



Kent Academic Repository

Valente, Pete (1995) "*Irreconcilable antagonisms*" in *Faulkner and Conrad: The Nigger of the 'Narcissus' and As I Lay Dying*. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) thesis, University of Kent.

Downloaded from

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/86075/> The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

The version of record is available from

<https://doi.org/10.22024/UniKent/01.02.86075>

This document version

UNSPECIFIED

DOI for this version

Licence for this version

CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives)

Additional information

This thesis has been digitised by EThOS, the British Library digitisation service, for purposes of preservation and dissemination. It was uploaded to KAR on 09 February 2021 in order to hold its content and record within University of Kent systems. It is available Open Access using a Creative Commons Attribution, Non-commercial, No Derivatives (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>) licence so that the thesis and its author, can benefit from opportunities for increased readership and citation. This was done in line with University of Kent policies (<https://www.kent.ac.uk/is/strategy/docs/Kent%20Open%20Access%20policy.pdf>). If y...

Versions of research works

Versions of Record

If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher's web site. Cite as the published version.

Author Accepted Manuscripts

If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title of article'. To be published in *Title of Journal*, Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

Enquiries

If you have questions about this document contact ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our [Take Down policy](https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies) (available from <https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies>).

**"Irreconcilable Antagonisms" in
Faulkner and Conrad: *The Nigger of
the 'Narcissus'* and *As I Lay Dying***

Pete Valente

**Submission for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy**

University of Kent at Canterbury

10th July 1995

Supervisor: Dr Keith Carabine



IMAGING SERVICES NORTH

Boston Spa, Wetherby
West Yorkshire, LS23 7BQ
www.bl.uk

BEST COPY AVAILABLE.

VARIABLE PRINT QUALITY

Abstract

Faulkner and Conrad possessed marked affinities in personal history, moral vision and narrative technique. They wrote in response to "irreconcilable antagonisms"; their common preoccupations and attitudes are grounded in temperamental affinities which were rooted in their own personal, familial and cultural histories. There are clear similarities between Conrad's Ukraine and Faulkner's South. The work of Mikhail Bakhtin supplies the 'key' or 'enabling methodology' for a comparative study of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and *As I Lay Dying*. The thesis is divided into two parts, which are, themselves, divided into titled sections. There are three introductory sections which aim to provide a critical 'map' for the reader. We then look at the ways in which Conrad and Faulkner represent and give voice to simple people. This is followed by an examination of the relationship between figural and narratorial voices in *The Nigger* and the ways in which Faulkner uses the limited voices of individual characters to perform functions traditionally associated with the omniscient narrator. The issue of narratorial 'unreliability' and 'inconsistency' in both books is also explored. In the second part, we consider the pervasive relationship or 'congruence' between narrative and value-structures, a feature which the novels share. Our sense of this relationship grows directly out of the notion that they are composed of competing figural and narratorial voices. We look also at some of the major differences and similarities between the novels' value-schemes. We go on to examine how language is seen to relate to values. We then consider some of the implications or consequences of this relationship for notions of community and human solidarity. We conclude with an examination of the attitude of the authors, themselves, to their own work, especially in terms of their 'public' and 'private' voices.

Introduction

Introductory theoretical observations

The object of this section and the two that follow it is to provide a 'map' for the reader, to explain the critical terms I intend to use and to deal with some of the methodological implications of dialogism. The use of a Bakhtinian model clearly has certain consequences. Let me state at the outset that the orientation of this thesis is neither socio-historical nor class-based. Its emphases are rather on the ethical/metaphysical and, in a broad sense, the phenomenological, i.e. that which has to do with individual experiences and perceptions. This orientation could well pose problems for the employment of a Bakhtinian model.

My argument does not focus on the socioeconomic determinants of voice. This is not to say that Faulkner and Conrad ignore class as a constituent element in the construction of voice or world-view. It is rather that they (as I) do not see the socioeconomic or sociohistorical as foundational in the production of individual or communal consciousness. Even if we accept a neo-Marxian postulation of a direct, determining relation between socioeconomic status and idiolect, I do not believe that it helps us to read the work of Faulkner and Conrad because *they* do not accept it. It seems clear to me that what lies at the heart of the work of both writers is precisely a consciousness of the futility or irrelevance of such postulations.

For Conrad and Faulkner, the notion of voice is rooted in the idea of individual psychology and the isolation of the subject. This is played against a backdrop of (Christian) ethics and moral ambivalence. We cannot criticize either writer for failing to produce novels of social realism. They are not concerned, necessarily, with giving a 'faithful' version of social reality or writing in order to buttress some social theory or other. They are concerned rather with

making their simple people/speakers true (as they see it) to experience and the values of empiricism rather than theory.

I am not unduly interested in exploring the historical or social background of the novels though I am happy to assert their significance and the validity of readings that employ orientations other than my own. My preoccupations are to do with the way in which Faulkner and Conrad convey the moral consciousness and imaginative life of their subjects. Faulkner and Conrad are concerned with the way human beings see and experience themselves; neither the pretensions of a supposed sociohistorical 'objectivity' nor the mysteries and indeterminacies of the Unconscious are ultimately of interest to them.

It is an aspect of our condition that we do not see ourselves as sociohistorical constructs and that despite the protestations of theorists we fail to experience ourselves as nodes in which class and gender discourses coincide. A Marxist might assert this phenomenon as one of 'alienation', where individuals are 'seduced' from their 'true' or 'objective' identity; this seduction is commonly linked with the degenerative effects of alienating forms of economic organization (e.g. capitalism). This is a view which Faulkner and Conrad implicitly yet categorically reject.

