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REGIONAL COMMITMENT IN EUDORA WELTY'S "PETRIFIED MAN"

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the sense of regional commitment in Eudora Welty's short story "Petrified Man." The study mainly focuses on the regional representations in the story. These representations are dedicated to The Mississippi's surroundings and how they reflect Welty's commitment to her living regions in these surroundings. Thus, the study demonstrates how Welty expresses her regional commitment to her life near The Mississippi. This life encompasses the social interactions within the society in which Welty was brought up. Therefore, Welty has a nostalgic longing for recalling this life in the context of her "Petrified Man." Accordingly, she portrays this life implicitly by expressing her nostalgic insights in the novel. Such insights are exemplified indirectly. As such, the study will apply Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of monologism, dialogism, and polyphony to analyze Welty's authorial voice projected in her narrative. On the other hand, the characters' voices will be analyzed by applying Gerard Genette's concepts of intra-diegetic and extra-diegetic narrators. The application of these concepts reveals how Welty provides a literary regional commitment in "Petrified Man."

Key Words: Dialogism, Extra-diegetic narrator, Intra-diegetic narrator, Monologism, Polyphony

1. Introduction

This article examines a very familiar piece of textual analysis concerning Eudora Welty's short story "Petrified Man." It will mainly focus on three complementary discourse presentations of the story. The first of these is Dialogism; the second, Monologism; and the third, a polyphonic mode in terms of the plurality of independent voices in the text. The transactional structures of the story's components of discourse acts, and of its evidences of cultural traits are used by Welty to emphasize her spatial concomitant relation with life styles in the southern parts of America especially the Mississippi.

Throughout the study, I will mainly apply Bakhtin's theoretical model of discourse in fiction. Consequently, I will highlight some pertinent concepts to accentuate Welty's regional style revealed in her story. This is evident in the story's plurality of both dependent and independent voices regarding the author's ideological representations in the story's contextual hints.

Using Bakhtin's terminology, I will show how "dialogism" in "Petrified Man" interweaves with the authorial "monologic" voice, which is revealed in the incarnation of the author, Eudora Welty, in the story's characterization. From this point, Bakhtin concludes that the dialogical methods support discourse analysis in quite simple forms, which may actually enhance the interpretation of a text by bringing into sharp focus elements in the literary pattern so clearly defined by such discourse methods. What is thus revealed about the dialogic, he suggests, may have particular relevance to the interpretation of the discourse; i.e.; the characters' speech, has particular relevance to the interpretation of the text i.e. the author's final outlet of his/her ideology.

In addition, Bakhtin approaches the concept of Monologism. According to Bakhtin, this term refers to the author's own ideology, which is exemplified and clarified in the characters' discourse in the text. In studying Monologism, I will use Gerard Genette's theory of "voice" as a narrative concept. Genette maintains that the narrative voice is either "intra-diegetic" or "extra-diegetic." The former refers to the internal narration of the literary text, and the latter to the external narrative stance. In "Petrified Man," for example, Leota and Mrs. Fletcher exemplify the intra-diegetic narration since they interact within the story discourse. On the other hand, Mrs. Pike and the petrified man's somehow anonymous identity embody the extra-diegetic narration because they carry out the author's external "monologic" narrative voice, which exposes social milieu in a small southern town in Mississippi. This is true to the characters' behavioural attitudes that Welty purely tackles.

Moreover, Genette divides narrators into two main types, namely, the "hetero-diegetic" narrator who does not appear as a character in the plot; like Welty's narrative presence which is implicitly revealed in the story's characterizations, and the "homo-diegetic" narrator who appears as some of the characters, like Mrs. Pike, Leota, and Mrs. Fletcher.

In studying "Petrified Man," I will rely on a number of narrative and structural stylistic theories, such as Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Michael Holquist's *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* and *Bakhtin and His World*, and Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. In elaborating my argument, I will utilize Edward Quinn's *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms*.

2. Analysis and Discussion

"Petrified Man" takes place in a small southern town in Mississippi. There are three principal characters: Leota, Mrs. Fletcher, and Mrs. Pike. Leota owns a beauty shop. She is a beautician. The story begins with Leota treating Mrs. Fletcher's hair with chemicals. They are engaged in a lengthy conversation. The whole story is written in dialogues. The main topic of their conversation is Mrs. Pike who has newly arrived to the town. She is from New Orleans. Mr. and Mrs. Pike have rented a room in Leota's house. Leota tells Mrs. Fletcher that Mrs. Pike is very smart, because she has recognized Mrs. Fletcher's pregnancy from a distance.

