the concept of motion: instead of doing what is expected of him, Vince decides to become a used-car salesman, starting his own business from scratch. He wants to be his own boss rather than being dependent on someone else's merits. This shows the main difference between the generations present in *Last Orders*: while the older generation to which Jack and his friends belong puts aside their dreams to keep the peace in the family, the younger generation (Vince, but also Susie and Sally) takes distance from their parents and is desperate for self-reliance, independence. Because of Vince's rejection of Jack's offer, and Jack's refusal to acknowledge his own family, the business "Dodds and Son" is doomed to stop existing. The butcher shop is thus one of the novel's immobile metaphors, just like the pub "Coach and Horses," they go nowhere.

Vic and Lenny also are part of a family business, but while for Lenny's fruit and vegetable stall the same fate lies ahead as "Dodds and Son" and will die a quiet death, Vic has successors for his undertaker business in his two sons. Vic is the only one who has a stable

family life in which a clash between generations is avoided. He is also the only one who was glad to take over his father business, he feels that he was born to do it. Vic believes that his trade is a good trade, which will never run short of custom: "It's not a trade many will choose. You have to be raised to it, father to son. It runs in a family, like death itself runs in the human race, and there's comfort in that. The passing on. It's not what you'd call a favoured occupation. But there's satisfaction and pride to it" (78).

Ray is also an exception. He is the only one who did not join the family business, at his father's explicit request. He works now in an insurance office instead of following in his father's footsteps as a scrap metal merchant. Still, Ray learnt to be a man by imitating his father, even though Ray's father always believed that his son was too intelligent to do a job which was physically very demanding:

It said 'FRANK JOHNSON – SITES CLEARED' up there on the board behind the seat on the cart, and sometimes he used to let me sit there with him just for the ride. But he said I wasn't cut out for scrap. He said I should get myself a job behind a desk, with my brains, and I never knew if it was on account of my build or my brains or on account of a desk job being a higher calling anyway, to his mind. So that if I'd been born all muscle, it wouldn't have made no difference, he still wouldn't have let me unload the cart (37).

He is the only character whose occupation is not mentioned very often as being part of his personality. His role is especially limited to that of main narrator; he is presented as the one who keeps the other men together and brings coherence to the story as well. Instead of being seen in the light of his occupation, Ray is often considered in the role of betting-man, on the basis of his instincts.

All men share some roles that are the same, for example the role of father, soldier, and that of drinking companion. These roles are also performed by Jack, but Ray believes that it is only when Jack is in hospital that he sees an "authentic version" of him (Lea 175). This is, however, a mistake, since Jack has fallen even deeper into misery. He does not only feel guilty now, he also has to take action from his deathbed to make sure that his wife will not become the victim of his debts. Amy is however aware of her husband's role-playing and asks Ray the question: "You think Jack knows who he is?" (Lea 175).

Amy herself describes her principal role in her last section as that of a visitor, in relation to June as well as to Jack. Heike Hartung-Brückner believes that Amy "realizes the fossilizing

aspects of the pattern of her habitual visits to June, when she compares the roles into which she and her husband had settled after their antagonistic choices”:

I chose June not him. I watched him set solid into Jack Dodds the butcher, Jack Dodds, high-class butcher, have a bit of mince, missis, have a bit of chuck, because he couldn't choose June too, couldn't choose what was his, it was all he had to do, and I thought I'm the one who can still change. I did, once. But when he looked at me then, like he was looking at someone I wasn't, I knew I was stuck in a mould of my own. Of this woman who sits every Monday and Thursday afternoon on a number 44 bus. Even a week after her husband has died. (229)

She is so fixed in her role of visiting her daughter twice a week that she even refuses to join the men on their journey to fulfil the last wish of her own husband. She wants to make her own journey because she believes that “[t]he living come first, even the living who were as good as dead to him, so it'd be all one now, all the same, in his book” (228). In this last section, she also says goodbye to Jack and June, and consequently to her role as a visitor. She believes it is time to focus on her own life for a change, and take on a new role that is not in function of someone else. After Jack's death, Amy realizes that “the duty to perform depends on nothing but one's free will, because none will know what is or is not done for them: ‘If she won't be the wiser, he won't either’ (228)” (Pedot 68). Amy thus believes that you only have to do the things you really want to do, not because you feel morally obliged to do so. She has always visited June with a lot of devotion, but since June does not make any improvement whatsoever, Amy believes it is no longer useful to continue her two weekly visits. Amy makes her own decisions from now on, even though others believe she is not fulfilling her duty.

Both authors recount events that take place in a male-dominated society, but by giving the male protagonists feminine qualities, and the women a more prominent voice, masculinity has been attacked. Because of the fact that Faulkner chooses a dominant woman as “main protagonist,” and Swift includes two important female voices in his novel, the patriarchal society that is commonly accepted becomes reduced. The feminine connotations or reducing content of a number of masculine names only attributes to this.

## Chapter 5: Religion

In this fifth chapter, I will discuss the presence of religion in *As I Lay Dying* and *Last Orders*. However, both writers make use of this theme in other novels as well, so it is useful to see whether or not religion is treated in a different way depending on the novel you are reading. To determine how dominant this theme is, I will among other things look at the way in which some characters fulfil the role of a Christ-figure. In *As I Lay Dying*, this role is attributed to Darl; in *Last Orders*, Ray is the Messianistic figure. In Faulkner's novel, religion is very dominant because of the presence of Cora Tull. Her belief in God is so strong that it becomes ridiculed. She seems oblivious of the world around her and attributes every single event to the omnipotence of God. Graham Swift uses a different approach in *Last Orders*: he does not give mention of any kind of religion at all. He rather makes allusions to the idea that "someone" is watching over the characters.

William Faulkner seems to have a special interest in the theme of religion, which becomes especially apparent in the middle part of his literary career. In order to take a closer look at this theme, I will refer in this chapter to the novels *Light in August* (1932), *Absalom Absalom!* (1936), *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* (1939), *Go Down, Moses* (1942), *A Fable* (1954), and, last but not least, *As I Lay Dying* (1930). According to Moonsu Shin, Faulkner's novels are a succession of rewritings; he states that *As I Lay Dying* rewrites *The Sound and the Fury*; *Requiem for a Nun*; *Sanctuary*; *Go Down, Moses*; *Absalom Absalom!*; *The Hamlet*; and *Father Abraham*. Patrick O'Donnell believes that Faulkner's rewritings show the repetition of the tragic personal pasts of the people that inhabit the Yoknapatawpha County. These repetitions recur through the generations of the Sutpens, Compsons, and the Sartoris in a landscape that is cursed by slavery and the Civil War (O'Donnell 33). Because of this repetition of the characters' history, I believe it is also important to discuss the way in which Faulkner approaches the theme of religion throughout his oeuvre.

Richard B. Hauck lays out his strategy for finding clues that reveal the presence of religion in a particular novel. The first thing you have to do is to look for characters whose initials are J.C., by analogy with Jesus Christ (Hauck 498). The only character in Faulkner's work who fits this requirement is Joe Christmas, one of the protagonists in *Light in August* who even has Christ incorporated in his last name. Other aspects in which he resembles Christ are his age,

his mysterious birth, and his death scene. Joe is betrayed by Lucas Burch, who thus fulfils the role of Judas (Malin 68-69). The Christ figure has to be “symbolically crucified at the age of thirty-three by a group of antagonists” (Hauck 498). This happens to Joe Christmas, who is abandoned by the white community, and receives five gunshot wounds in the form of a quincunx, which will eventually lead to his death. At the moment of this crucifixion, a rebirth is taking place as Lena Grove gives birth to her child. The child is confused by Mrs. Hines with her own grandson Joey, which links Joe’s death to the idea of rebirth. Hauck warns, however, that it is dangerous to see “Joe Christmas as a consistent and seriously intended imitation of Christ” (502). Unlike Christ, Joe is not a preacher, and there is evidence that he killed Joanna Burden. Faulkner also causes doubt concerning Joe Christmas’ actual age. He writes that Christmas is thirty years old, but he also states that fifteen years before his death he was eighteen. Also the fact that Joe is not at all a Saviour leads to Hauck’s conclusion that if Joe resembles Jesus Christ, it is as an “ironic” and “grotesque” symbol of a “Christianity that has itself become twisted” (502-03). Other Christ figures can be found in the novels *A Fable* and *As I Lay Dying*. In *A Fable*, the Corporal can be equated with Jesus Christ, since he is obliged to undergo the same experiences (Malin 69). The Corporal and his squad of twelve men (by analogy with the twelve Apostles) were brought to judgement because they were advocating peace and good will. This novel “in essential characterization and narrative detail parallels the story of the Passion and the Crucifixion” (Kohler 472). The novel shows even a “point-by-point correspondence with the New Testament account” in the time scheme dealing with the Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection. (Kohler 472). In *As I Lay Dying*, the most important religious symbol is the fish caught by Vardaman. Jason Peters mentions that the early Christians believed that there was a link between their religion and the fish symbol. Fish also referred to Eucharist and Baptism which are rituals of healing and cleansing (Peters 49).