Though we may accept that individuals are materially constituted in social relation, it is the truth of subjective experience which is central to the work of these writers. We rarely if ever experience our emotional and moral life as conditional or constructed: we rather experience it as *real*. Further, the subjective experiences of others cannot be as real for an individual as his own. This leads to the notion of the isolation of the individual and has clear implications for the possibilities of collective human action. Each subject struggles under constant and conflicting external and internal pressures/demands.

My foregrounding of the ethical and the experiential follows as a direct consequence of the above. My emphases

merely and necessarily reflect those of my chosen authors and of their tales. If this were not the case, I'd be criticizing them purely for their suppressions and omissions and for not having produced other kinds of writing. It is not that they elide class differences under a dubious indeterminacy or that they wilfully obfuscate. It is precisely the point that speakers who apparently belong to the same class and who speak the same language do not agree.

In the end, we are not merely blank pages on which the discourses of a dominant culture are indelibly and unchangeably inscribed. It may be that, as Bakhtin asserts, the word in language half-belongs to someone else: to whom, however, does the other half belong? I believe that there is a private property in language. I take as my starting point Tzvetan Todorov's fine book on Bakhtin and his school.

Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle is both a biographical and critical survey/account. It deals with the way in which the writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Volosinov shift in emphasis over time and how they reinforce one another. Todorov works, however, to elide or to ignore the differences between these writers and attempts to impose a unity of meaning or consistency on writings which are as diverse as they are similar.

Todorov readily accepts the scientism of Medvedev's *The Formal Method in Literary Theory* and Volosinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. In his anxiety to make the writings of the Bakhtin school consistent or at least broadly complementary, Todorov fails to note major differences between Volosinov and Bakhtin in particular. For Volosinov there is nothing beyond or behind the social as far as language is concerned. I agree with Todorov that Bakhtin often implicitly asserts "the predominance of the social over the individual".¹ However, this does not mean, as Todorov appears to assume, that Bakhtin is oblivious to the significance of the individual in the sense of 'the

experiencing subject'. The individual is hardly annihilated or negated by the preëminence of the social.

Certainly, on the level of individual consciousness, a sense of the "predominance of the social" is rarely of the first importance. This preëminence is taxonomical or scientific rather than of direct relevance to the construction of our individual voice and our sense of how it is constructed. As Todorov himself implies, dialogism is intrinsically linked with "Bakhtin's concept of human personality".² Again, in the main, we experience ourselves as self-willed and autonomous creatures, not merely as the victims of social forces. Bakhtin, unlike Volosinov, constantly asserts the existence of something behind or beyond language. Todorov dismisses Bakhtin's frequent use of terms such as "soul" and "conscience" without really dealing with them or confronting what they are doing in the text. He appears to regard them as a slightly embarrassing dysfunctional tendency or anomaly, and does not address their significance, i.e. he resists affective humanist or neo-Christian interpretations.

Todorov dismisses what he sees as evidence of a vestigial Christianity or humanism in Bakhtin as embodied in terms such as "spirit" and "conscience". As Todorov is aware, such terms belong to a vocabulary or world-view radically different from the social reductionism of Volosinov. Todorov is clearly keen because of his own prejudices and predilections to elevate or emphasize certain aspects of Bakhtin's writing at the expense of others. Todorov is of course by no means alone in this tendency to claim Bakhtin as 'one of his own'. However, I don't want to become embroiled in a debate to do with Todorov's motives. Neither do I want to get bogged down in a discussion of who really wrote what in the Bakhtinian canon. It is enough to say that the way in which Todorov approaches Bakhtin is nicely captured in Julia Kristeva's definition of structuralism in 'The Ruin of Poetics': "that process of treating 'human' and 'social' factors scientifically".³

Todorov tends to attribute the utterances and observations of writers, whom I believe differ in substance, to a Frankensteinian composite, the Bakhtin/Volosinov/Medvedev monster. Unlike Todorov who seems bent on 'claiming' the Bakhtin school for a given critical or intellectual tradition, I wish merely to use him rather than to claim him for anything in particular. Todorov misunderstands Bakhtin's notion of the 'social'. Bakhtin is not interested in material objects nor is he concerned with discourse as a material object. His point is that the very nature of discourse lies outside the realm of the materialist philosopher or of the scientist. This distinction is borne out in the work of Faulkner and Conrad where discourse becomes itself the focus of enquiry (discourse).

My intention is to concentrate on the work that is commonly attributed to Bakhtin alone. In response to possible criticisms of political, economic and historical 'deletions' in this thesis, let me say that I do not aim to approach either Bakhtin or his circle through his interpreters nor through the operation of some 'master code', e.g. Marxism. Further, I intend to use Bakhtin's ideas judiciously if not selectively and to depart from or to develop his ideas as I see fit. The validity of this strategy depends in the end on the fruit that it bears though, of course, I do not pretend to have exhausted the possible applications of Bakhtin's ideas to the study of my chosen texts.

Faulkner and Conrad write about the antagonisms and conflicts of human existence. Clearly, these conflicts are partly grounded in social conflict or, rather, it is in the domain of the social that these conflicts often manifest themselves. These considerations are of scant importance to simple people. Indeed, even for the sophisticated, knowledge and 'awareness' rarely prove useful in themselves. Intellectuals often merely enjoy the dubious blessings of the observer, knowing why they suffer or experience conflict without the capacity to end it.