Mrs. Fletcher is upset because her pregnancy is obvious to other people. Leota and Mrs. Fletcher engage in the other qualities of Mrs. Pike's character. Mrs. Pike has impressed Leota in many ways. Then, Leota tells Mrs. Fletcher that she and Mrs. Pike have attended a freak show. Leota talks about the strange and frightening-looking people that she has seen in the show. She is particularly interested in the petrified man who can stand still like a statue and moves his head right and left without moving the other parts of his body. In the second part of the story, Leota and Mrs. Fletcher meet again. This time, Leota is upset with Mrs. Pike because Mrs. Pike has recognized the petrified man as a rapist who has raped four women in California. His name is Mr. Petrie. He is wanted, and there is a cash reward of five hundred dollars for his capture.

Mrs. Pike has informed the police and has taken the money. Leota is jealous of Mrs. Pike Luck. There is hardly male presence. The women in the story talk about their husbands. The only male presence in the story is the young son of Mrs. Pike. The story ends with the boy getting a sound paddling from Mrs. Fletcher for stealing old peanuts and he exclaims, "If you're so smart, why ain't you rich?" Every personality in the story is a moral freak of one kind or another. Mrs. Fletcher is jealous and judgmental of others. Leota spreads rumors and gossips with her clients.

In textual terms, the dialogic aspect is considered a relative relation between the author and his text (Abu Jweid and GhadaSasa 338). Mikhail Bakhtin describes this process as the “dialogic relations.” These relations require the “monologic mode” which represents the author’s own voice. In “Mikhail Bakhtin and the Dialogical Dimensions of the Novel,” David Patterson discusses the “dimensions” of the dialogic novel. Patterson maintains that dialogism refers to the relationship between the text and the reader: “The dialogical dimensions of the novel draw its readers into a dialogical interaction with the novel” (131). Dialogism, furthermore, depends on the authorial monologic mode (Abu Jweid and Sasa 164).

The multiplicity of discourses uttered by the characters in “Petrified Man” embodies Welty’s critical perspective of her society. In the following excerpt, the little boy, Billy Boy, embodies the complex relations between Welty and her social circle, which represents the author’s “monologic” voice: “If you’re so smart, why ain’t you rich?” (1976). Here, the writer appears relatively free from the constrictions of society.

Bakhtin also introduces the term “heteroglossia” which means the “coexistence” of a number of discourses in one “linguistic code.” In this sense, heteroglossia is similar to dialogism. In “Discourse in the Novel,” Bakhtin’s discusses the importance of language to heteroglossia; Bakhtin contends:

From this point of view, literary language itself is only one of these heterolog languages-and in its turn is also stratified into languages (generic, period-bound and others). And this stratification and heteroglossia, once realized, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing. (1199)

Accordingly, the authorial voice is represented through the author’s commitment to the text (Abu Jweid, Termizi, and Majeed 73). This is obvious in the author’s utilization of textual devices that pertain to his/her monologic mode. Clearly, “Petrified Man” reflects the function of such textual devices. Welty’s exposition of her characters’ comments reveals her characters’ “dialogic” mode since the whole story is written in dialogues. The quotation below foregrounds the authorial relationship with the outer society.

“Well,” said Leota,” at first Mr. Pike didn’t want to do anything about it. Can you feature that! Said he kinda liked that ole bird and said he was real nice to ‘em, lent ‘em money or somethin’. But Mrs. Pike simply tole him he could just go to hell, and I can see her point. she says, ‘You ain’t worked a lick in six months, and her I make five hundred dollars in two seconts, and what thanks do I get for it? You go to hell, Canfield,’ she says.” (49)

Commenting on the same topic of the discourse relation literary texts, Julian Wolfreys *et al*, in *Key Concepts in Literary Theory*, approach the stylistic nature of heteroglossia. Wolfreys *et al* describe heteroglossia as:

Term refers to the many discourses that occur within a given language on a microlinguistic scale Heteroglossia literally signifies as ‘different-speech-ness.’ Bakhtin employed the term as a means of explaining the hybrid nature of the modern novel and its many competing utterances. (50)

Furthermore, the dialogic relationship between Leota and Mrs. Fletcher highlights this assumption. This dialogic relationship will, in turn, lead to Welty’s monologic notion that society suffers from jealousy, rumors, and gossips. These themes have been repeatedly a subject of observation by Welty. In “Petrified Man” Welty’s idea is revealed in the following discourse:

“Did Mrs. Pike like the petrified man?” asked Mrs. Fletcher.