In this novel, two protagonists combine qualities to become an imitation of Christ, namely Jewel and Cash. This representation is a rather comic one, which does not lead to “a consistent portrayal of moral behaviour but an exercise in pessimistic irony” (Hauck 504). When you put those two characters together, their initials will show the consonants Hauck encourages the reader to look for: J.C. These two consonants bring together Jewel’s power and sacrifice and Cash’s ability, perception, and acceptance (Hauck 504). The character that shows most resemblances to Christ is Jewel Bundren, first and foremost because of Addie’s prediction that he will save her from flood and fire. He also makes the greatest sacrifice he can make to bury his mother: he sells his horse. Like Christ, he is not the offspring of a

worldly marriage; his father is an emissary of God. He was, however, not conceived by the Holy Ghost, but is the result of a brief, yet passionate affair between his mother and Minister Whitfield. The most crucial differences, however, are that he is the instrument of revenge rather than forgiveness, and that he becomes Darl's betrayer instead of a saviour (Hauck 504). He is the one who overpowers Darl so that the latter can be put on the train to the mental institution in Jackson. Cash Bundren also has some physical and psychological qualities in common with Christ. The physical characteristic is the most obvious one: after he has fallen from the wagon and has to move on with a broken leg, Cash is laid down on his mother's coffin in the form of a crux, resembling Christ's suffering on the cross. He also possesses the same perceptiveness as Christ, offering solutions for all kinds of problems. The solutions, however, differ in essence. While Christ advocates faith as the solution to everything, Cash turns to pragmatism (Hauck 503). Characteristic of pragmatism is the reliance on facts and the discovery of truth through science and experience. In *As I Lay Dying*, Cash is very often described in connection to his tools, which shows that he tends to solve problems by gaining control over the world around him. He looks for practical solutions, rather than believing in a higher spirit who will take care of you as long as you act piously. The clearest example of this is that his answer to his mother's death, his way of coming to terms with it, is building a perfect coffin for her. It is the last thing he can do for her before she is buried, and he takes his task seriously. This is obvious in his obsession with balance; he is afraid that the coffin might fall, and to Cash that would mean that he is a failure, not fit for being a carpenter.

Even though Jewel and Cash embody Christ-like qualities, eventually they help carry out Addie's revenge in bringing her all the way to Jefferson, and thus become "powers of damnation" rather than salvation (Hauck 504). They serve Faulkner's intention of presenting the failure of Christianity. He is determined to expose the hypocrisy that he associates with people who devote their lives to Christianity.

Actually, Hauck claims, the only true Christ-like figure in the novel is Darl Bundren (504). Addie states that Jewel is the one who will save her from water and fire, and this turns out to be true, but it is Darl who undertakes action to save her from damnation. From one of his conversations with Vardaman, it becomes clear that he realizes that Addie is neither dead nor alive as long as her body will continue to rot above the ground;

'Hear?' Darl says. 'Put your ear close.'

I [Vardaman] put my ear close and I can hear her. Only I cant tell what she is saying.

'What is she saying, Darl?' I say. 'Who is she talking to?'

‘She’s talking to God,’ Darl says. ‘She is calling on Him to help her.’

‘What does she want Him to do?’ I say.

‘She wants Him to hide her away from the sight of man,’ Darl says.

‘Why does she want to hide her away from the sight of man, Darl?’

‘So she can lay down her life,’ Darl says. (214-215)

It is crucial for Addie that the humiliation comes to an end; she has been the object of negative attention for far too long. Ironically enough, it is the one who shows the most moral judgement that is sent to a mental institution. Addie wanted to take vengeance on the entire family, and especially Anse, but in the end it is only the one who wanted to spare her from further damnation that is punished.

Faulkner not only falls back on the figure of Christ in his novels, he also refers to entire stories taken from the Old and New Testament. Taking other texts as a kind of blueprint for your own work is referred to with the concept of “intertextuality.” I will elaborate on this literary technique in the following chapter, but I believe it is more useful to discuss the novel’s relation to biblical texts in this chapter.

Throughout Faulkner’s work, some clear references to the Bible can be found, especially in *Absalom Absalom!*, *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*, and *Go Down, Moses*. The connections already become clear through the titles of the novels.

*Absalom Absalom!*, for instance, recalls the biblical story of King David and his son Absalom. Absalom rebels against his father who at the time ruled over the Kingdom of Israel. Absalom was eventually killed by General Joab, who served his father. Faulkner’s novel *Absalom Absalom!* deals with the rise and fall of Thomas Sutpen, a plantation owner in Mississippi. He learns that his daughter Judith has a relationship with Charles Bon, a fellow student of his son Henry. Thomas realizes, however, that Charles is his son out of a previous marriage, and demands that Charles and Judith end their affair. In the end, Charles is killed by Henry, who is jealous because his sister has chosen Charles over him. This fratricide also recalls the fact that Absalom murdered his brother because he raped their sister.

Another novel with an apparent religiously inspired title is *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*. This title is drawn from the 137th Psalm. The following abstract is taken from the King James translation, which Catherine Gunther Kodat believes Faulkner knew best:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion,  
We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that

Wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion!

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I

prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase  
it, rase it even to the foundations thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth  
thee as thou hast served us.

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones (Kodat 73-  
74).

Also *Go Down, Moses* is based on a story from the Bible. The title obviously refers to Moses, but it has to be read a little differently:

O Go Down, Moses  
Away down to Egypt's land,  
And tell King Pharaoh  
To let my people go!

To understand these lines in the context of Faulkner's background and slavery in general, Egypt has to be read as the South; Pharaoh as the owning class; Jews as Blacks, and exodus as Great Migration (Godden 24). Both *Absalom Absalom!* and *Go Down, Moses* recount the story of "a white protagonist who rejects his heritage and who enacts a failed attempt to create a new, 'original' self that can live beyond or outside of cultural and temporal boundaries" (O'Donnell 35). Here we can witness problems with identity and the failure to create a new personality. *Go Down, Moses* resembles *Absalom Absalom!* in many respects and, as I have in the beginning of this chapter, this seems to be characteristic of Faulkner's fiction.

To Richard Hauck, *As I Lay Dying* is a "travesty" in that it combines a serious subject (death and burial) with a comic structure and style (503). This comic sense is also apparent in the way in which religion is represented. The character that deserves special attention here is

Cora Tull, who is always described in connection to her obsessive belief in God. Her self-righteousness becomes already clear from the very first chapter that she narrates in the beginning of *As I Lay Dying*. She and her daughter Kate had to bake some cakes for Miss Lawington, a rich town lady. When the cakes were finally finished, Miss Lawington refused to take them. Kate thinks that this is really inappropriate and despises the fact that you can always change your mind, as long as you have enough money. Cora reacts differently and believes it is not up to her to give an opinion about rich people, because her God will; He who “can see into the heart” (7). Cora’s piety receives so much emphasis that it cannot be ignored, but is easily ridiculed. She tries so hard to relate everything to God that she seems to lose touch with reality, but also her credibility as a narrator. The most obvious example, which I already touched upon earlier, concerns the fact that she believes that Addie preferred Darl to Jewel. From the sections of the other narrators, and especially the one told by Addie, we learn that this is not true at all. Another example deals with Anse, whom she seems to detest very much. When her husband Vernon Tull tells her that the wagon the Bundrens were crossing the river with had turned over into the water, and that Anse was not on it while it happened, she says that “[i]f he had been a man, he would a been there instead of making his sons do what he dursn’t” (153). On the other hand, she also states that it was not because of the log that the wagon toppled, but because it was the will of God. Vernon confronts her with this contradiction, “[o]ne breath you say they was daring the hand of God to try it, and the next breath you jump on Anse because he wasn’t with them” (153). However, she only really starts to lose her wits in her final section, recalling one of her conversations with Addie, which precedes the only section narrated by the deceased woman. In Cora’s last chapter, she seems to be acting as one of the evangelists, declaring that everything that He does is done with a reason and that He is the saviour of mankind.

Vernon Tull also believes in God, but he is not so fanatic, or even obsessed, as his wife. He believes that Cora has the right to be so pious and to trust in God, and he reckons that “if there’s ere a man or woman anywhere that He could turn it all over to and go away with His mind at rest, it would be Cora” (73-74). Vernon also thinks that his wife “would make a few changes, no matter how He was running it,” and these changes “would be for man’s good” (74). She is thus the ideal Christian, but Vernon’s hypothesis that Cora would change God’s creation, implies that she even sees herself in a higher position than God himself. Vernon loves his wife and respects her devotion to the Lord, but he also tries to temper her a little since she tends to exaggerate. She believes, for example, that Darl was touched by God himself, and she could not accept that Addie was more devoted to one of her

other sons: Jewel. Addie literally states that Jewel will be her cross and salvation, saving her from flood and fire. When Cora realizes that Addie means Jewel and not God, she is horrified that Addie puts her trust in that boy rather than in the Lord. In this part of the novel, her last section, Cora completely loses track of reality and tries to persuade Addie to turn to God again:

I realised that out of the vanity of her heart that she had spoken sacrilege. And I went down on my knees right there. I begged her to kneel and open her heart and cast from it the devil of vanity and cast herself upon the mercy of the Lord. But she wouldn't. she just sat there, lost in her vanity and pride, that had closed her heart to God and set that selfish mortal boy in His place. Kneeling there I prayed for her. I prayed for that poor blind woman as I had never prayed for me and mine. (168)

Addie's only chapter is placed between that of Cora and the one told by Minister Whitfield. Addie's sense of sin and punishment could not be further removed from the opinions of Cora and Whitfield.

Addie's character could thus not be more opposed to that of Cora. She plays her own God in that she is aware of her sins and the punishments that follow from them. Cora, however, feels that Addie does not realize how the final judgement really works. It is up to God to decide then what your sins exactly were, and which punishments should follow from these sins. In her section, Addie also refers to the moment when Cora fell on her knees and prayed for her: "One day I was talking to Cora. She prayed for me because she believed I was blind to sin, wanting me to kneel and pray too, because people to whom sin is just a matter of words, to them salvation is just words too" (176). Salvation was however not just a word to Addie. She truly believed that Jewel would be her saviour, and this prediction turns out to be right; he does not let her down.