So intelligence or privileged consciousness/knowledge guarantee little, cf. Darl or Hightower. In one way or another, concepts of the social generally fail to impinge on the way people experience themselves. This is particularly true in the case of the simple. It is not that simple people do not experience existential suffering, alienation and so forth, it is rather that, for the most part, they lack the words to express what they feel to others, as well as to themselves. Antagonism and conflict are a feature of the experience of all human beings; that these conflicts are rooted in the sociopolitical does not alter the fact that this is not the way that such conflict manifests itself for most people.

The way we see ourselves often varies markedly from the material 'reality' of what we are: the product of biological, evolutionary and sociohistorical forces, a 'bag of bones', a skin-bound biological unit. For some of the more apocalyptic critical and philosophical developments of the last quarter of a century, there may well have been a 'crisis of the individual'. But as Umberto Eco wryly observes, if an individual receives a ticket for a traffic violation, it is he and no-one else who must pay it.⁴ We may add for our own part that if an individual breaks a leg or contracts HIV, then it is that individual and no other (at least as far as that individual is concerned) that suffers. No human subject can truly experience the experience of the other in precisely the same way as that other.

Todorov, working within the limitations of his assumptions, ends up concluding far from satisfactorily that "there is also a biological and individual 'I' experienced but it remains inaccessible". Todorov insists on constructing a pseudo-scientific unity out of the sometimes disparate writings of the Bakhtin school: as Kristeva points out however, Bakhtin seeks "to pose the problems, not solve them".⁵ I look to Bakhtin to provide me with a way 'into' my subject. Todorov describes the object of what he calls

translinguistics (Bakhtinian critical theory) as "the stable, non-individual, forms of discourse".⁶ Through Bakhtin, we can build up a sense of the personal voice, the individual utterance, not just a depersonalized concept of 'voice'. Todorov is quoting from Bakhtin when he states that "Meaning is personal".⁷

It is precisely to the realm of 'personal meaning' that the work of Faulkner, Conrad and Bakhtin give us access. It may be true that if there *is* a private property in language then it is a construct: it remains, however, a powerful human drive and a perhaps indestructible (and necessary) illusion, one which cannot be attributed merely to the dysfunctionality of bourgeois or, for that matter, feudal culture. People do not express or feel themselves in the way that Marxist or even liberal ideologues would like them to: it is the way in which simple people feel and express themselves that Faulkner and Conrad claim to be rendering.

Politics, sociology and the historical are of secondary importance for these writers who are more interested in the politics of experience, and subjective rather than 'objective' realities. Historical conflict may be the source of vocal division, but in the end our experience is more rooted in the biological, the phenomenological and existential. The great movements of history ultimately resolve themselves in a myriad individual 'choices', coerced or otherwise. We may be constructed in social relation but this is rarely the only or the main way in which we experience ourselves.

It would be futile to tell Dewey Dell for example that her reality is constituted entirely in the social domain. Even if she were able to understand what was being said, she would remain inarticulate and would continue to feel isolated. The kinds of 'objective' criteria, e.g. class, are of little or no use when it comes to dramatizing the inner consciousness of the simple and the 'voiceless'. For me, as I believe for Conrad and Faulkner, the controlling model for their speakers

is one of competing subjectivities. This model implies radical subjectivism and isolation of the speaker.

It may be that the crewmen see themselves superficially as members of the same craft, humble workers, the exploited and so forth, or the Bundrens may see themselves as members of the same family. Such determinations (identifications) tend to be insufficient and ultimately do not stand up to the kinds of strains imposed on them. Moreover, they are often the result of a kind of enforced 'legitimizing' (status-guaranteeing) conformity to which individuals subscribe out of a fear of social isolation.

The criticism has been made of my methodology that it turns on a single issue, i.e. that if language dialogizes and therefore relativizes all judgements, all values and all semantic instances, are not all language-users (in and outside the text) subject to a debilitating epistemological crisis and to a subsequent anxiety over forms of authority whether based in character, ethics or politics? The answer may be an unpalatable affirmative, though anxiety may *not* be a substitute for argument. More seriously, the question essentially addresses the problem of how to halt a slide into arid relativism.

Of course, I could, as I have said, use Marx or the Bible as a stable set of absolute values. The point is that the positing of a crisis in authority need not lead down the road of relativism. I think it is axiomatic in Bakhtin that far from describing a universe in which all values are relative, his view is deeply valorized; not all values are equal. Bakhtin is closer to Christ in this respect, just as Volosinov is to that other deity, Marx. Further, the closures and themes and value-structure of the novels themselves problematically hierarchize the values which they present. Heteroglossia does not imply 'no values'.

A sense of community based on an aggregation of subjectivities does not necessarily rely on the Conradian 'necessary lie' nor on the New Critical ploy of 'natural

harmony'. Even if this were the case, to characterize these 'solutions' as tired releases betrays the anxiety of the rationalist heresy. If reality were an easily and objectively determinable/measurable quality/quantity, there would presumably be no problem. Truth-claims whether made by Anse Bundren or reactionary historians are always limited and contingent.

