

FAULKNER'S AS I LAY DYING: HOW MANY NARRATORS?

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This article deals with the problem of narration in Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying*, and the way it overcomes limitations from point of view imposed by the one text/one narrator restriction. The interpretation of the narrative theory (Kuroda) has been observed, and it has been pointed out that via performative analysis one can reach for a formal expression of the omniscient narrator. At the same time applying the conceptual essence of linguistic performance it appears that language is essentially independent of its communicative function which further on leads Kuroda to reject the notion of the omniscient narrator, that is, the notion that a narrative is necessarily a discourse by a narrator. Thus the conclusion has been reached that some sentences of the novel's narrative can be attributed to various narrators while there can also exist a nonnarrator (narratorless) passages which may have a narrator. Some points on theory of narration by Anne Banfield, Bleikasten, and Volosinov have been discussed to illuminate the reporting mode in this specific novel. The point is made that reportive/expressive mode has been used by all the voices in the novel but one, Darl's. Darl's passages are presented in the narratorless mode. Moreover Faulkner uses series of narrators with limited omniscience while not dispensing with the narrator altogether. Stylistically, linguistically and applying grammatical analysis, this article tries to explain Faulkner's unique way of rendering this rather difficult problem of reporting in the stream-of-consciousness technique.

One of the triumphs of this novel is the way in which it overcomes the limitations on point of view imposed by the one text/one narrator restriction. The history of narrative style since the development of the novel may be described as various attempts to overcome this limitation and eliminate the unique narrator. Alongside these attempts to overcome limitations on point of view there have been various attempts to restrict the extent of the narrator's omniscience. He can be made less objectionable by limiting his omniscience, but it has generally been felt that a better solution is to dispense with him altogether (as in the narrative mode known as the free-indirect style)¹ or to replace him with a series of narrators whose omniscience is similarly limited (as in the novel in question).

The linguist S. Y. Kuroda, in an article entitled »Reflections On the Foundation of Narrative Theory,« has proposed a quite different method of dispelling »the ghost the omniscient narrator... that has been haun-

¹ This narrative mode is variously called the »free-indirect style«, »narrated monologue« the *style indirect libre*, and *Erlebte Rede*. Defined grammatically, it is »the presentation of a character's thoughts in the third person and the tense of narration« (Dorit Cohn, »Narrated Monologue«, *Comparative Literature*, XVIII, 1966, 98—112). Banfield, op. cit., calls it »the nonreportive style in the third person«. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is an example of the narrative mode.

ting literary critics for decades.«² To begin with, Kuroda points out that the idea of an omniscient narrator depends upon a communicational theory of linguistic performance, each linguistic performance is considered to be an act of communication, and all assertions are considered complements to deleted performative clauses of the type »I declare to you that...«³ The underlying form of sentence is assumed to be something like following:

I V_p you S

where *V_p* is a performative verb, e. g. *essert, tell*, etc.; *I* is the first person pronoun, the subject of *V_p*; *S* is the sentential complement of *V_p*.

The sequence *I V_p you* may be (and usually is deleted). *I* and *you* denote the addressor and the addressee; *S* is the content of the message and *V_p* indicates the type of performative act with which the message is communicated.

A fictional narrative is a product of a linguistic performance. Accordingly, each sentence of a story also has a deep structure of the form »I declare, tell, etc. to you that...« In the event the narrator assumes a character's point of view, that new point of view is introduced in the deep structure as direct or indirect discourse. Let us say the character is named Addie: a sentence representing her point of view would be derived from a structure like:

»I the narrator declare to you that Addie
thought, felt, etc. that...« (indirect discourse)
»I the narrator declare to you the reader that
Addie said: »I declare to you that...«

The problem, from a linguistic point of view as well as from the point of view of literary criticism, is that of the narrator is assumed to be equipped with human faculties, he can directly perceive only Addie's »outer« acts. Grammatically speaking, we do not know the grounds on which the narrator makes his assertions about the inner acts (thoughts, beliefs, etc.) of characters. But, as Kuroda points out, »we must so long as we follow the performative analysis, accept that he does make such assertions.«⁴ One could just assume that he directly perceives the mental states of his characters, in which case he becomes the »omniscient narrator.« This interpretation of narrative theory by the performative analysis gives explicit formal expression to that familiar but enigmatic person, the omniscient narrator.