“Not as much as she did the others,” said Leota deprecatingly. “And then she likes a man to be a good dresser, and all that.”

“Is Mr. Pike a good dresser?” asked Mrs. Fletcher sceptically.

“Oh, well, yeah,” said Leota, “but he’s twelve or fourteen years older’n her. She ast Lady Evangeline about him.” (1971)

At this point, Welty's appreciation of her society brings about another apparent theme, namely life experience. As the discourse proceeds, the story clarifies the southern ways of life. In so doing, she depicts the behavioral norms of her characters. Here, the dynamic nature of Mrs. Pike, for example, serves as a representation of such nature: "Lord, yes, she's from New Orleans. Ever'body in New Orleans believes ever'thing spooky. One of 'em in New Orleans before it was raided says to Mrs. Pike one summer she was goin' to go from State to State and meet some grey-headed men, and, sure enough, she says she went on a beautician convention up to Chicago ... "(1972). In addition, their locomotive experience carries out Welty's contiguous depiction of her southern regions. Viewing her societal situation as a customary prerogative, Welty portrays it through the use of restricted narrative.

Additionally, the dialogic nature of a fictional work has a close affinity to the all-knowing narrator (Abu Jweid and Termizi 16). Such narrative aspect constitutes a vital vehicle for more heterolog and dialogic voice of the author. Since "Petrified Man" is completely told by an omniscient narrator, Welty's narrator conveys her perspective on the regional surroundings. In his treatment of *heteroglossia* in *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory*, Patrick O'Neill discusses Gerard Genette's classification of the kinds of narrators who interact in the text:

In terms of narrative level, since every narrator either produces or is part of a particular narrative reality-or, as Genette calls it, a diegesis – every narrative first of all has an extradiegetic narrator who produces it; any character within that primary narrative who also produces a narrative is an intradiegetic narrator; and any character within that (second-degree) narrative is a hypodiegetic narrator.... In terms of participation in the narrative reality presented, any one of these three kinds of narrator may either play a greater or lesser role as a character in his or her own narrative, in which case Genette speaks of a homodiegetic narrator, or may be entirely absent from it, in which case the narrator is said to be heterodiegetic. (60-61)

From the beginning of the story, Leota and Mrs. Fletcher initiate their speech: "Reach in my purse and git me a cigarette without no powder in it if you kin, Mrs. Fletcher, honey," (1967). Here, it is obvious that Welty directs her story towards the modern qualities, such as wealth using social issues. Consequently, she enhances the life experience, which is typical to her story. Furthermore, Leota's wealthy state represents this social issue: "Mrs. Pike is this lady from New Orleans," said Leota, puffing, and pressing into Mrs. Fletcher's scalp with strong red-nailed fingers" (1967).

Additionally, narrative communication involves both intratextual communication between the characters, narrator and narratee, and extratextual communication between the author and the reader (Abu Jweid and Termizi 178). In this case, it is obvious that the structural implication of text in "Petrified Man" offers references to this analysis. The discourse between Leota and Mrs. Fletcher, for example, illustrates the intratextual communication between the characters. At the same time, it refers implicitly to the extratextual nature of the text, which tackles the social concerns like gossips. Welty, in "Petrified Man" alludes to this communication:

"Who's Mrs. Pike?" asked Mrs. Fletcher, settling back. Hidden in this den of curling fluid and henna packs, separated by a lavender swing-door from the other customers, who were being gratified in other booths, she could give her curiosity its freedom. She looked expectantly at the black part in Leota's yellow curls as she bent to light the cigarette." (1967)

As for the intratextual relationship, there are different communicative relations among the characters (Abu Jweid 530). In this sense, it is vital to show how the characters embody the author's voice. The "dialogic" voices in "Petrified Man" share independent characteristics. The textual discourses of the story interact with each other differently (Abu Jweid and Hardev Kaur 4). The following quotation demonstrates the intratextual relationship between Leota and other characters: "This won't take but a minute," said Leota."Who is it you got in there, old Horse Face? Just cast your mind back and try to remember who your lady was yestiddy who happ'm to mention that my customer was pregnant, that's all. She's dead to know". (1968). Being so, the story "levels" of "Petrified Man" clarify the dual relationship between the author and society and invite comment on

the writer's social vision. Within the dialogic context, another distinct feature emerges, which, at first glance, appears relevant to the traits of discourse.