How can we halt the slide into relativism? It is in the novels' closures, their ethical implications and in Faulkner's and Conrad's view of human subjectivity (which are not scientific) that we can best seek the answer. Clearly, as far as these authors are concerned, the certainties of historical and social materialism do not deepen our understanding of *who* we are, only of *what* we are. The human voice is anchored in ideology, but ideology here is a system of ideas and assumptions which are ethical rather than socioeconomic in their genesis and derive ultimately from the Christo-humanist world-view or the primitivist/romantic tradition, as Faulkner and Conrad, in my opinion, believed.

It is an important aspect of my task as an interpreter of these novels to take them on their own terms rather than exposing them to a set of controlling ideas which exist only outside the text and pretending that such a reading (which depends more often than not on the ingenuity of the critic) constitutes a validating 'inter-textuality'. The notion of radical indeterminacy which informs my thesis, as the 'battle' between Anse and Addie make clear, turns not on issues of class or ultimately of gender but on the idea of the moral dilemma and of ethical ambivalence, i.e. the struggle of value against value which is irresolvable. This indeterminacy is both a reflection and a determinant of the indeterminacy of language.

The interaction of the speaking subject and the language he uses is intimately connected with the condition of human isolation, subjectivity and egotism/individual needs. Of course, historical and social factors play a part; it is

simply that the 'coördinates' of the worlds of Faulkner and Conrad do not match these concerns. The terms of my reading are not merely the upshot of a particularly conservative reading of Bakhtin; they stem from the work of the writers themselves. Semantic indeterminacy is linked to ethical indeterminacy and the continuing and ineluctable crisis in values which despite grand theories and the taxonomies of the sociologist continue as essential to our sense of who we are. It is no accident that what I see as the pervasive relationship between narrative and value-structure in the novels provides a main feature of this thesis.

At this point, let me acknowledge my considerable debt to Bruce Henricksen's "The Construction of the Narrator in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*". In a sense, the object of any thesis is to convince the reader of the validity of the assertions the writer is making. So the writer is working for consensus or a species of solidarity between himself and his reader. This solidarity is precisely of the kind that Conrad claims he is seeking in the preface to *The Nigger*.

Henricksen recognizes the phenomenon of authorial coercion when he writes of the 'I' narrator who ends the novel:

This narrator reveals Conrad's uncomfortable awareness of how the authorial voice is shaped to implied readers. Although, according to the preface the artist should make us see, the author who is shaped by public demand may well be serving a societal will to blindness [. . .] this romanticizing narrator is also a spokesman for Conrad's own conservative ideology, and this fact points to another Conrad, who was a critic of that ideology.⁸

He concludes that Conrad's "political views were in crucial ways unsettled". These observations supply, in part, a sound basis for a productive dialogic or interactive engagement with the text. What Henricksen goes on to say is relevant to this discussion both theoretically and ideologically as far as my sense of the 'subject' is concerned:

Just as a narrative is a point of interaction between an author and the belief system of her or his culture and readership, so the self too is a hybrid, a place of interaction between an inner subjectivity and the other. Authorship, to Bakhtin, is therefore a metaphor for self-fashioning.⁹

The dialogic characteristics of our chosen novels point precisely to the "hybrid" nature of the self. The act of authorship is a paradoxical activity, however, in that it is a metaphor for a process whereby a hybrid self, which is constituted intrinsically through its relations with the other, insists upon creating itself with all the singularity and unity that such an act of creation implies. Moreover, authorship is not only a metaphor for self-fashioning but a paradigm for it.

The "point of interaction" is obviously a point also of dialogic exchange. To expand on Henricksen, we can say that not only is "the self" a locus of dialogism, so too are the text and its interpreters. This "self-fashioning" is in fact a dynamic and reciprocal process where text, author and reader succeed in being 'fashioned by' as well as 'fashioning' each other. Insofar as the author also is a "self", he too is a "hybrid" whose "views" are "in crucial ways unsettled". In the end, this 'unsettledness' precisely characterizes our experience of the text as well as our own experience of ourselves as readers and as beings.

In Bakhtin, the innovation represented by the emphasis on a polyphonic view of the novel finds expression in metaphors of hearing and speaking rather than seeing or merely 'writing'. Henricksen again provides us with another key for unlocking the possibilities of the text as well as the relationship between reader, writer and 'written':

A dialogic theory of the text and the self, by which reading is figured as hearing rather than seeing, provides at least a partial

escape from the coercive power of the artist's vision¹⁰

and:

Conrad's violation of the rules concerning point of view exposes the dialogic nature of discourse.

What is it that appeals in the ideas of Bakhtin as opposed to those of Deconstruction (of whom, as Henricksen convincingly argues, he is in some senses a precursor), Marxist criticism or even the taxonomical elegance of New Criticism or the pseudo-science of linguistics and its critical bedfellow, Structuralism? It is that, through Bakhtin, we can largely avoid the totalizing tendency and exclusivism more or less inherent in these other methodologies. Bakhtin encourages a pluralism and richness of interpretation, truly promoting the 'textual play' so valued by the votaries of Deconstruction.

Our attention is turned by the logic of Bakhtin's formulations to the text rather than to a body of ideas outside it. Our gaze is fixed on the text rather than the critic or his methodology. I make no apologies for basing my thesis firmly on a close reading of my chosen novels. I hope that I have succeeded in fruitfully *applying* the ideas of critics and theorists rather than expounding them or, worse still, trying to prove them. Bakhtin supplies an 'enabling' model, a 'way into' Faulkner and Conrad, providing a means of investigating their immanent preoccupation with language, values and actions, the relationship between them and the possibilities for human sympathy/solidarity. My enabling methodology should be judged by the value of what it produces; its validity depends in the end on its fruitfulness.