How does Kuroda suggest to eliminate the omniscient narrator? By arguing that »there is no logical necessity that the materialisation of sentences is uniquely combined with the communicative act.«⁵ On a cer-

² Typescript of an article issued in J. Kristeva, Nicola Rewet and J. C. Milner, eds., *A Festschrift for Emile Benveniste*. A shorter version of this article, entitled »On Grammar and Narration«, appeared in *Actes du Colloque Franco Allemand du Grammaire Transformationnelle: Etudes du Semantique et Autres Linguistic Arbeiten* 14 (Tübingen, 1974).

³ This is the performative analysis proposed by J. R. Ross and others. See J. R. Ross, 1970, »On Declarative Sentence« in R. Jacobs and P. Rosenbaums (eds.) *Readings in Transformational Grammar*, (Waltham, Mass., 1970).

⁴ Kuroda, typescript p. 9.

tain level, Kuroda says, language is like any object of perception — say, a red apple. In an act of communication, the content (meaning) of a sentence is accompanied by the speaker's intention that his sentence should evoke in his auditor's consciousness the same mental image he has in his own. But from the point of view of analyzing the function the sentence has in use, this aspect of »good intention« on the part of the speaker is merely incidental. Just as a fact that a red apple evokes the perception of a red apple is independent of any intention of anyone who might put an apple in front of someone else. (This line of argument involves a sort of linguistic version of the intentional »fallacy« familiar to literary criticism.) This analysis, Kuroda says, shows that the meaning-realizing function of a sentence can be separated from the communicational function of a sentence. If we recognize the conceptual essence of linguistic performance in the meaning-realizing act, than »language (in the sense of linguistic performance) is conceptually independent of its communicative function.«⁶

The implications for the narrative theory are obvious. Kuroda can reject the notion of the omniscient narrator by virtue of the fact that he rejects the assumption that a narrative is necessarily a discourse by a narrator. This does not, he notes, contradict the existence of narratives by narrators. Furthermore, a narrative may be partially narrated by a narrator. That is, some sentences of a narrative, or even some constituents of sentences, may be attributed to narrators of various sorts without the entire narrative being attributed to a narrator or narrators. Similarly, a nonnarrator story may contain local narrators who are responsible for some sentences and / or constituents of sentences. But unless a sentence grammatically forces us to assume that it is a set out in a communication setting, it should be considered as narratorless.⁷

By what means does a sentence grammatically force us to assume that it is a set out in a communication setting? Anne Banfield, in her article »Narrative Style and the Grammar of Direct and Indirect Speech,« equated the speaker of sentence and the narrator of a text with »the first-person pronoun and associated expressive or evaluative language.«⁸ Expressive or evaluative language implies a narrating »I« even without a first-person pronoun. Banfield uses the example »president N. told the nation that the damn businessmen should get all the brakes.« In this sentence any hearer familiar with the person designated by »N. — Nixon« would never assume that he used the actual word »Damned«. In other circumstances the word might be pronounced by the quoted speaker, but evaluative adjective appearing in indirect speech (i. e. without quotation marks) always express the state and the attitude of the quoting speaker. (This is because we have no access to the reported speaker's state, only to the content of his speech: indirect speech is a variety of paraphrases and the speaker of the indirectly quoted speech does not play a linguistic role.) Expressive features like pauses, exclamations, interjections and the like are excluded altogether from the indirect speech contexts.

⁵ Kuroda, p. 32.

⁶ Kuroda, p. 39.

⁷ Kuroda, p. 48.

⁸ Banfield, p. 38.

It is possible then to identify a »narrator« by virtue either of the »expressive/evaluative« or the »reportive« quality of discourse. An »expressive« narrative mode makes use of expressive constructions and/or incomplete sentences. A »reportive« narrative mode (indirect speech) excludes these but retains the first-person pronoun and those evaluative and relational words indicative of the speaker's attitude and situation (the expressive style may of course contain these also).

Like Kuroda, Banfield is interested in alternatives to a communicational theory of narrative and a possibility of a narrative which eliminates the »unique narrator. She identifies what she calls a »nonexpressive, nonreportive« narrative mode which, she says, »eliminates the unique narrator's privileged perspective«. ⁹ We find this narrative mode wherever the grammar does not assume a communication setting (neither »expressing« nor »reporting«).

As Kuroda notes, many modern theories of narration are, either explicitly or implicitly, under the influence of communicational theory of linguistic performance. One could cite, for example, R. Jakobson's closing remark at the Symposium on Style in Indiana, which sets forth a program for stylistics and poetics in the framework of a communicational theory of linguistic performance. ¹⁰ In this framework the relation of narrator to reader is the basic relationship underlying all narrative structures (because a »communication theory« model of language has the speaker-addressee relationship at its center). As both Kuroda and Banfield point out, not only does such a theory adequately account for the free-indirect style (which by definition is narratorless), but there is no linguistic reason to invoke such a theory at all unless the grammar itself assumes a communication setting.