Addie also differs greatly from the man she had an affair with, Minister Whitfield. While Addie is fully aware of her sin and admits it, Whitfield keeps on hanging on to his status of untouchable holy man, helper of God. In his section succeeding the one by Addie, he tells that he had to fight with Satan and became the victor. He realizes the importance of his sin now and wants to confess it to Anse. When he learns that Tull's bridge is gone, he believes that God is putting him to the test by confronting him with difficulties and dangers. Yet, the Lord has helped him to overcome them all, which to Whitfield is a sign that He has not abandoned him and in this way does not condemn his sin. Instead of seeing Whitfield as

some kind of hero, this passage has a ridiculous effect on the reader because of the place it is given in the novel. This “incredible and spiritual journey” closely follows the part where the Bundrens are trying to cross the river with their wagon and Addie’s coffin, which even topples into the water. In this horrible flood, Cash gets injured and he is forced to continue the journey with a broken leg. When we compare Whitfield’s description of himself as some kind of hero with the Bundrens’ stoic acceptance of their enduring journey, we can only think of him as a ridiculous character who believes he is chosen and protected by God.

Charles Palliser remarks that with Whitfield and Anse the assumption can be found that God’s purpose coincides with the speaker’s own advantage (621). For Whitfield this becomes already clear from what I have discussed earlier: he attributes the fact that he crossed the river safely to God’s divine intervention: “It was His hand that bore me safely above the flood, that fended from me the dangers of the waters” (178). Anse’s main interest is of a completely different nature: he wants to go to Jefferson to purchase new teeth. Darl notes in his monologue after Addie’s death the egoistic behaviour that lies behind his father’s apparent piety: “Pa breathes with a quiet, rasping sound, mouthing the snuff against his gums. ‘God’s will be done,’ he says. ‘Now I can get them teeth’” (52). Cora also is guilty of referring too frequently to Providence, but it does not directly involve her own interests (Palliser 622). She is obsessed with reducing everything to a divine will and does not believe in coincidence, for example the log that had caused the wagon to sink: “‘Log, fiddlesticks,’ Cora said. ‘It was the hand of God’” (153).

There is one important question in the novel, however, that remains unresolved: What is actually responsible for the funeral journey? Is it really Addie’s will and the promise she extorted from her husband? Or are we dealing here with the dictates of Providence? Or rather the trivial and egoistic reasons of the majority of the members of the family? The origins of the journey are rather complex and ambiguous, and they will remain this way.

William Faulkner clearly makes fun of the hypocrisy of religion in *As I Lay Dying*. The readers of this novel are inclined not to take the presence of religion seriously because it is so exaggerated. The critical and satirical overtone that Faulkner uses to attack the hypocrisy only attributes to this.

Contrary to *As I Lay Dying*, *Last Orders* should be seen as a novel with a “subtly religious tone” (Cooper 40). Cooper believes that throughout Swift’s work we can see a kind of contrast between faith and rationality: “The importance of the miraculous to Swift’s vision of

modern life can hardly be overstated. His fiction is preoccupied with the limits of rationality – the failures of human knowledge – and the mysterious possibilities of intuition and spiritual insight. Rationality and faith debate with each other as alternate ways of knowing in Swift’s work.” (36). Graham Swift deals with religion in a more spiritual way than Faulkner as is evident from the fact that the “men seek something they can believe in with an unquestioning absolutism” (Lea 13). This “something” is however not God, because the four men do not quite know whether or not there is “a metaphysical endurance of identity,” or “any God or plan to the universe” (Malcolm 182). The characters express their doubt as to whether or not Jack realizes what is happening on the journey to Margate. At other moments in the novel, the characters have the feeling that they are being watched by inanimate objects, especially buildings. Their sense of being the object of a gaze will be the major part of this analysis dealing with the way in which Graham Swift approaches the theme of religion in his novel.

The majority of the characters believes that Jack is dead and that he cannot see and control them, so they do not really care about fulfilling his last wish. The belief, however, that Jack or some “spirit” is watching over them, is very much present in Vince and Ray. Lenny takes on a completely opposite position and is rather cynical, making fun of those who believe in such spiritual nonsense. He is too realistic to believe there is more to life than this.

There is one character in the novel who in a way grew up being surrounded by dead people: Vic. His father was a mortician, and Vic has taken over the business. As a mortician, Vic knows how to take care of dead people. He believes that the dead deserve as much respect as the living, and he makes that known in his sections: “I looked at my watch: nigh on three. But the superintendent could wait. I’d waited for him. Though it’s a serious transaction, release of the body. You need the signature and the verification and the date and time, and you shouldn’t be late for the dead, just because they’re dead. One of my rules. Don’t dilly-dally with the deceased” (217).

Vic is also the one to suggest a detour to Chatham Memorial to pay tribute to the dead. It is not fair to remember only Jack, he feels, while there were hundreds and thousands of other men who were killed in battle and thus also deserve their respect.

As a professional mortician, but also as Jack’s friend, Vic wants to warn everyone that Jack is not special now that he is dead: “He’s just one of the many now. In life there are differences, you make distinctions, it’s the back seat for me from now on. But the dead are the dead, I’ve watched them, they’re equal” (143). This makes it easier for him to advise Amy whether or not to fulfil Jack’s last wish: “Amy, if you want to do it, do it. If you want me to

do it, I'll do it. I'll see it doesn't add too much on the bill. But one thing's certain...if you don't do it, Jack won't ever know" (13).

The belief that someone or something is watching over them plays especially a role in the life of both Vince and Ray. As Ray expresses this in one of his sections, that it is "not me seeing the world but the world seeing me" (283). Both men have the feeling that Jack is checking up on them and they attribute characteristics of living being to objects. In the very beginning of the novel, it becomes already clear that they are not the only ones who have this feeling. Bernie, the bartender, looks and talks to the jar in which Jack's ashes are kept, as if it might start a conversation. "That's Jack?" he says, leaning closer, as if the jar might answer back, it might say, "Hello Bernie" (10). According to Ray, Vince also believes that things can come to life, and in his case it is the obelisk at Chatham. Ray notices that "Vince looks up at the obelisk, all intent, as if it might do something sudden and he don't want to takes his eyes off it, as if he's glad he don't have to look at me" (134). Vince is also the only one who admits that he believes that the dead are able to see him:

Lenny says, 'He can't hear nothing, no more than he can see. Unless you believe Big Boy here.' . . . We drive on in silence, though it feels like Vince is working up to saying something. He keeps looking at the box on his jacket. At last he lifts his head and tilts it as though to say he aint talking to anyone in particular but if he is, it's Lenny. There's an odd pitch to his voice. He says, 'I used to think they could see me. I used to think, I couldn't see them but they could see me.' (49-50)

Vince is looking for some affirmation from the other men, because he wants to know whether or not it is possible that Jack is aware of what they are doing:

Vic says, 'Well it's still a mystery. Why Margate?'

Lenny says, 'I reckon it was a try-on, just to see if we'd do it.'

Vince half turns in his seat. 'So you think he does know? You think he can see us?'

Lenny blinks and pauses a moment. He looks at me, then at Vic as if he needs some of the refereeing.

'Manner of speaking, Vincey, manner of speaking. Course he can't see us. He can't see nothing.'

Vic's hands move a little over the box.

Then Lenny chuckles. ‘Mind you, Big Boy, if he can’t see us, if he can’t see nothing, why d’you go and borrow a Merc?’ (31)

Lenny clearly does not have the same opinion on the matter as Vince, and uses any opportunity to make fun of him. He has an overly matter-of-fact view on the journey he and his friends are undertaking. His reason for fulfilling Jack’s wish and scattering his ashes at Margate is one of personal duty. Lenny feels obliged because of his daughter Sally, who, just like Jack, has become an absence in his life: “The only reason I'm here, if you don't count being his regular boozing partner for close on forty years, is because of Sally. Is because Jack took her to the seaside when we couldn't take her ourselves. It was a kindness, one of the few that girl ever got. And now I'm taking Jack. It's a question of duty” (132).

Like Vince, Ray also has the feeling that Jack is keeping an eye on them. An example of this can be found in Ray’s section after the fight at Wick’s Farm when he gives authority to the urn in which Jack’s ashes are kept:

Vince is carrying the jar. He’s holding it extra tight and careful. It’s like the reason we’re out here in this field is because the jar’s gone and made a bolt or it and we’ve had to run after it and catch it. It’s all the jar’s fault. Except we know it aint, it’s the other way round. It’s all our fault. Fighting over a man’s ashes. And the jar’s sitting there in Vince’s hand like it’s shaking its head at us all, like Jack’s inside there peeping out and sighing over us, with a bit of him left behind in the field for the sheep to trample on. He didn’t expect this, he didn’t expect this at all (180).