A guide for the reader

It is necessary briefly to mention some of the terms I will be using throughout the thesis. Though the word 'narrator' implies a discrete and more or less definite narratorial presence or identity, I use it simply to make it easier to talk about one of the many narrative strands or valorized voices (woven around others) which inheres within the text. This can on occasion extend to the voice of the character or figure.

The dominant voices of *The Nigger* I shall refer to as 'umbrella' narrators. These voices are for the most part structured according to the conventions of omniscience. They are capable of providing overviews of situations or imparting information about character and event. I fall short of referring to these speakers simply as omniscient narrators because their interpretation of events and the valorized commentary they provide is often contradicted or subtly conditioned by other voices in the text, often figural voices. They also differ between themselves.

At times, though the stylistic conventions which govern the expression of a given umbrella voice do not change, the substance (valorized content) does. In other words, what appears as monologic discourse is often seen to be on closer inspection a composite, like all voices, created by the wedding together of disparate and potentially conflicting vocabularies. Sudden shifts in valorized content in both *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying* I refer to as 'polar' structures (cf. Bakhtin's *syncretism*). This term extends to the novels' characteristic tendency to assert and then to subvert their own meanings.

Gerald Prince defines the polyphonic/dialogic narrative thus:

A narrative characterized by the interaction of several voices, consciousnesses, or world views, none of which unifies or is superior to

(has more authority than) the others; a POLYPHONIC NARRATIVE. In dialogic as opposed to MONOLOGIC NARRATIVE, the narrator's views, judgements, and even knowledge do not constitute the ultimate authority with respect to the world represented but only one contribution [. . .] a contribution that is in dialogue with and frequently less significant and perceptive than that of (some of) the characters.¹¹

I quote Prince in preference to Bakhtin because Bakhtin, particularly in his discussion of Tolstoy, is not always consistent in his use of terms such as monologic and polyphonic. In any case, Prince concisely states a sustaining theoretical assumption of this thesis.

Throughout the material on *The Nigger*, I use the terms narrator, crewman-narrator, officer-narrator and conservative or paternalist narrator. I want to sort out what I mean by these terms in order to preserve consistency and coherence, though of course there is no discernible *diegetic* consistency or coherence in narratorial identity (stylistic or ideological). At times it is pointless for instance to distinguish between a conservative narrator and the crewman-narrator in that the latter almost always acts as a 'container' for conservative views of the crew.

I only use the term 'crewman-narrator' when it is clear that the speaker is a member of the crew or, particularly, when the first person is invoked, often alternating with the third. It is unnecessary for example to attribute the conservative views of the Asiatics and the crewmen with which the novel opens to the crewman-narrator: the term conservative narrator is sufficient. In the absence of diegetic clues to the identity of the 'narrator', the term can act as useful shorthand to denote the characteristics of a speaker (this is why terms like conservative narrator, conservative narrators and paternalist narrator can be used interchangeably at times without generating confusion). The officer-narrator for example is distinguished from the above

by his sophisticated style, his literary references and certain diegetic clues which allow us to identify him as not belonging to the body of the crew.

Lastly, let me say a word about some of the temporal narrative shifts in *The Nigger*. The switch in person which characterizes much of the creman-narrator's narrative is often accompanied by a switch between observations which belong to the *witnessing* time and those which belong strictly to the time of narration or *narrating* time, i.e. retrospection and contemporaneous observation.

It may seem disagreeable to approach given passages as in some way representing discrete narratorial phases. The only way of avoiding this however, particularly in the Conrad, is to create a gloss or fiction of our own, the fiction of a consistent narratorial identity. This leads, as many students of the novel can confirm, up a critical blind alley. I intend to approach voice and narration in both novels through discrete examples. On this basis, it would be perfectly possible to pursue our readings in line with traditional models of literature (the monologic) which perhaps both novels resemble enough to make such a reading meaningful. However, I believe that a dialogic approach takes us much further than any monologic reading could; it is also what prevents this thesis degenerating into an albeit diverting list of exegetic irrelevancies.

Some notes on the role of the reader

The purpose of this section is to shed light on the reader's relationship, as I see it, to my chosen texts.

Evaluation and its less restrained forms, judgement and retribution constitute the central elements of the novels' value-pictures as the narrators and we the readers find ourselves constrained to construct them. Images of suspension abound in both works: the suspension of the ship at a perilous angle after the storm, the imbalance of the coffin

as it is carried by Jewel and Darl, the swathed body of James Wait refusing to tip off its plank, a well-/ill-made coffin teetering precariously on a rickety wagon.

Just as Darl and Jewel carry the coffin "balancing it as though it were something infinitely precious" (p.98) so the reader 'balances' his appreciation/evaluation of the novels' speakers. The judgements that are offered by the texts' stylistically or conventionally (if not epistemically) dominant 'umbrella' voices are, often, in the first person plural. This lends them an inclusiveness and a (spurious?) authority. 'We' implies a narrative voice with the right and capacity (authority) to speak, collectively, i.e. on behalf of others (including the reader?).

Yet, as we read both books, we learn to distrust these collectivizing voices and to challenge their claims. It is the reader who must *wait*, keep things in *balance* in order to establish relations between voices/characters of varying reliability, relations which are perhaps never wholly determinable one way or another. The reader, ultimately, discriminates, evaluates and '*tells*' between the characters and their '*tellings*' and, himself, constructs '*hierarchies of authority*' and of meaning.