Let us consider the implications of this suggestion for the narration of *As I Lay Dying*. If we except the idea that not every discourse has a narrator, we do not need to require a »narrator« except when we encounter a discourse in either a reportive or an expressive mode. We find that reportive/expressive discourse characterizes all voices — in the novel but one. Only Darl in his clairvoyant moments uses the nonexpressive, nonreportive mode. According to Kuroda and Banfield, sentences in the nonexpressive, nonreportive mode do not have a speaker. And of course we do not think of Darl-Clairvoyant as an independent entity. Darl-Clairvoyant does not call attention to himself through the use of the first-person pronoun or expressive features, nor does he report on his perceptions or the state of his consciousness. His voice »intrudes« not because it makes demands on us as a separate consciousness but because it presents a clear stylistic contrast, at the level of syntax (as well at other levels), with Darl's normal voice and with the voices of the novel's various characters. Consequently there is no linguistic reason to think of those stylistically-distinctive actions as being spoken by a narrator, real or invented.

There are also a few stylistically distinctive passages in the reportive mode, passages which, while they have a narrator, have not been assimilated to that character's style. These unassimilated passages occur in the sections assigned to Vardaman and Dewey Dell. For example, this passage from one of the sections assigned to Vardaman:

⁹ Banfield, p. 37.

¹⁰ R. Jakobson, »Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics«, T. A. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1960) pp. 350—377.

It is as though the dark were resolving him the horse out of his integrity, into an unrelated scattering of components - snuffings and stampings; smells of cooling flesh and amoniac hair; an illusion of a co-ordinated whole of splashed hide and strong bones within which, detached and secret and familiar, an is different from my is (55).

We are certainly right to think of this passage as a voice speaking on Vardaman's behalf because the following sentence, equally unrepresentative of Vardaman's style, contains an »I« which we understand to refer to Vardaman: »I see him dissolve — legs, a rolling eye, a gaudy splotching like cold clamms...« Commenting on this passage, Andre Bleikasten says that these authorial intrusions on behalf of characters »risk reviving the absolute viewpoint of the traditional novel«, that what we have here is »the omniscient narrator in disguise.«¹¹

Most of these stylistically heightened passages do not, however, have a narrating »I« or other self-referencing pronoun. Where there is no narrating »I« there can be no »omniscient narrator in disguise« and no »failed intention«. Still, to say that these passages are narratorless is only to say that they are not. To say what they are we need to examine what they do. The effect of narratorless passages in a stream-of-consciousness novel is striking. What they do is to provide the reader with direct access to the novel's external world via the novel's various characters, but these glimpses are filtered through consciousness with limited points of view. That is, what the reader perceives is the character's acts of perception, reflection, etc. The nonexpressive, nonreportive mode of narratorless passages permits an objectivity which is linguistically impossible in narrated sections.

Paradoxically, the objective direct access which is made possible by the nonexpressive, nonreportive mode lacks the immediacy of narrated passages. A number of the narratorless passages in *As I Lay Dying* have about them something of a quality of a »set piece«. As, for example, the section near the beginning of the novel which describes Jewel bringing his horse down from the pasture. It is at once one of the most violent and one of the most detached sections of narrative in the novel. It has about it that quality of dynamic immobility which has something to do with Darl-Clairvoyant's fondness for derived nominals. This quality of dynamic immobility has a great deal to do with the ability of verbals and derived nominals to »freeze« action, and to communicate a sense of latent energy. But it also has a great deal to do with what happens when the narration passes from a section with a narrator to one without a narrator. The effect is to remove the narratorless passages from the reach of time and human knowledge. These scenes are not transmitted to us by a speaker (narrator) who perceives or imagines them: They are simply »there«. And they have a great deal to do with one of the dominant features of the novel's tone: a sense of things being suspended, and by that act of suspension rendered larger than life:

We might compare the effect of two passages describing Addie as she lies dying. The first is in Cora's voice:

The quilt is drawn up to her chin, hot as it is, with only her two hands and her face outside. She is propped on the pillow, with her head raised so she can see out window, and we can hear him every time he takes up the

¹¹ Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, trans. R. Little (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 64.

ax or the saw. If we were deaf we could almost watch her face and hear him, see him. He face is wasted away so that the bones draw just under the skin in white lines. Her eyes are like two candles when you watch them gutter down into the sockets of iron-candle sticks. But the eternal and everlasting salvation and grace is not upon her. (8).