I believe that the best example of a personification of an object can be traced back to the greatness of Canterbury Cathedral, which is described by Ray as follows:

We turn another corner and there’s an old arch and we go through it and suddenly there’s nothing in front of us except the cathedral itself, and a few bits of chained-off lawn and cobbles and people walking. It’s a big building, long and tall, but it’s like it hasn’t stretched up yet to its full length, it’s still growing. It makes the cathedral at Rochester look like any old church and it makes you feel sort of cheap and titchy like it’s looking down at you, saying, I’m Canterbury Cathedral, who the hell are you? (194)

When the men leave the cathedral, Ray still has the feeling that he is being watched: “I can feel the cathedral behind me, looking at me” (225). Compared to the cathedral, an impressive building that dominates the landscape, the men feel humbled and small. A feeling of alienation also arises because of the enormity of history that accompanies the literal greatness of Canterbury Cathedral (Lea 168). So they are not really impressed by the sacred surroundings, but are rather intimidated by the importance of history that the cathedral represents. This also becomes apparent in Vince’s devotion to the guidebook he has bought. His interest shows an “adumbration of the social signification of nation’s most resonant site of Christian worship as a series of disconnected, decontextualised and dehumanised data” (Lea 169). Because of the fact that Vince does not open himself up to the religious values of the Catholic Church, he focuses on things he can understand and which he can look up in a booklet: knowledge, facts dealing with the history and architecture of the building.

By visiting Canterbury Cathedral and the Naval memorial, the men intended to reconnect to traditional structures of society, because they “are haunted by monolithic ideas of church, nation, and family that they have not been able to live up to, and they find it difficult to orient themselves in a context where traditional markers have lost their cultural currency” (MacLeod 149). Yet, instead of being comforted by the holy environment of the Cathedral, they experience a sense of alienation. Ray realizes that “you’re supposed to gaze up and think it’s amazing and feel yourself being raised up too, and I’m gazing, I’m peering hard, but I can’t see it, I can’t make it out. The next world” (207). So, instead of getting into contact with the holy atmosphere in the cathedral that should enrich them, they feel humbled and small. MacLeod believes that the same thing is true for the memorial in Chatham. He thinks that “[r]ather than serving as a monument to a collective cultural memory, it serves as a humiliating reminder of what they feel have been lost” (152). Like the Cathedral, the memorial thus also has “a littling effect” (134).

Throughout the novel, the sacred (cathedral) and the profane (pub) are juxtaposed, and this is already present in the title. “Last Orders” refers to the last round of drinks in a pub, but also to the last wishes. Because of this, Daniel Lea defines *Last Orders* as an “areligious religious novel” (166). Contrary to MacLeod, Lea believes that Canterbury and its cathedral mark an important cathartic moment in the pilgrimage, because this episode follows the fight between Lenny and Vince over what to do with the ashes: spread them all at Margate as Jack has ordained, or scatter already a little at Wick’s Farm which was a significant place in the life of both Jack and Vince. The detour to Canterbury serves to bring the men back together and makes them realize that they lost track of the purpose of their journey. They have to focus

again on the “unifying recognition of their objective and collective responsibility” (Lea 168). The four men have made a promise to themselves to bring Jack’s ashes to Margate, and now that they have come so far, they have to finish it. Just as Chaucer did in *The Canterbury Tales*, Swift creates the effect of a pilgrimage to emphasize the collective effort that is needed to reach the goal, but also to stress possible problems in human relationships, as well as a search for understanding, and, eventually, even the grace of God (Cooper 36). According to Cooper, the cathedral should be seen a “gateway to another world, a spiritual portal” (36). In a way they are cured from all negative aspects that were surfacing during the journey, so they are ready to make a fresh start. This is contrasted to the other monument they visited, the Chatham Memorial, which is much more secular. It is a monument erected to remember all those who suffered, which is not a spiritual or comforting thought at all.

The characters do not really feel at home in the cathedral, and they do not feel the need to think their lives over in this sacred building. They rather create their own space where they feel comfortable and at ease to meditate on life or just have a little privacy. A central place to them, where the men can connect to Jack, is the pub. The pub and drinking beer gives them a more religious feeling than any church in the country, not even Canterbury Cathedral. Lewis MacLeod mentions this in his article: “While the Cathedral reminds them of the distance between them and conventional religious practices, the pub welcomes them and offers procedures they can feel and understand” (158). According to MacLeod, the Eucharistic obligation is to do something in memory of someone else (159). Consequently, the best way to remember Jack, to do something for him, is something they have done almost their entire lives: drinking beer together. So unlike the monuments they have visited along the way, the pub has a unifying effect.

According to Cooper, another crucial place in *Last Orders* is the lavatory, the “Gents.” It is a place in which distinctions between people disappear, everybody is equal in a lavatory. When the men take a break along the way, they tend to stop at a pub in which a character brings a visit to the “Gents.” The lavatory is a kind of church offering “emotional as well as physical relief” (Cooper 54). At Rochester, it is Ray who brings a visit to the Gents, in which he weeps thinking about his life:

I [Ray] say, ‘I’ve got to take a leak.’

But it’s not just to take a leak. I find the Gents and I unzip, then I feel my eyes go hot and gluey, so I’m leaking at both ends. It’s cold and damp and tangy in the Gents. . . .

There’s always a frosted quarter-light, chinked open, with a view of the back end of

somewhere, innyards, alleyways, with some little peephole out on life. Racecourse towns. It's when you stand up to piss you can tell how pissed you are. (111-112)

When Lenny some moments later goes to the Gents, Ray wonders if he is going to do some weeping too. Sometimes the men need some time to themselves, to get the emotions out before they continue the journey. This is also true for Vince, who stays back for a while after visiting the obelisk at Chatham:

Where the path starts to slope down towards the trees Vince suddenly comes to a halt and we all shuffle up behind him, like he's held up a hand. Our faces are all bright in the sunshine. He steps off the path on to the grass. He says, 'I'll catch you up, you all go on. I'll catch you up down there.' . . . He walks off across the grass, he don't seem to mind about his smart suit and shoes, and I see him stop on the edge of the hill and look at the view like Vic looking at the names. . . . We wait about a minute. Then we see him coming town the path, carrying the bag. It seems he's as keen as we are now to be pressing on, because he's walking fast, slipping now and then on the mud. His face is all fixed and distant as he comes towards us, like he wishes we weren't around. I'd say he's done some blobbing too. We all need our moment. (139-40)

It is remarkable that even though none of the characters has a clear religious faith and they all have a rather sceptical attitude towards the afterlife, they all need a place where they can perform a kind of ritual to straighten things out.

In agreeing to fulfil Jack's last wish, the men undertake a journey that resembles a religious pilgrimage, moving the body (or ashes, in the case of *Last Orders*) in a public procession to a place that had an emotional meaning for the deceased one (Smolarski, qtd. in MacLeod 148). This is, however, even more the case for the Bundrens; their journey becomes a lot more public since it lasts longer and because of the rotting corpse that start to smell. The Bundrens proceed slowly to Jefferson, while Vince, Ray, Lenny, and Vic advance to Margate, a place which was of great importance to Jack. To him, Margate was some kind of magical place, a place where he "could put the clock back and start off again where it all stopped" (229). Because of this, Margate seems to be something holy. When the four men arrive in Margate, however, they see nothing but "huge great slabs of stone laid as flags, all pocked and pitted and puddly, and a low granite parapet, like kerbstones, half broken away, and the wind and the rain and the spray" (292). Also the jetty is rather disappointing; it turns out to be "a

rusty mass of old iron-work sticking up out of the water about three hundred yards out, the waves surging around it, like what's left of a fallen-in bridge" (292). Jack's idea of the place where he wants his ashes to be scattered, differs greatly from Jefferson, where Addie wants to be buried. Addie wants to be brought to that town because members of her family are buried there. So while Margate is associated with magic and renewal (in the eyes of Jack at least), Jefferson is connected to death. Addie has sent her relatives to this place out of vengeance; Jack's last wish, on the other hand, allows the four men to enrich themselves and see the error of their ways.

Ray, Vince, Lenny, and Vic are involved in a ritual that has an apparent Christian ground, yet there is something unusual in the way they perform it (MacLeod 148). Instead of moving on in a quiet and peaceful manner, they stop in pubs and monuments, and are even confronted with a physical fight. There is thus a contrast between the religious connotation of the journey and the way in which it is executed. Also the moment when they are standing at the end of the pier shows a contrast. There is something melancholic about the scattering of the ashes, but on the other hand, the men are afraid that some ashes will stick to their wet hands:

Lenny dips in first and takes out a handful, sifts of it slipping through his fingers, and Vic says, 'Keep your hands as dry as you can,' wiping his own hands on a handkerchief, and I realize what he means. It's so that Jack don't stick to us, it's so we don't get Jack stuck to our hands. But I haven't got no handkerchief, I aint never thought. Today of all days, I never thought about no handkerchief. (293)

When the jar slowly starts to empty, the moment that the jar has to be held upside down emerges. They have to turn it around and "bang it like you do when you get to the bottom of a box of cornflakes" (294). It comes across as a very disrespectful thing to do, but it is not something they can avoid.

According to Pamela Cooper, some of the characters in *Last Orders* can be compared to characters in the Bible. She believes that Margate has to be read as the garden of Eden, the paradise where Adam and Eve lived. Consequently, these roles are fulfilled by Jack and Amy. I already referred to the fact that Margate was the place where Jack and Amy found happiness, but also the place where they lost it, because their love was not strong enough to survive Amy's accidental pregnancy, and marriage (Cooper 34). Their fate thus can be seen

by analogy with Adam and Eve's expulsion from paradise. Cooper also believes that the fight between Vince and Lenny in the Garden of England should be interpreted as "a version of the aftermath of humanity's fall from grace in the garden of Eden – a fall effected through curiosity and sexuality in a gloriously pastoral setting" (34). Lenny and Vince are compared to the brothers Cain and Abel, the children of Adam and Eve. Cain killed his brother because God had only accepted the offer of the latter. This resembles the fight between Vince and Lenny at Wick's Farm, with the only difference that this one does not end in death. Lenny is jealous of Vince because the latter feels he has the right to scatter some of Jack's ashes here instead of Margate. Lenny believes that Vince is acting as a "toe-rag," who "aint got no prior claim" (145). According to Lenny, Vince "aint got no special rights," because "he aint kin" (146).