Our sense of these hierarchies is often unstable and shifting. The question is on what grounds do/should we discriminate? Clearly, in *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying* the process of epistemic or interpretative evaluation is intimately connected, in fact at one with the process of judgement and value-discrimination. The importance of ideas of perspective, 'position', distance and relation (relevant to both books) is set up in the opening passage of *As I Lay Dying* in the stress on the relative heights and positions of Darl and Jewel.

Jewel and I come up from the field, following the path in single file. Although I am fifteen feet ahead of him, anyone watching us

from the cotton-house can see Jewel's frayed
and broken straw hat a full head above my own. (p.3)

Here, the problem of discriminating between voices is represented 'visually'. That "anyone" watching is the reader: if Jewel and Darl are fifteen feet apart, how far away is the reader? This "anyone watching" is also a figment of Darl's imagination and alerts us to his 'queerness'. It is also a playful way of engaging the reader who cannot 'watch' but who is invited to read or, we may say, 'hear'. As elsewhere, Faulkner is 'announcing' as well as joking with Darl's possibilities and limitations as author-surrogate. The sequence *obliquely* introduces some major preoccupations of both *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*.

Faulkner is in part playing with categories. How could Darl know, for example, how far he is in front of his brother? It is possible, if unlikely, that Darl knows because of some mark or prompt in the landscape or farm buildings. This rationalization only adds to the joke. In addition, these complications draw attention to Faulkner's presence as a controlling authorial intelligence. Further, the problematizing of Darl's 'knowing' is juxtaposed with our own efforts to know or to understand as readers. So, a parallel is being drawn between the predicament of the reader and the predicament of the author and/or narrator.

This, paradoxically, challenges the status of the presence of an *all-controlling* author from whom, conventionally, certain 'guarantees' are assumed to flow. *As I Lay Dying* refuses to give such assurances. Darl's role as reader, narrator, author and observer challenges and problematizes the conventions. The conventional status of these categories and the conventional hierarchical reading of the relationships between them is brought into question.

Such techniques are modernist in their effect of reader-alienation. Faulkner is a fine exponent of the alienating metaphor or of similes characterized by a marked or even

absurd disparity between vehicle and tenor. They are often used to create distance. James Guetti writes that similes work as much through a reinforcement of the difference between disparate elements as an insistence on affinity or similarity.¹²

For example, as he and his brother load their mother's coffin onto the cart, Darl tells us

We move, balancing it as though it were something infinitely precious, our faces averted, breathing through our teeth to keep our nostrils closed. (p.98)

The "as though" works dialogically to negotiate between competing alternatives or possibilities. Rather than unequivocally positing the 'infinite preciousness' of the coffin, the simile leads us to question it, as does our sense of their 'aversion' to it. The very presence of the "as though" locution implies that it is not so 'in reality'.

For Darl, if not for Jewel (since, at least, on a re-reading, we challenge the status, the inclusivity of Darl's use of the first-person plural), the 'infinite preciousness' of his cargo is highly equivocal. There is grotesque and black humour here. The brothers' faces are "averted", a gesture commonly associated with contrition or respect. Yet, Darl averts his face out of repugnance for the smell of his mother's corpse as well as in another sense distaste for the enterprise upon which his father has insisted that the family embark. The effect of the "we" is also to include Jewel in his disgust, though as we have said we may quote evidence elsewhere in the book to question Darl's assumption of the authority to speak for others.

There is a nice tension here between veneration and distaste. Anse *and* Addie, through their perverse tryst, have forced this monstrosity, this unburied cadaver (every bit as monstrous as Wait) to stalk the earth, to remain uninterred. Apart from prompting disapproval, sympathy or mere

recognition in the reader, Darl's feelings for the coffin and his mother's corpse parallels the crew's feelings for Wait; we remember the alacrity, for example, with which the seamen get him off the fo'c'sle and into his 'box'.

Just as the characters face a crisis of authority, ethical and epistemological, within the novels' *diegeses*, so we as readers find ourselves facing a number of 'impossible' choices. Yet, in order to achieve a moral as well as epistemic sense of the novel, we must attempt to make them, or at least to understand why different speakers adopt different positions. The characters' dilemmas parallel our own difficulties as readers. Should we condemn or laud Darl's barn-burning, Anse's selfishness, Jewel's ferocity *inter alia*?

So what basis is there for an integrated reading of the text and theory of textual knowing and what basis can we as readers propose as a foundation for a common understanding or even discussion of the text? Our responses are complicated in that we have to sift voices one from the other. We have to decide who is speaking and under what conditions. Further, we have to establish the relative presence of the author's controlling intelligence compared with the voice of the figure.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the novels solicit violently conflicting readings. At least to begin with, we can do little other than grant these possibilities, albeit provisionally, however crazy they may seem. In the end, it is the reader alone who, *on reflection*, is able to 'hear' all the texts' voices in effective simultaneity. What follows is based on the present writer's *hearing* of the novels.

The shifting of voice in both novels mirrors the novels' own value-structures whilst bearing directly on the manner in which the reader determines and evaluates 'what happens'. This observation is axiomatic as far as this thesis is concerned. As Perrin Lowrey observes of *The Sound and the*

Fury, "Because he only learns what really happened bit by bit, the reader continually reëvaluates events"¹³.