In this passage we are conscious of a narrator describing the scene for us. The first-person pronoun »we« locates us in Corais consciousness. The expressive interjection »hot as it is« and the evaluation in the last line (»the eternal and the everlasting salvation and the grace is not upon her«) imply an evaluating, judgemental consciousness. Here is the same scene in the narratorless style:

He looked up at the gaunt face framed by the window in the twilight. It is a composite picture of all time since he was a child. He drops the saw and lifts the board for her to see, watching the window in which the face has not moved. He drags a second plank into position and slants the two of them into their final juxtaposition, gesturing toward the ones yet on the ground, shaping with his empty hand in pantomime the finished box. For a while still she looks down at him the composite picture, neither with censure nor approbation. Then the face disappears (47).

Here there are no first-person pronouns, no expressive features, nothing to suggest a narrator with a special point of view, nothing to distract our attention from the scene at hand. The effect is formal, detached, portentuous.

It is, I think significant that all of the passages in the narratorless mode occur in sections assigned to Darl. What is more, they occur exclusively in sections which present Darl's second sight experience. When Darl is perceiving things in the normal way, i. e. when he is perceiving things which are directly before him, or which are available to him as memory, he speaks in the reportive mode, and in the same colloquial, predicative-subordinative style as the rest of the family. For example, here is Darl recalling an experience from his past:

When I was a boy I first learned how much better water tastes when it has set a while in a cedar bucket. Warmish-cool, with a faint taste like the hot July wind in cedar trees smells. It has to set at least six hours, and be drunk from a gourd. Water should never be drunk from a metal. And at night it is better still. I used to lie in the pallet in the hall, waiting until I could hear them all asleep so I could get up and go back to the bucket. It would be black, the shelf black... I could see may be a star or two in the bucket, and may be in the dipper a star or two before I drank. After that I was bigger, older. Then I would wait until they all went to sleep so I could lie with my shirt-tail up, hearing them asleep, feeling myself without touching myself, feeling the cool silence blowing upon my parts and wondering of Cash was yonder in the darkness doing it too, had been doing it perhaps for the last two years before I could have wanted to or could have (10—11).

Here is Darl »speaking« in the present about the scene directly in front of him (strictly speaking, this is Darl's conscious apprehension speaking):

Jewel's eyes look like pale wood in his high-blooded face. He is a head taller than any of the rest of us, always was. I told them that's why ma always whipped him and petted him more. Because he was peaking around the house more. That's why she named him Jewel I told them (17).

The two preceding scenes were directly accessible to Darl as experience and memory. But the scene below would have been accessible to him only by the second-sight. The scene is presented in the nonexpres-

sive, nonreportive, »narratorless« mode, and since Darl apprehends it by clairvoyance, the narratorless mode is precisely right. It produces a sense of events not directly perceived but simply »there«. He is off with Jewel getting a wagonload of wood when he perceives Cash driving the last nail into Addie's coffin:

... It is not yet day when Cash drives the last nail and stands stiffly up and looks down at the finished coffin, the others watched him. In the lantern light his face is calm, musing; slowly he strokes his hands on his raincoated thighs in a gesture deliberate, final and composed. Then the four of them Cash and pa and Vernon and Peabody — raise the coffin to their shoulders and turn toward the house. It is light, yet they move slowly; empty, yet they carry carefully, lifeless, yet they move, with hushed precautionary words to one another, speaking of it as though complete, it now slumbered lightly alive, waiting to come awake. On the dark floor their feet clump awkwardly, as though for a long time they have not walked on floors (75).

Earlier, while on the same errand, he had perceived the scene at Addie's window, apprehending, via clairvoyance, Addie's »gaunt face framed by the window in the twilight« and Cash »shaping with his hands in pantomime the finished box.« Other clairvoyant experiences include his perception, while he was up at the house, of Jewel bringing his horse down from the pasture (11—13), and his perception, while he was on his way to Jackson, of the scene back at Jefferson (244). The recognition of a narratorless, nonexpressive, nonreportive mode formalizes our sense as readers that these passages are somehow »made strange«, that they do not seem to belong to the consciousness that we know as Darl. Moreover if we recognize these passages as »narratorless«, we do not have to assign them to Faulkner »intruding on Darl's behalf«, we do not in other words, have to invoke Bleikasten's »omniscient narrator in disguise«. The scene presented in the nonexpressive, nonreportive mode are simply »there« we perceive them as Darl perceives them, as objects floating in time and space. This is not true of the water bucket passage or of the passage describing Jewel's eyes, or for that matter, of the passage on sleep:

In a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep what are you. And when you are emptied for sleep you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were. I do not know what I am. I do not know if I am or not... (76).