The most important religiously inspired figure in this novel is Ray, who acts like some kind of Messiah in bringing fortune to the world. Because of his luck, Ray gains prominence as a person who is capable of performing miracles (Cooper 47). A reference to this can be found in the name of the horse that has to win the race in order to multiply the money that Jack had given to Ray: Miracle Worker. And indeed, the horse that according to the gamblers had no chance of winning, won the race seemingly without any effort. Cooper assumes that because of his incredible luck, "Ray embodies the chance that resurrection and new beginnings might manifest themselves on this side of the grave, not only for the dead but for the living" (47). She also believes that Ray's luck should be read as an expression of "God's mysterious grace, which is, for Swift, as deeply rooted in the world and human life as suffering, loss, bewilderment, and death" (47).

One last thing I would like to mention about religion in *Last Orders* is something I already referred to earlier: the combination of "dads" and "God" into the surname "Dodds." The presence of two patriarchal figures in the novel, God and Jack Dodds, is a moot point (Cooper 36). Vic, Vince, Lenny, and Ray do not know if God really exists and whether or not Jack still is able to see what they are doing. Yet, Jack remains present in the novel despite the fact that he is dead. He is still physically close to the four men in the form of ashes in a jar, a container. God is in a way present through the buildings that are supposed to represent him, like Canterbury Cathedral.

Jack should be seen as the central figure in the group of men, who has suddenly disappeared. The four remaining male protagonists are now confronted with the void that has appeared in the group, and they do not quite know how to deal with it. Jack is some kind of

“missing Christ figure who previously united them” (MacLeod 155). The journey is for Vic, Vince, Lenny, and Ray the ideal opportunity to find out what they have to do to become reunited again. At first, the visits to Canterbury, Chatham, and Wick’s Farm had a distancing effect, tearing the members of the group apart. But when they arrive at Margate, the possibility of reconciliation becomes apparent. The men are finally able to bond again, and at the same time feel that a new life is waiting for them.

Most men in *Last Orders* tend to act as some kind of God in that they abuse their role of father to force their children to do things against their will, for example Lenny who obliges his daughter to have an abortion. This is also true for both Jack and Vince. Jack wants Vince to take over the butcher shop; Vince offers his own daughter to Mr. Hussein so that he will buy a car. As a father, neither man is as infallible as God; both Jack and Vince make a lot of mistakes. Apart from trying to persuade Vince to take over “Dodds and Son,” Jack also abandons his only biological child because she is not normal. Vince has lost his only daughter because of his own materialism: Kath has left the house to go and live with Hussein. Since Jack is dead, it is too late for him to correct his mistakes, especially as far as June is concerned. Vince, however, is still young, and he realizes that he wants to re-establish the contact with his daughter. He has seen the error of his ways.

Like in Faulkner’s work, the theme of religion is also present in other novels written by Swift. The first novel I would like to discuss is *Waterland*, which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1983. The most significant Christ-like figure in this novel is Dick Crick, who is the result of an incestuous relationship between Ernest Atkinson and his daughter Helen. Ernest was impressed by the remarkable beauty of his daughter, and started to believe that only this beautiful woman could give birth to a “Saviour of the World.” Yet, unlike Christ, the child turns out to be a “potato-head” and the murderer of Freddie Parr, rather than a Saviour of the World. Towards the end of the novel, Dick commits suicide in the river Ouse; the water refers, just as the sea at Margate, to birth as well as death. Pamela Cooper believes that Dick “gave his life to save his cursed family which suggests Christ’s martyrdom for humankind’s sins” (49). His death is thus “sacrificial; it suggests the possibility of salvation and the incipience, in the everyday world, of miracle” (Cooper 12). Dick believes that he is responsible for the misfortune that has come over his family, since he is born as a “potato-head”: “Suddenly he [Dick] blurts out, as if it’s all his fault, as if he, being the effect, is to blame for the cause: ‘S-s-sorry, Tom. S-s-sorry’” (323). The other characters in the novel,

however, do not mention Dick in comparison to Christ. His own brother, history teacher and narrator of the story Tom Crick, defines him as a machine:

Dick works at his motor-bike. It could be said that Dick's love of machines, if love it is, springs from the fact that Dick himself is a sort of machine – in so far as a machine is something which has no mind of its own and in so far as Dick's large, lean and surprisingly agile body will not only work indefatigably but will perform on occasion quite remarkable feats of dexterity and strength. (38)

At other moments in the novel, Dick is compared to an animal: "His cow-lashes flutter over his fish-eyes" (33). He is also compared to an eel when he commits suicide, an eel returning to where he was born. The last type of comparison involving Dick is to matter, especially silt, because he always seems to carry the smell of silt with him. Tom's conclusion is thus that Dick is "[n]ot a saviour of the world. A potato-head. Not a hope for the future. A numbskull with the dull, vacant stare of a fish..." (242).

Another character in *Waterland* that should be discussed when dealing with religion is Mary Metcalf, Tom Crick's girlfriend/wife. When they both were still very young, Mary got pregnant. She did not want to have this child so she and Tom went to Martha Clay, a "witch," who was the only person who could help them to get rid of the baby. When Mary was losing the baby, Tom compared her to "a little convent girl, staunchly saying her prayers: 'HolyMaryMotherofGodHolyMaryMotherofGodHolyMaryMotherof—'" (308). Years later, the effect that this abortion had on Mary starts to emerge, and she slides into madness. Tom believes

it must have been always there, lurking, latent, ripening like some dormant, forgotten seed. Because in the year 1979, a woman of fifty-two, she suddenly began looking again for Salvation. She began this love-affair, this liaison – much to the perplexity of her husband (from whom she could not keep it a secret) – with God. And it was when this liaison reached a critical – in the usual run of liaisons not unfamiliar, but in this case quite incredible – pitch, that your astounded and forsaken history teacher, prompted as he was by the challenging remarks of a student called Price, ceased to teach history and started to offer you, instead, these fantastic-but-true, these believe-it-or-not-but-it-happened Tales of the Fens. (41-42)

Now, all these years after her “sin,” she hopes that God will grant her salvation. And she believes that God will do this by giving her a child. When Tom comes home from work one day, he finds his wife sitting on the couch with a baby in her arms, saying “I told you. Look, I told you, didn’t I? There! I said I was going to have one” (265). Looking at her sitting there like that, resembling “a young mother who’s never been a mother before,” Tom compares what he sees to the image of Madonna with child (265). From the conversation following this scene, it becomes clear that Mary is losing touch with reality:

‘Mary, what on earth—’

‘I told you—’

‘How—?’

There’s no denying it, she’s serene, she’s seraphic. Fifty-two years old. She’s beautiful.

‘Look. Come and look.’

‘Where did you get it?’

‘From God. I got it from God.’

‘Mary, are you all right?’

‘Look.’ (265)

Obviously, Mary Metcalf and the child should be seen by analogy with the Virgin Mary, not only because of the namesake, but also because of the fact that she “becomes the mother-figure to a sacrificial child (the aborted foetus) which reappears (as the baby stolen from the supermarket) to redeem the world” (Wells, qtd. in Craps 171)

Contrary to *Last Orders*, the characters in Swift’s *Waterland* refer or appeal explicitly to God. When Tom’s mother is dying, he and his father say their prayers to God, but they express a different desire:

All through the night he watches; while in our room Dick snores and I [Tom] lie awake listening for sounds across the passageway and praying (yes, praying: Please God, please, let this not be happening . . . Please God, if you don’t let her die, I’ll . . . I’ll . . .), and the wind comes and goes, howls and whimpers, but doesn’t stop, and the cottage, creaking and groaning, seems more and more like a ship far out at sea that has lost its rudder. (274-75)

I [Tom] think: Can this go on for ever? This being-on-the-edginess. This trance of Dad's. This wind. This hearing Mother say, A fine state of things, when it isn't.

I pray to God: Please God, don't let it go on like this for ever. Please God, if it's got to happen, make Mummy be no more. Let it be over, let it be done with . . .

Now how could I be praying this when only a while ago I was praying . . .? (276)

In general, it can be said that the characters tend to escape from reality through story-telling. The knack for story-telling runs in Tom's family, and that is the reason why he became a history teacher. Yet, instead of teaching his students the relevance of history, he tells them stories. Some stories in the novel involve God and his creation, for example the story about the stars that Henry Crick tells to his sons: "Do you know what the stars are? They are the silver dust of God's blessing. They are little broken-off bits of heaven. God cast them down to fall on us. But when he saw how wicked we were, he changed his mind and ordered the stars to stop. Which is why they hang in the sky but seem as though at any time they might drop. . ." (1-2).

When Tom is confronted with harsh reality, he feels uncomfortable. This becomes, for instance, clear in Tom's reaction to the discovery of Freddie Parr's dead body: "the reality of things – be thankful – only visits us for a brief while" (33). The beginning of the novel contributes to the idea that Tom's family seeks refuge in a fairy-tale world: "Fairy-tale words; fairy-tale advice. But we lived in a fairy-tale place. In a lock-keeper's cottage, by a river, in the middle of the Fens. Far away from the wide world. And my father, who was a superstitious man, liked to do things in such a way as would make them seem magical and occult" (1).