It is not however, as Lowrey implies, that the reader eventually discovers what has 'really happened', it is more that each subsequent piece of testimony or information alters and complicates *our* view of what happens. As a result, our moral as well as epistemological sensibilities are held in a continued state of suspension (like Addie's coffin) even though the very process of reading means that we must make/discard provisional decisions and discriminations *as we read*. The protagonists find it difficult if not impossible to communicate or articulate intelligibly, without conflict, what they think and feel. As such, in their own perception, each experiences himself to different degrees as isolated. It is an isolation of which Singleton suddenly becomes conscious after his Herculean feat at the wheel; paradoxically, it makes him loquacious, communicative.

The generator of each vocal presence (the isolated individual) can in a sense hear only himself; unbeknownst to each they *are* united but only in their sense of isolation in their own subjectivity. Each of the perspectives given voice is limited and conditioned/conditional including the novels' 'authorial' and quasi-authorial voices. They *are* however united in the reader's sense of interrelating narratives as well as in the author's consciousness. In *As I Lay Dying*, certain voices are not privileged as in *The Nigger* by being constructed according to the norms of traditional omniscience. Instead, plot structure itself, culminating in the closure of the novel, ends up privileging, albeit equivocally, the 'ideological' positions adopted by Anse and Cash. They survive and are 'given the last word'.

In *The Nigger*, even if we find ourselves unable to accept the testimony of the 'umbrella' voices, they derive some legitimacy from the fact that they belong to conventionally authoritative speakers. In *As I Lay Dying*, the powerful 'sponsorship' of the book's closure (Darl incarcerated, Addie

dead and buried) impresses us despite a nagging and pervasive sense of doubt. The novels do make their choices but the subversive voices stay with the reader and make him unable to accept, without equivocation, the 'testimony' or 'ideology' of the dominant voices of the text and the 'politics' of the novels' endings.

I do not wish necessarily to follow Jameson or Fogel in positing the coercive nature of Conrad's or Faulkner's rhetoric. Nevertheless, like Henricksen, I want to make "a partial acknowledgement of the *complicity* of fiction, as a power discourse, with ideology and coercion [my italics]"¹⁴ and the presence of the writer as "a 'maker' in a sense Aristotle did not intend".

Initial remarks on *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and *As I Lay Dying*

At one of a series of seminars held at the University of Virginia, Faulkner remarked that he "got quite a lot from Conrad".¹⁵ In an interview he identified *Moby Dick* and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* as "The two books I like best", adding "I'd just like to have written those two books more than any others I can think of".¹⁶ He also singled out Conrad's novel as one he regularly reread.¹⁷

There are many specific figurative, verbal and scenic similarities between the novels which provide strong evidence to suggest that Faulkner was directly influenced by Conrad. For example, the description of the crew of the *Narcissus* as "silhouettes of moving men" who "appeared for a moment, very black, without relief, like figures cut out of sheet tin", (p.1)¹⁸ is 'replayed' when Jewel appears "like a flat figure cut leanly from tin" (p.218),¹⁹ and Popeye in *Sanctuary*, is said to have "that vicious depthless quality of stamped tin".²⁰ The "stamped tin" metaphor also occurs in Faulkner's 'Barn Burning'.

Again, in *The Nigger*, the startling, incongruous description of the crew's shore clothes, "shaped with an axe", "glossy trousers that seemed made of crumpled sheet iron" (p.104), is rehearsed in *As I Lay Dying* when Anse's "brogans [. . .] look as though they had been hacked with a blunt axe out of pig-iron" (p.11). This impressionistic mode of presentation, which works through the use of metallic metaphors and similes, serves to create a sense of narrative or figural distance, detaching us from the characters through the operation of unusual or paradoxical formulations, causing the reader to suspend his sympathies.

In *The Nigger*, James Wait is the metaphysical burden whose 'weight' retards the passage of the *Narcissus*; he is also carried as 'dead weight' in the sense that he cannot or will not work (does not pull his 'weight'). The crewmen 'wait' for the *Narcissus* to right herself after the onslaught of the storm and for the wind to come up once they have rounded the Cape. Just as the Bundrens must wait for Addie's death so the crew in *The Nigger* 'wait' for Jimmy to do the same. Addie's 'dead weight' retards the work of her family just as Wait interferes with the work of the crew. The crewmen 'wait' on Jimmy just as, in more than one sense, the Bundrens 'wait' on Addie. Dewey Dell carries her own burden in the form of a child, Anse bears the indignities and sufferings of existence, as well as those of his own shortcomings, and Singleton is forced "to take up at once the burden of all his existence" (p.60).

The insistent punning on the word 'wait' and its derivatives, which abounds in *The Nigger*, is present also in Faulkner's novel. In the twenty-eighth section (Anse's third), he reflects on the hard lot of the "honest, hard-working man" (p.110):

Sometimes I wonder why we keep at it. It's because there is a reward for us above [. . .] But it's a long wait, seems like [. . .] (pp.110-111)

We note that the phrase, "long weight", is an ingenious definition of a coffin. The fifth section of *As I Lay Dying* is attributed to Darl (his third) who tells Jewel to "Wait" (p.16). In the same section, Anse says of Peabody, "'If he was to come tomorrow and tell her the time was nigh, she wouldn't wait'" (p.18).