These passages are all narrated. There is a reporting »I« (When I was a boy...«, »I told them...«, »I don't know...«), and the passage contains various expressive and evaluative elements associated with that »I«. As a consequence there is no objective distance in these passages: locked inside Darl's perceiving subjectivity, we hear the family asleep, feel the cool silence, »are«, and »are not«.

I noted at the beginning of this chapter that there are two ways of dispensing altogether with the omniscient narrator. One is to do as Faulkner does in *As I Lay Dying* and replace him with series of narrators whose omniscience is limited. Faulkner's solution, while it eliminates the authorial intrusive narrator, does not, of course, dispense with narrator per se. We are presented with no fewer than 15 narrating »I's,« and their domination of the novel's narration accounts in part for the strangeness of the narratorless passages which we encounter. Virginia Woolf's solution dispenses with narrators altogether, by altering the grammar of English to present various unspoken consciousnesses

in what has come to be known as the »free indirect-style.« The stream-of-consciousness technique employed by Faulkner in *As I Lay Dying* suggests that the process of reflection occurs as internal speech, and we encounter everywhere self-referencing pronouns which refer us to the inner voice with which the consciousness addresses itself. The free-indirect style, in contrast, suggesting that the actual process of reflection occurs as internal speech. The free-indirect style distances the language which reproduces it from verbal communication in Suppressing first-and-second-person pronouns. It also fills a hiatus in the grammar by allowing constructions expressive of a speaker's state to be introduced by verbs which would normally take indirect speech (nonexpressive) complements (e. g. »He thought Good God do they want to see her dead«).

By permitting expressive constructions to be introduced by verbs which would normally take indirect speech complements, the free-indirect style overcomes one of the linguistic limitations in the kind of stream-of-consciousness narration where a narrating »I« introduces his thoughts and perceptions via indirect speech. That limitation is the exclusion of expressive elements and constructions from indirect speech contexts, the exclusion of words or constructions expressive of a speaker's state from the embedded clause of reported speech would seem to be a problem in a species of narrative concerned with presenting a character's consciousness. To be sure, a character can *describe* his state in an embedded clause, for example: »I thought that they wanted to see her dead and that thought distressed me a great deal.« But he cannot *express* his state without violating the grammar of English. The following sentence, for example, is unacceptable: »I thought that Good God do they want to see her Dead.« The grammar of the free-indirect style permits such constructions, although only in the third person and in the tense of narration.

One way around this is simply to violate the grammar, to proceed as though verbs like »think« which require indirect speech complements, can take direct speech complements. Faulkner does this freely, signaling his intention to the reader by putting a colon after the verb, for example »I would think: Anse. Why Anse. Why are you Anse.« (This grammar would normally exclude incomplete sentences in indirect speech contexts. »I would think that Anse« would be unacceptable.) Or he puts reported words in italics to suggest that they are being quoted directly, for example »I would think *Cash* and *Darl*. . . « »By this simple expedient the pauses, incomplete sentences, and expressive elements which belong to speech can be used to render thought »expressive«. Although it provides solution to some of the problems of reporting the stream-of-consciousness, I could find no instances of the free-indirect style in *As I Lay Dying*. Faulkner is able to achieve some of the same effects (e. g. »expressiveness« after verbs of mental process) without sacrificing the first-person point of view.

I have mentioned that there are certain evaluative words, although they occur in indirect speech contexts, are always attributed to the reporting speaker rather than to the speaker being reported. Here arises a somewhat different problem from the one just mentioned (the problem of certain expressive constructions which are entirely excluded from indirect speech). One might wish in a stream-of-consciousness narrative, that these evaluative words which express a character's state

could be attributed to him, even when he is reporting his words or thoughts indirectly. And so they can, but only because it happens that in this case the reporting speaker is the same person as the speaker being reported. But the effect, while fortunate, is also odd. Consider the following example, a sentence from one of Peabody's sections. »I thought may be that they have the same sort of fool ethics in heaven they have in the Medical College (40).« This is only the third sentence which Peabody »speaks«, and his use of the evaluative word »fool« tells us something about his attitude toward life and death, about what sort of person he is. Since he is the reporting speaker, there is no problem of our attributing the word »fool« to some one else, and yet because of the presence of the evaluative speaker (Peabody's voice of consciousness) from the speaker whose thought is described (Peabody himself), but to consider the evaluation as a separate »report«. Peabody and his voice of consciousness are the same person, and yet the grammar separates them. One feels that if the word »fool« is essential it would have been more satisfactory to render the reported though as a quote: »I thought: May be they have the same fool ethics in heaven . . .« In this case evaluation to the reported speaker, and the reporting »I« remains the conventional, almost invisible voice with which the consciousness addresses itself.