The most overtly religious novel in Swift's career must be *The Light of Day*, his seventh novel, which was published in 2003. As far as structure is concerned, *The Light of Day* shows a remarkable similarity to *Last Orders*. Both novels span one single day, moving back- and forward in time, recalling past events and looking at the future. In a way, *The Light of Day* can be seen as a kind of continuation of *Last Orders*: "If *Last Orders* ended on a redemptive note, with Ray looking forward to a possible resumption of his relationship with Amy and a possible reunion with Susie in Australia, this note swells and grows in power in *The Light of Day*, a novel buoyant with hope and anticipation that strongly suggests that past losses can be effectively redressed" (Craps 168). Contrary to the subtle religious tone in *Last Orders*, however, *The Light of Day* makes explicit references to religion, just like *Waterland*. The

most important character that should be noted in relation to this theme is Rachel, who received a religious education, but later on told her parents that “[s]he didn’t believe in it anymore” (119). She decided then that “there’s no one up there at all. Just me” (181). According to Stef Craps, Rachel can, by analogy with Cora Tull, also be seen as a self-righteous and judgemental woman, which to her (ex-)husband George proves that “Rachel never really gave up her god, that’s what I think. I mean, the big stern daddy part of him” (181) (Craps 169). Because of this, George start imagining “how its must have been for Rachel when she was small. God looking down on her, and her looking up, being obedient and scared” (181). Craps believes that Swift prefers the forgiving God that is presented in the New Testament, rather than the vengeful ruler that can be found in the Old Testament (169).

The title *The Light of Day* can be linked to the New Testament notion of God, who saves His people out of darkness and brings them into the light. Like God is the saviour of mankind, George acts as a saviour for Sarah, who because of the murder she has committed, is rejected by society: “But I’ll be there, I’ll be there, sweetheart, to catch you” (323) (Craps 170).

*Last Orders* is a novel which is less explicitly concerned with religion as is the case in *As I Lay Dying*. Contrary to Faulkner, Swift’s intention is not to make fun of religion. While the Tulls are very religious and other characters embody characteristics that are often related to Christ, Swift does not portray his protagonists as being associated with a particular religion. None of them is said to be Catholic or Protestant, or makes explicit claims about their faith. Swift rather uses the notion of religion in a subtle way to promote the spiritual overtones that the novel tends to put forward. In a way, it contributes to the feeling of hope and optimism that *Last Orders* propagates. This stands in sharp contrast to the satirical use of religion in *As I Lay Dying* to ridicule the hypocrisy that is related to it.

## Chapter 6: Intertextuality

The Australian professor John Frow accused Graham Swift of having plagiarised William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Other critics, like Anastasia Logotheti for instance, have noticed that Swift did not only rely on Faulkner, but also on writers like T.S. Eliot and Chaucer. In this final chapter, I would like to elaborate on the other sources that Swift (and Faulkner as well) had in mind when they wrote *Last Orders* and *As I Lay Dying* respectively.

Postmodernism “is about a gentle acknowledgment and respect for the already said” (Winnberg 69), and as a postmodern writer, Graham Swift loves to apply this technique in his novels. One of the general issues that is significant for Swift's work is the notion of intertextuality, which means that his novels show echoes of other major texts, and similarities between his work and the work of other important writers (Malcolm 9-10). This term was introduced by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s, but since its definition was written down by Roland Barthes in the *Encyclopédie universalis* in 1973, the recognition for her was fleeting and dismissive. Her work was from then on considered as being derivative of the work of Bakhtin and the Bakhtin circle (Orr 20). According to Kristeva, “intertextuality” is “a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Orr 21). Intertextuality thus implies that a text refers to other texts, rather than to an outside reality. Judith Still and Michael Worton note that a text cannot exist without the presence of other texts; a text can never function as a hermetic whole or a closed system. They give two reasons for this. The first one is that “the writer is a reader of texts (in the broadest sense) before s/he is a creator of texts, and therefore the work of art is inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind” (Still and Worton 1). The second reason refers to the fact that “a text is available only through some process of reading; what is produced at the moment of reading is due to the cross-fertilisation of the packaged textual material (say, a book) by all the texts which the reader brings to it” (Still and Worton 1-2).

In my first chapter dealing with plagiarism, I already made mention of a quote taken from John Walsh's column, which referred to *Idylls of the King* by Tennyson, who himself drew his inspiration from Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Walsh claims that *As I Lay Dying*, and consequently also *Last Orders*, show some remarkable similarities to these two poems. *Idylls of the King* and *Le Morte d'Arthur* are both epic poems that are constructed around a number of short parts which are related to the protagonist. The different parts do not form one

coherent story as is also the case in the novels by Faulkner and Swift. There is an alternation of a number of narrators who reflect on their own lives, and on memories they share with the protagonist.

Intertextuality did not suddenly appear in recent years, it is a notion of all times. Nick Groom takes Shakespeare and Coleridge as example. Shakespeare used to lift plots and passages from Chapman's *Homer*, North's *Plutarch*, Golding's *Ovid*, Holinshed's *Chronicles* and a lot of other sources. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in turn, was known for his borrowing from Shakespeare's work (Groom 79). Françoise Meltzer states in her book *Hot Property* that Coleridge was a literary thief. She even mentions that Wordsworth gave him a number of his rejected poems so that he could show his "genius" to others (2-3). It was only after Coleridge's death that his "intertextuality" was discovered as plain plagiarism (Groom 79).

Throughout his entire career, Graham Swift has made a lot of allusions to other texts. He admits that he has "always had a fondness for the classics" (Malcolm 11), and this means more specifically his nineteenth-century predecessors Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy. He places his characters in the same working-class milieu that can be found in the fiction by Dickens and Hardy. The inspiration he drew from Dickens in particular results in his fascination with disrupted families and dark secrets (Malcolm 11). Hardy's style has especially an effect on the psychology of Swift's characters, who also tend to be character-driven and philosophical. Like Hardy, Swift is a regionalist who tries to picture a truthful image of England (Winnberg 15). Both authors tend to present the women ambiguously. They are depicted as ideals, but are in fact also destructive figures who are deceitful (Cooper 20). Unlike Hardy, however, Swift uses I-narrators, while Hardy prefers omniscience (Winnberg 15). Jakob Winnberg looks at the level of intertextuality in Swift's novels and concludes that there is an increasingly overt textual mirroring throughout his oeuvre (Winnberg 69). While *The Sweet-Shop Owner* and *Out of this World* are barely metafictional, *Shuttlecock* shows some overt intertextuality (Winnberg 73-74). *Waterland* seems to be nothing more than a collection of other texts like *Great Expectations*, *Moby Dick*, *Absalom Absalom!*, *The Sound and the Fury* and *Tess of d'Urbervilles*. There is also a great similarity when compared to Nick Carraway's *The Great Gatsby* especially what the opening scene is concerned. Swift seems to have taken it from Carraway and almost copied it into his own novel. The most obvious intertextuality, however, can be found in *Last Orders*, which according to David Malcolm is "a tissue of reworkings of other texts" (Malcolm 185). First of all there are links to two poems written by T.S. Eliot. The first one is a clear reference to Margate, the place at the seaside where Jack wants his ashes to be scattered. One sentence in Eliot's poem *The*

*Waste Land* goes as follows: “On Margate Sands/ I can connect nothing with nothing” (Lea 161). Daniel Lea interprets this as a “consonance between a poem and a novel that mourn the loss of Western society’s faith in didactic institutionalisation of belief is uncanny” (161). Both *The Waste Land* and *Last Orders* are works of mourning and show notions of loss and disconnection as being characteristic of modernity (Lea 161). The location of the last scene in *Last Orders* presents the reader with an image of how a waste land may look like and how Ray, Lenny, Vince, and Vic disconnect from Jack. Yet, being disconnected from Jack makes the men realise that they have to reconnect to their children (Parker 99). This hope of reconciliation thus stands in contrast to the complete sense of alienation that can be found in Eliot’s poem. The second poem by Eliot that *Last Orders* strongly recalls is *The Four Quartets*. The similarities between the two works comprise the spiritual searching, the dread of time, and the images of ashes and old men. Also the circular motion in *Last Orders* recalls the poem, and especially the opening and closing lines of the second part called “East Coker”: “In my beginning is my end/In my end is my beginning” (Cooper 18, 28). *Last Orders* as well as the four poems of *The Four Quartets* focus on the aspects of geography, nature and time.

Swift does not only reach back to poems to construct his story, but he also is interested in Greek tragedies and myths. As Thomas Hardy was influenced by the tragedies created by Sophocles and Aeschylus, Swift also uses some typical classical tragic patterns in his oeuvre. Central in his work are the suffering of families, the sexual desire, the warping of the children by their parents, and incest as a symbol of regression and misdirected entrepreneurial energy (Cooper 15). Ray fancies his own daughter Susie whom he believes to be more beautiful than his wife has ever been.