O'Neill describes such narrative aspects as: "The fundamental discrimination upon which all modern narratological theory is founded, however... is precisely that between the two 'levels' of *story* and *discourse*" (20). Similarly, Toril Moi talks about the relation between Kristeva's and Bakhtin's intertextual theories. In *The Kristeva Reader*; Moi argues:

In this context Kristeva's insistence on the importance of the speaking subject as the principal object for linguistic analysis would seem to have its roots in her own reading of Bakhtinian 'dialogism' as an open-ended play between the text of the subject and the text of the addressee, an analysis which also gives rise to the Kristevan concept of 'intertextuality.' (34)

In a similar way, Welty's text represents a dialogic relationship between the reader and the author. In so doing, Welty introduces a thematic observation of the public opinion about women. For example, the following excerpt embodies the women's lives as workers in a seemingly conservative society:

He belongs to Mrs. Pike. She got her a job but it was Fay's Millinery. He oughtn't to try on those ladies' hats, they come down over his eyes like I don't know what. They just git to look ridiculous, that's what, an' of course he's gonna put 'em on: hats. They tole Mrs. Pike they didn't appreciate him hangin' around there. Here, he couldn't hurt a thing. (1969)

Here, Mrs. Pike represents Welty's social critique. In turn, the reader absorbs the text's meaning. This problematic depiction demonstrates the cultural dimension, which Welty writes about. Simultaneously, the author's critical notion is conveyed from inside the textual discourse.

Michael Holquist echoes the same idea in *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*. Yet, Holquist discusses the relationship between Kristeva and Bakhtin's concept of the textual "voice." Bakhtin, Holquist argues, replaces Kristeva's "singular unified subject" with the common relation between the "self" and "others." According to Bakhtin, others influence every person in an inevitable close way; thereby no voice can be said in isolation. Holquist comments:

In dialogism, the very capacity to have consciousness is based on otherness. This otherness is not merely a dialectical alienation on its way to a sublation that will endow it with a unifying identity in higher consciousness. On the contrary: in dialogism is otherness. More accurately, it is the differential relation between a center and all that is not that center. (18)

Furthermore, Kristeva discusses the textual subject. According to Kristeva, the subject's position indicates the writer, characters, and the pronoun "I." Therefore, it is divided into "the subject of enunciation" and "the subject of utterance." In *A Concise Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, Jeremy Hawthorn comments on these terms as follows:

We can note that the important distinction between *utterance* and *statement* is that the former term links that which is uttered to its human originator, whereas the latter term concentrates attention on to the purely verbal result... *utterance*, that is to say, it calls to mind the *act* of producing a form of words which involves a human SUBJECT. In contrast, when enonce [enunciation] is used the intention is normally to consider a form of words independently from their context-bound association with a human subject. (69)

Pursuing this further, in "Petrified Man" the subject of utterance and the subject of enunciation interweave with each other. The following discourse about Mrs. Pike's age illustrates the function of the subject of utterance and the subject of enunciation: "Mrs. Pike's thirty-three, born in January, an Aquarian. He could move his head- like this. A course his head and mind ain't a joint, so to speak, and I guess his stomach ain't, either-not yet, anyways. But see-his food, he eats it, and it goes down, see, and then he digests it"

(1971). Purportedly, Mrs. Pike's age, food, and life experience reveal the subject of utterance where the omniscient narrator who exemplifies the authorial narrative stance directly reports her words. This clarifies the textual nature of discourse. In contrast, the subject of enunciation does not interact with the present discourse. The pronoun "I," however, illustrates the authorial "subject position" which indicates the nature of the text's social concerns.

In *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms*, Edward Quinn tackles the textual function of the omniscient narrator. Fictional works more or less represent the author's view through the text. The omniscient narrator, therefore, carries out the author's ideology; Quinn writes that the omniscient narrator is a "term for a type of FICTION in which the third-person NARRATOR has complete knowledge of the actions and thoughts of the characters. Frequently taken to be the 'voice' of the author, the omniscient narrator is the most common type of storytelling" (304).