V. N. Volosinov, in a discussion of reported speech, notes that »analysis is the heart and soul of indirect discourse . . . An analysis simultaneous with and inseparable from transission constitutes the obligatory hallmark of all variants of indirect discourse whatsoever.«¹² This »analysis« is what makes the embedeed clauses of indirect speech reports rather than quotations. Volosinov goes on to say that this analysis can transmit to the reader information not only about the subject of the report but about »the author's attitude — his irony, humor, and so on.«¹³ What Volosinov is talking about is the tendency we have just observed in Peabody's sentence about »fool« ethics for indirect discourse to report on the reporter as well as to report the report. I suggested that, where the reporter is an »I« reporting out the content of his own consciousness, this tendency is disconcerting, and in fact Faulkner generally avoids calling attention to the reporting »I« under these circumstances. This objection disappears when the narrator is reporting the words or thoughts of others. What we get in the following passage is Peabody repeating, via indirect statement, Cash's assertion that his broken leg »never bothered none«. Peabody's statements »analyse« Cash's assertion and, as Volosinov says »at the same time they are made to accomodate the shadings of the speaker's attitude — his irony, humor, an so on.« We recognize the ironic shadings as Peabody's characteristic tone.

Don't you lie there and try to tell me you rode six days on a wagon without springs, with a broken leg and it never bothered you . . . And don't tell me it ain't going to bother you to loose sixty and square inches of skin to get that concrete off. And don't tell me it ain't going to bother you to limp around on one short leg for the balance of your life — if you walk at all again (230).

¹² V. N. Volosinov, »Reported Speech«, in Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorsky (eds.), *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 162.

¹³ p. 165.

It seems that Darl-Clairvoyant has been my major concern here and it is because this audible but invisible narrator has not been significantly accounted for. By a careful linguistic discription of style and the narrative mode we could pinpoint this elusive speaker and do equally well with the novel's identified voices of consciousness.

Sonja Valčić: FAULKNEROV DOK LEŽAH NA SAMRTI (AS I LAY DYING),
KOLIKO PRIPOVJEDAČA?

Sažetak

Ovaj članak obrađuje problem naracije u Faulknerovom romanu *Dok ležah na samrti* (*As I Lay Dying*), odnosno načinom kojim autor rješava, to j. ograničava točku gledišta »sveznajućeg pripovjedača«. Prikazana je interpretacija teorije naracije po Kurodl, te je istaknuto da se putem funkcionalne analize (performative) može doći po (Kurodl) do formalnog značenja i postojanja »sveznajućeg pripovjedača«. Primjenivši konceptualan bit lingvističkog tumačenja proizlazi da je govorni vid jezika neovisan od svoje komunikacijske funkcije što dalje navodi Kurodu da odbije ideju (obaveznog) postojanja »sveznajućeg pripovjedača«, to j. ideju da naracija obavezno mora sadržavati pripovjedača. Na taj način se može uočiti da u ovom romanu određene rečenice pripadaju raznim pripovjedačima, a da isto tako postoje i odlomci bez pripovjedača. Istaknute su pozicije lingvisti Ann Banfield, Bleikastena i Volosinova u odnosu na problem interpretacije narativne teorije specijalno karakteristične za roman *Dok ležah na samrti*. Svi »glasovi« u romanu upotrebljavaju nepravno/upravni vid govora (reportive/expressive), dok se samo jedan lik uklapa u tzv. nenaratorni vid, dakle bez pripovjedača. Faulkner ima niz pripovjedača ugraničenog »sveznanja« koji kao likovi postoje u ovom romanu, ali u isti mah on u cijelosti ne odbacuje pripovjedača. Stilističkom, lingvističkom i gramatičkom analizom ovaj članak nastoji osvijetliti Faulknerov specifičan način pripovijedanja njemu svojstvenom tehnikom toka svijesti.