Susie puts the dryer down and gives her head a couple of brisk, stern shakes to loosen the hair and I think, I can’t deny it, she’s better-looking than Carol ever was, even Carol at her age. It’s a kind of disrespect and unfairness to Carol to think it but that don’t matter because she’s a part of Carol, there’s a part of Carol in her, we’re all part of each other. (51)

Like Susie and Carol, Mandy seems to be a younger version of her mother-in-law Amy and replaces her in Vince’s Oedipal drama (Cooper 30). Mandy feels sexually attracted to Vince but she also sees in him a paternal figure. This pattern can also be found in the relationship between Mandy and Vince’s daughter Kath and the older Arab businessman Hussein. Mandy however also responds to Vince as a kind of brother (Cooper 52):

It couldn't have just been him, Vince. That we were somehow, underneath it all, like *brother* and *sister*, worse, father and daughter. . . . So it was like *committing incest*, like throwing the whole thing open, like being dangerous where you ought to be most safe. Safe as houses. And in a camper-van too, Uncle Ray's camper, like a pair of gypsies. (157, italics in original)

Sibling incest is represented in Vince's relationship with Sally Tate, Lenny's daughter. In a way, Sally is Vince's surrogate sister since she takes the place which June has not been able to fill. Also Amy's affair with Ray can be seen in the light of sibling incest because Ray is represented as being a brother to Jack (Cooper 53). The notion of incest clearly echoes Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus* who married his own mother without even knowing. After Oedipus was warned by an oracle that he would kill his own father and marry his mother, he ran away out of fear. A couple of years later, he met a man on a chariot who violently demanded Oedipus to go out of the way so that he could pass. Oedipus became very angry and killed the stranger, not knowing that this was King Laius, his real father. Travelling further, Oedipus met a strange creature, a Sphinx that terrorized the city Thebes. After being able to solve the riddle that the Sphinx challenged him with, Oedipus was offered the throne of Thebes and the hand of the queen who recently had become a widow. Oedipus accepted both offers with gratitude, yet signs of misfortune began to descend upon Thebes. When he tried to find out the reason for the misfortune, Oedipus discovered that it was he who killed his own father and married his mother. Unable to cope with this revelation, he blinded himself, condemning himself to live in darkness for the rest of his life.

Shakespeare's work also serves as an example, especially *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. Remnants of *King Lear* can be discovered in the shock of old age, the horror of a desolate world, betrayal of love and the failure of the fathers (Cooper 16). The strongest echo of this play is to be found in the troubled relationship between Ray, Lenny, Vince and Jack and their daughters. It resembles King Lear's abandonment of one of his daughters, Cordelia, because she refuses to express her love for her father in speech. Vince, however, can also be compared to one of the characters in *King Lear*, and more precisely to Edmund, the Earl of Gloucester's illegitimate son. They are both rather unscrupulous and hold the older generation at a distance (Cooper 49). Edmund acts in a horrible way to get rid of his father; Vince refuses to take over the butcher shop and even joins the army to be away from Jack for a while.

The comparison with Shakespeare's *Hamlet* becomes especially clear in Jack's soliloquy. As I mentioned already earlier, Jack recalls in his only monologue the words of his father. The warning that Jack's father gives to his son, recalls the words spoken by Hamlet's father. However, while Hamlet's father warns his son to be aware of his murderer, and revenge "his foul and most unnatural murder" (90), Jack's father warns that Jack has to distinguish between the good and bad things in life. He has to set his priorities if he wants to survive in this harsh world that is dominated by competition.

The framework of the novel shows a lot of similarities to Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. The journey Ray, Vince, Vic and Lenny make to bring Jack's ashes to Margate, resembles the pilgrimage of the characters in Chaucer's famous work. For both groups the journey is a collective effort in which they start to search for understanding and the grace of God (Cooper 36). On the pilgrimage, the four men stop by monuments, and it is especially Canterbury Cathedral that makes the reader aware of the link with *The Canterbury Tales*. In *Last Orders* as well as *The Canterbury Tales*, the pilgrims tell stories and talk about themselves, especially about their past. There is also another type of building that establishes a clear link between both works: the pubs "Coach and Horses" in Bermondsey and the "Tabard Inn" in Southwark. Both buildings are the starting point of the trip to Margate and the pilgrimage to Canterbury respectively. Ray's joke about their pub the Coach and Horses is, however, contrasted to the pilgrimage since it implies non-movement: "They calls [sic] it the Coach and Horses but it aint never gone nowhere" (6). The men seem to be fixed in place and find it hard to move from that which is familiar. Yet, they overcome this to fulfil the last wish of one of their best friends. The four protagonists of *Last Orders* undertake the journey in April when spring brings the death of the old and the birth of the new elements in the world. They try to find new growth and life by disposing Jack's ashes at Margate just as the pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales* hope to find regeneration by visiting St. Thomas Beckett's tomb in Canterbury Cathedral (Cooper 33).

The idea of journeying, a pilgrimage does not only recall Chaucer's masterpiece but goes even further back in history to Homer's *Odyssey*. In ancient myths, the notion of undertaking a journey was very important. The poem recounts the events that befall the Greek hero Odysseus in his long journey after the fall of Troy and before his return home. The events comprise a period of twenty years, ten years of Trojan war and ten years of returning to Ithica. Other famous examples of an adventurous journey include Beowulf, King Arthur's knights of the Round Table, Gulliver, and so on; these are all stories which show physical travel and inner searching (Cooper 31). The wandering hero often tries to understand the

destiny of race or country. In *Last Orders*, Swift asks questions about England's historical destination in the aftermath of the Empire (Cooper 32).

*Last Orders* also refers to more recent literature like Virginia Woolf and Kazuo Ishiguro (Cooper 28). The structure of Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*—six characters recounting past events in monologues—resembles that of *Last Orders*, but the content shows more similarities to *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. Both novels deal with journeying and more particularly the journey of the human being from life into death. In *To the Lighthouse*, Lily Briscoe completes a painting just as Mr. Ramsay reaches the lighthouse that symbolizes the dead Mrs. Ramsay. This can be compared to the way in which Amy finds closure to Jack's story when his ashes are shattered at Margate by his closest friends. This symbolizes a circle as the traditional symbol of completion, of beginnings and endings rolled into one (Cooper 28).

Resemblances to Kazuo Ishiguro's fiction can be found in the themes of isolation and bewilderment, and the changing position of England in the world. Overlaps with *Last Orders*—and in a way also *Waterland*—are present in Ishiguro's most famous novel *The Remains of the Day*. All three of them represent the traumas of the Second World War and a post-war British society whose historical mission is not so clear anymore (Cooper 19). As I have mentioned before, *Last Orders* shows how the relationship between England and its former colonies has altered. England becomes more and more dependent on the countries they used to possess, which is represented in the figure of the Arab businessman Hussein. Another echo of *The Remains of the Day* can be discovered in the image that at the brink of land the ocean offers both oblivion and the freedom of conversion into another element (Cooper 38).

However, the most important novel of which *Last Orders* seems to be a rewriting is of course William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Over more than six decades now novelists from all over the world have publicly acknowledged their debt to Faulkner, and the fact that Faulkner receives so many tributes from so many authors indicates that he will probably keep his high rank among modern classics (Bleikasten 76).

Both novels deal with the same subject matter: a group of people (family versus friends) undertake a journey to fulfil the last wish of a loved one. Graham Swift has defined *Last Orders* as a homage to Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and the fact that he is so open about his references to the novel, shows that his reworking of Faulkner's text was intentional (Cooper 17). He has never denied the admiration he felt for Faulkner and this becomes already clear in some novels that precede *Last Orders*. *Waterland* in general shows some remarkable similarities to *Absalom Absalom!*, published in 1936; Dick Crick in particular can

be compared to Benjy Compson in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). Dick and Benjy Compson are mentally retarded and because of that they cannot speak. As a result, they are often given insulting names like potatohead and idiot. What they also have in common is their obsessive behaviour: Dick is obsessed with the question where babies come from, Tom's girlfriend Mary, and machines (especially his motor-bike), and for Benjy this is his sister Caddy and firelight. *Waterland* and *Absalom Absalom!* are told by a middle-aged man (Tom Crick and Thomas Sutpen respectively) and are non-chronological. They focus on one family and the stories of the characters echo war, business, and complex relationships. The monologues by the characters in *Last Orders* recall the ones spoken by Jason Compson in *The Sound and the Fury*, but what is more important, echo the complete structure of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. The stories are told by rather poor and not so well-educated characters who speak a non-standard dialect (Malcolm 173). In both novels you can distinguish "normal" monologues in a stream-of-consciousness style but also a chapter consisting of a list with numbered entries, a chapter told by a dead person, and the inclusion of a single sentence chapter. There are thus similarities in the narrational strategy and social background, but also in the story matter in general. Both stories recount a "funeral procession which is both fun and funereal" (Winnberg 174). The dominant theme is how the dead continue to put pressure on the living by letting them fulfil their last wishes, and how they as a consequence are obliged to cooperate, but also are confronted with one another. This becomes, for instance, clear in the troubled relationship between Jewel and the rest of his family, and the fight between Lenny and Vince when Vince wants to scatter some of Jack's ashes at Wick's Farm. Yet this fight also uses irony since Lenny tries "to maintain the wholeness of something that is intrinsically uncoalesced" (Lea 174). It is rather odd that they all see the scattering of Jack's ashes at Margate as their duty and a melancholic event, yet they all dry their hands as to avoid that ashes will stick to their hands. The irony is especially obvious in the reason why the members of the Bundren family want to escort Addie to her final resting place. Anse wants to keep his promise and bury her in Jefferson, with her "people," but he also wants to get new teeth there. Vardaman really wants a toy train just like the rich children and Cash wants a phonograph. Dewey Dell only accompanies them because she needs pills for an abortion. The irony continues when Anse buries his wife and finds a new one in less than a day, and none of the children seems to have any objections to the new Mrs. Bundren. When Addie is buried, no one seems to pay any thought to her at all. It is as if she has never existed and the children accept the strange woman as their new mother without any questions (Volpe 130). It is especially Anse who is the source of irony. This became already clear in his reasons for bringing Addie to Jefferson,

yet it appears also in the distance between what Anse says and what he does. He gives for example a short funeral oration (“You all don’t know,” pa says. “The somebody you was young with and you grew old in her and she grew old in you, seeing the old coming on and it was the one somebody you could hear say it don’t matter and know it was the truth outen the hard world and all a man’s grief and trials.” (234-35)), which stands in contrast with his objection to buy a shovel to dig the grave for his deceased wife (Vickery 56).