In the same manner, Welty's heterodiegetic narrator does not play any part in the whole narrative. Consequently, he represents the seeking eye of the authorial position who knows more than the characters themselves. For example, Welty's narrator observes the textual reality through direct reporting of the author's depiction. In her short story, Welty describes the southern life styles and social problems of the time to comment on her community status: "Sure. See, the fortune-teller- I went back and had my other palm read, since we've got to rent the room agin-said my lover was goin' to work in Vicksburg, so I don't who she could mean, unless she meant Fred. And Fred ain't workin' here-that much is so" (1974). Here, social human types, such as fortune-tellers dominate the habitual life of the southern regions and thus become a typical image peculiar, to these places which accentuate public opinion about people relations in one area.

In "The Return of Omniscience in Contemporary Fiction," Paul Dawson discusses the dual nature of the omniscient narrator. Dawson argues: "This narrator's divulgence of omniscient knowledge ranges from omniscience to free suppression, depending on the artistic strategy required" (147-148). To illustrate, Welty's omniscient narrator observes the "omniscient" relations in the text more than the characters themselves. This is because the omniscient narrator mainly reports on events that take place in "Petrified Man".

Whether they designate the social or cultural aspects, fictional settings play essential roles in carrying the plot actions as if they were real. Regarding the spacious setting, O'Neill discusses the "psychological" effects of fictional settings. These effects are made for technical goals; O'Neill writes: "the setting reflecting the mood of the action or the psyche of the characters or both has been standard in device in literary texts for several centuries" (48). O'Neill, moreover, argues that settings elevate the reader's "interaction" with literary texts. O'Neill further adds, "The reader's reaction to the story presented can thus certainly be coloured significantly by the particular setting chosen" (48). This is clear in Welty's diverse spacious setting, which covers a wide range of southern parts of America like New Orleans, Mississippi, California, and others. This, in turn, might help the reader to conceptualize the reality of such southern regions.

In addition, intertextual theorists, however, tackle the loss of the subject in language (Abu Jweid and Termizi 1070). This explains the "apersonal" nature of language in general to allude to both the speaker positions and other people. This is clear in John Anthony Cuddon's and Claire Preston's *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Cuddon's and Preston maintain that:

He [The French linguist, Emile Benveniste] distinguishes between the 'personal' and 'apersonal' aspects of language. In one sense 'I' is personal; in other, apersonal. When apersonal, 'I' is nothing other than 'the person who utters the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic instance 'I.'" (875)

To bring that into play, Leota's speech in the following words embodies the linguistic feature of the pronoun 'I':

"Well," said Leota," at first Mr. Pike didn't want to do anything about it. Can you feature that! Said he kinda liked that ole bird and said he was real nice to 'em, lent 'em money or somethin'. But Mrs. Pike simply told him he could just go to hell, and I can see her point . she says, 'You ain't worked a lick in six months, and her I make five hundred dollars in two seconts, and what thanks do I get for it? You go to hell, Canfield,' she says" (1975).

Here, the pronoun 'I' refers to Leota, who exemplifies the subject of utterance. Being so, it represents the 'personal' linguistic nature of the subject of utterance. Simultaneously, this pronoun refers to the 'apersonal' linguistic discourse since it is "lost" in textual writing, i.e., the 'I' refers to the authorial instance, which directs the 'personal' linguistic instance of the character (Leota) in the text. In this 'apersonal' utterance, Welty, as an author, longs for a more just and fair social life. Furthermore, Leota's speech exemplifies the nature of the southern life style and spoken language, which linguistically does not fit the normal language qualities. Thus, it leads to an inherent thematic insight, which Welty explicitly observes.

In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Bakhtin focuses on "various forms and degrees" of the dialogic relations in discourse. Bakhtin argues that utterances in literary discourses are directed towards some objects:

Discourse lives, as it were, beyond itself, in a living impulse [napravlennost] toward the object; if we detach ourselves completely from this impulse all we have left is the naked corps of the word, from which we can learn nothing at all about the social situation or the fate of a given word in life.... The whole matter consists in the fact that there may be, between "languages," highly specific dialogic relations; no matter how these languages are conceived, they may all be taken as particular points of view on the world. (292-93)

In the course of "Petrified Man", Welty provides a variety of dialogic discourses, which relate to the authorial points of view. The quotation below, for example, reveals this authorial position. The following utterance is initiated from the omniscient point of view where the author's narrator directly addresses the reader: "From everywhere ladies began to gather round to watch the paddling. Billy Boy kicked both Leota and Mrs. Fletcher as hard as he could, Mrs. Fletcher with her new fixed smile" (1976). In this situation, the object of the discourse's utterance is, therefore, directed toward the chaotic social community, which is the subject of Welty's critique. Moreover, Mrs. Fletcher mediates on the community's closeness to the region in which some social customs take place and affect its people: "Hidden in this den of curling fluid and henna packs, separated by a lavender swing-door from the other customers, who were being gratified in other booths, she could give her curiosity its freedom. She looked expectantly at the black part in Leota's yellow curls as she bent to light the cigarette" (1967).

Furthermore, Bakhtin maintains that in the monologic voice of the characters do not appear in the author's abstract voice. Instead, they depend on the author's monologic voice to carry out his critique in the text. Bakhtin *et al.*, in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, put it in these terms:

Language is regarded from the speaker's standpoint as if there were only one speaker who is not related to other participants in speech communication. If the role of the other is taken into account at all, it is the role of a listener, who understands the speaker only passively. The utterance is adequate to its object (i.e., the content of the uttered thought) and to the person who is pronouncing the utterance. Language essentially needs only a speaker-one speaker-and an object for his speech. (68)

Apparently, the multiplicity of voices in "Petrified Man" provide rich examples, which illustrate Bakhtin's concept of dialogism. Similarly, in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Bakhtin talks about the dialogic or heteroglossic novel: "It [heteroglossia] serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking and the refracted intention of the author" (324). Here, Bakhtin describes heteroglossia synonymously with dialogism. Examples of heteroglossia are evident in Welty's narrative discourse. In the following excerpt, the author

portrays the social position of Mrs. Fletcher who, with other characters, became aggressive towards other people: "If a certain party hadn't found it out and spread it around, it wouldn't be too late even now," said Mrs. Fletcher frostily, but Leota was almost choking her with the cloth, pinning it so tight, and she couldn't speak clearly. She paddled her hands in the air until Leota wearily loosened her" (1973).

In this respect, heteroglossia provides a kind of interaction between the text and the author (Abu Jweid and Termizi 137). The description of Mrs. Fletcher represents the author's monologic perspective on the dominant community. Thus, the dialogic nature of this story involves Mrs. Fletcher and Leota simultaneously. Mrs. Fletcher recognizes her change through some social problems like gossip. By its nature, dialogism occurs when Welty reveals her social ideological vision through the characters' discourse. Consequently, society suffering from such problems becomes more "spooky" and frightening: "Lord, yes, she's from New Orleans. Ever'body in New Orleans believes ever'thing spooky. One of 'em in New Orleans before it was raided says to Mrs. Pike one summer she was goin' to go from State to State and meet some grey-headed men, and, sure enough, she says she went on a beautician convention up to Chicago" (1972).

The representation of cultural reality is faced by many challenges (Abu Jweid 102). Foremost, we have seen southern life styles cope with hegemonic forces within and outside the society. We have also seen regional culture measured constantly against its social life experience, especially in modern qualities, which often exemplify the public opinion attitudes to the spoken language, women's status, social problems, and so forth. Obviously, it is in the work of Welty that socio-cultural images of life experiences are perpetuated. It may be observed that positive and impressive aspects of human traditions are under-explored and maintained by a southern writer. In her eagerness to apply self-critique as a strategy, Welty mostly tends to focus on the human aspects of her culture.

3. Conclusion

This article has focused on Welty's spatial concomitant relation with life styles in the southern parts of America, especially the Mississippi surroundings in "Petrified Man." Welty has a profound vision of her national geographical features in her society. She incarnates these features into her narrative where regional aspects of the Mississippi are exposed and portrayed in the story. Welty uses her own cultural insights to negotiate her natural surroundings in the story's fictional events.

Thus, the study has applied fictional discourse concepts to analyze Welty's fictional treatment of her geographical surroundings. Bakhtin's concepts of monologism and dialogism are applied. The concept of monologism refers to the author's abstract voice. This is projected in the fictional characters' voices which reflected the author's implicit voice. The dialogic voice, or polyphonic utterances, exemplifies the author's (Eudora Welty) desire to represent her geographical or natural surroundings in her story.

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