The most obvious textual parallel between the novels can be found in the reference to the distance to the next town. Dewey Dell notices that it is three miles to New Hope: “The signboard comes in sight. It is looking out at the road now, because it can wait. New Hope. 3 mi. it will say. New Hope. 3 mi. New Hope. 3mi. And then the road will begin, curving away into the trees, empty with waiting, saying New Hope three miles” (120). In *Last Orders*, they have to drive three miles to Gravesend, “Where are we? Gravesend, 3 miles. We’re coming up to Gravesend” (71).

Since the controversy that arose after Swift won the Booker Prize with *Last Orders*, people have focussed on the similarities. You cannot deny that the novel is an obvious rewriting of *As I Lay Dying*, yet there are also some clear differences. The leading thread through the novels is the funeral procession, but while in *As I Lay Dying* the journey lasts for nine days and deals with a family bringing a rotting corpse to Jefferson, *Last Orders* takes up only one day and focuses on the transportation of the urn with Jack’s ashes by his friends. However, both novels actually have to do with dismemberment: Addie’s body starts to rot and Jack’s ashes are divided amongst the four men (Lea 163). The most important difference that can be distinguished between the novels are the different tones, mentalities. Faulkner’s novel lacks the epiphanic reconciliation of conclusion that can be found in *Last Orders* (Malcolm 173). Swift’s novel is more hopeful and spiritual, and has a problem-solving structure. The men fulfil their task and realize that they want to resolve the differences with their daughters. Amy, on the contrary, decides to say goodbye to her daughter June. She leaves her man and daughter behind and is ready to start a new life. When the book is finished, it leaves the reader with a rather positive feeling, even though it has mortality as its major theme. *As I Lay Dying* on the other hand, has a cynical overtone and does not provide a sense of closure at all. It has a rather open ending and leaves the reader with a lot of questions. We can only assume that Dewey Dell will give birth to her baby but we do not know that for sure. We are unable to find out whether or not Darl will ever be healthy again, nor whether or not the truth about Whitfield will be revealed. These and other questions arise after finishing the novel and in this way postpone closure.

Up till now I have only mentioned Swift's use of intertextuality, but it is also important to note that Faulkner as well drew inspiration from other writers. I already referred to the link between *As I Lay Dying* and *Idylls of the King* by Tennyson, and Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Pamela Cooper believes that Faulkner was deeply influenced "by the Greek tragedians, Shakespeare and Hardy" (Cooper 16), while André Bleikasten thinks that Faulkner's literary ancestry can be "traced back to Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, and Sherwood Anderson," yet he is also a novelist of European descent whose "many fathers include Cervantes, Scott, Balzac, Dickens, Flaubert, Dostoevsky, Hardy, Conrad, Mann, Joyce, and Proust" (75).

To begin with, the title *As I Lay Dying* comes from Homer's *Odyssey*, and more particularly from the Hades chapter, when Agamemnon is speaking to Odysseus: "As I lay dying the woman with the dog's eyes would not close my eyes as I descended into Hades" (qtd. in Tanaka).

The multiplicity of voices that Graham Swift has borrowed from Faulkner, is originally taken from Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves*. However, Woolf applies them in a different way than Faulkner does. In her novel "each monologue serves primarily to reveal the innermost self of the narrator which is complemented by the thoughts of each one about the other five narrators" (qtd. in Shin). Faulkner, on the other hand, captures the characters' intensely charged emotions and thoughts. He never goes down into the character's subconsciousness as his predecessors Woolf and Joyce do, not even in Darl Bundren's monologues. Even when Darl is preoccupied with his own thoughts, he looks in an objective way at the world around him. In this way, his thoughts even seem to be detached from his own mind (qtd. in Shin).

Similar to Swift's novel, we can detect references to Shakespeare's work in Faulkner's oeuvre and especially his masterpiece *Hamlet*. The clearest reference can be found in the title of Faulkner's novel *The Hamlet*. Instead of referring to a person, the hamlet is part of the geography of Yoknapatawpha County. A more obvious parallel can be drawn between Hamlet's famous soliloquy "To Be or Not To Be" and Darl's monologue "I dont know what I am, I dont know if I am or not" (72). The problem of identity becomes apparent here, especially in Darl's case. He is desperately seeking for a fixed identity, a centre around which he can organize himself. He keeps on asking himself who and even if he "is": "Jewel is, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep in a strange room. And so if I'm not emptied yet, I am *is*" (72) (qtd. in Shin).

In this chapter, I have tried to make clear that Swift's Booker Prize-winning novel does not only rely heavily on Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, but also makes allusions to other well-known writers like Eliot, Shakespeare, and Woolf. The same is true for Faulkner, who used the elements which led to the controversy dealing with Swift's plagiarism from other writers himself. The structure of the novel (especially the division of chapters between different narrators) and the concept of a funeral journey were already applied by other authors and were thus not original for neither writer. I believe that the high number of intertexts contributes to the idea that it is difficult to claim that Graham Swift only plagiarised Faulkner's novel.

## Conclusion

It is not always easy to distinguish between stealing the work of someone else and just making allusions to it. While allusion and pastiche are legitimate techniques to reuse what another person has written, plagiarism has negative connotations. This is the reason why plagiarizers, contrary to alluders or those who use pastiche, are scared that their deceit will be revealed and consequently will ruin a further career. As Christopher Ricks states: “the alluder hopes that the reader will recognize something, the plagiarizer that the reader will not” (qtd. in Caterson).

This brings me to the most important question that I want to answer in this conclusion: Was John Frow right in accusing Swift of plagiarism? Or did Swift use a legitimate technique to write his novel? As already became clear in the previous chapters, there are a number of significant resemblances between the novels. However, I do not believe that these correspondences should be seen as a deliberate attempt by Swift to deceive people or can be described as plain plagiarism. This is what John Frow believes; the literary world, on the other hand, leapt to Swift’s defence. I am more inclined to follow the opinion of the majority of Swift’s fellow writers and critics, and see it as an example of postmodern pastiche. Graham Swift himself admitted that there was a little homage at work. This homage should especially be noted in his use of colloquial language, the division of chapters between different narrators, the use of three special types of chapter, and, of course, the subject matter.

There was one significant thing, however, that Swift felt he had to change, and that was the mentality that was presented through the story. As a Southerner, Faulkner incorporated the history of the American South and its consequences into his novel. Swift, however, is more familiar with his native England and the traditional notions that are attributed to it, like horse races, pubs, etc. Faulkner’s focus, on the other hand, is more related to the poverty and the hopelessness of the future of the Bundren family, as being part of a community of farmers in the South. The protagonists in *Last Orders* have better hopes for the future, and I believe that this can be seen as the most important difference between both novels. While *As I Lay Dying* in a cynical way provides its readers with a feeling of pessimism, fatalism, and the impossibility of ever gaining a better position in society, *Last Orders* offers feelings of optimism and hope of a better future. The bottom-line of the novel is that there is always an opportunity for renewal, a chance to undo the mistakes of the past. This

hopeful overtone of change and renewal contrasts strongly with the cynicism that is dominant in *As I Lay Dying*.

However, there is one important similarity between the mentalities, as is also the case for the theme of gender: both authors insist that these notions should be revised. Faulkner and Swift present the traditional values of the American South and England respectively, but in fact, they want to do away with them. They give a clichéd image to show the different kinds of constraints that a community can entail. Both present a community that reacts adversely to those who are different: Swift debunks conservative notions of Englishness in this way, while Faulkner parodies the concept of the American Dream. A similar approach can be detected in the analysis of gender: the male-dominated society depicted turns out to be in the midst of a crisis of masculinity. This is shown through the feminine roles and/or names that are attributed to the male protagonists.

The novels differ in the way they deal with the theme of religion. Faulkner has tried to lay bare the hypocrisy of religion in presenting an exaggerated image of a pious Christian, while Swift's novel has a subtly religious tone. In other novels like *Waterland* and *The Light of Day*, Swift created characters who explicitly appealed to their God. In *Last Orders*, he refused to do this and did not let any of the protagonists make a reference to his or her faith. However, Swift, like Faulkner, presented one of his protagonists as a personification of Christ, or a Messianic figure. By analogy with the difference in mentality, Darl Bundren is associated with damnation, while Ray "Lucky" Johnson should be seen in the light of the positive characteristics of Christ, like bringing fortune to those who surround him and embodying the idea of renewal.

Graham Swift does not only borrow obvious elements like the structure and the concept of the novel, but also looks at the more subtle approaches to particular themes, like gender. In my opinion, this shows that Swift's rewriting of Faulkner's novel does not merely rely on superficial aspects, and that he has created a true homage to Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, rather than shamelessly stealing a basis to build his own novel on. The fact that Swift deviates from the way Faulkner approaches the notions of mentality and religion only attributes to this. Another important factor is that Swift's *Last Orders* (as well as some of his other novels) shows some remarkable intertextual references to other great writers like Chaucer, Eliot, and Woolf. Consequently, if Swift has plagiarised Faulkner's novel, he should also be accused of having plagiarised among others things *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Waste Land*, and *The Waves*.

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