He says again of Addie, "'I would not keep her waiting'" (p.19). In the twenty-third section also attributed to Darl (his eighth), there is this exchange between Anse, Jewel and Darl as they carry Addie's coffin out of the house:

'Steady it a minute, now,' pa says [. . .] but Jewel will not wait [. . .] 'We better wait,' Cash says. 'I tell you it ain't balanced now. We'll need another hand on that hill.' [. . .] 'Wait, Jewel I say. But he will not wait [. . .] It seems to me that the end I carry alone has no weight [. . .] (p.98)

This play on 'wait' and its homophone, 'weight' is characteristic of *The Nigger* and in *As I Lay Dying* is matched by the persistent play on the words 'bear', 'burden', 'Bundren', 'borne', 'born', 'bore', 'board' and 'bored' which are too frequent to require extensive quotation. Such word-play contributes to the thematic richness of the novel by contextualising and re-contextualising the sets of ideas which cluster around a particular word and its different meanings, and so creating resonances, for instance, between the meaning of 'wait' and 'weight'. It also creates a sense of detachment by introducing, for the reader, an element of comedy or irony into what is often, for the characters, a situation lacking in either.

In the sixteenth section (the second attributed to him), Tull reflects on the tribulations of the Bundren family:

If it's a judgement, it ain't right. Because the Lord's got more to do than that [. . .] Because the only burden Anse Bundren's ever had is himself. And when folks talks him low, I think to myself he

ain't that less of a man or he couldn't a bore himself this long [. . .] Cora said, 'I have bore you what the Lord God sent me. I faced it without fear nor terror because my faith was strong in the Lord, *a-bolstering and sustaining me*. If you have no son, it's because the Lord has decreed otherwise in His wisdom [. . .]' [my italics] (p.73)

This passage connects with two of the great themes of the novel: the suffering of the Bundrens as an example of divine judgement, and the discourse on duty and motherhood which is conducted largely through a 'dialogue' between the utterances of Cora, Addie and Dewey Dell. Cora's conviction that she is 'borne' by the Lord ("a-bolstering" and "sustaining" being approximate synonyms for 'bearing') contrasts with Tull's observation that Anse is his own burden.

Anse himself frequently asserts that it seems his lot to bear particular ill-fortune. The fact that Tull has no sons to work the land, whereas Anse has four, also ties in with the issue of labour in the novel. Anse is allowed his idleness partly by an act of God or nature and is consequently loath to relinquish his privileged position:

And Darl too. Talking me out of him [. . .] It ain't that I'm afraid of work [. . .] it's that they would just short-hand me [. . .] they begun to threaten me out of him trying to short-hand me with the law.
(pp.36-37)

There are marked similarities between the two books as far as characterization and character description is concerned. Compare this last quotation, for instance, with Donkin's "'We ain't goin' to work this bloomin' ship shorthanded if Snowball's all right'" (p.74). Anse, like Donkin, is a shirker and keen on his rights; he complains to the marshal in Mottson that "it was a public street and he reckoned he had as much right there as anybody" (p.203). Donkin is scathingly described, early on in *The Nigger*, as a "sympathetic and deserving creature that knows all about his

rights, but knows nothing of courage, of endurance" (p.6), "The man who can't do most things and won't do the rest".

Anse constantly refers to himself as "luckless" (p.18) and "flouted" (p.3), again, reminding us of Donkin who looked as if he had known all the degradations and all the furies" (p.5). Both protest a kind of innocence: Anse observes,

I have heard men cuss their luck, and right, for they were sinful men. But I do not say it's a curse on me, because I have done no wrong to be cussed by.(p.38)

Anse's complacency depends on a manipulation of Christian language whereas Donkin's protestations are based on the language of rights and class politics. Donkin excoriates the crew for refusing to drink with him, "What 'ave I done to yer? Did I bully yer? Did I 'urt yer?" (p.105) He, like Anse, believes himself to be sinned against rather than sinning, and is engaged in a rhetoric of self-assertion and self-justification; he persuades Podmore, for example, that "he - Donkin - was a much calumniated and persecuted person" (p.88).

This parallelism in the presentation of Anse and Donkin, is reinforced in what appears to be a direct 'steal' from *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. In section eight of *As I Lay Dying* (Tull's first), we hear of Anse, "I never see him with a shirt on that looked like it was his in all my life" (pp.31-32). Of Donkin we are told, "It was his deserved misfortune that those rags which nobody could possibly be supposed to own looked on him as if they had been stolen" (p.5). Anse *is* a thief in as much as he steals Cash's eight dollars (saved to buy a radio), bullies Dewey Dell out of ten dollars and, in a sense, could be said to steal Jewel's horse. Donkin is a sneak-thief in that he takes from the dying Wait only when it appears safe so to do.

Donkin is in receipt of the crew's charity for the wherewithal with which to face the voyage, James Wait, also,

receives moral and spiritual charity (sympathy) from his fellows and, towards the end, from Allistoun himself. Anse Bundren and his family become the objects of both a material and spiritual 'giving': the status of sympathy or charity of both these kinds is important to the ethical structures of *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*. In addition, Anse, Wait and Donkin are in some sense 'conjurers'.

Anse is described in these terms by Armstid, for example (p.193), and reference is made to Wait's "infernal spell" (p.23) by the crewman-narrator. The voice and rhetoric of "the fascinating Donkin" (p.61) have an early Kurtzian appeal for the crewmen of the *Narcissus* who are spellbound despite themselves: "Our contempt for him was unbounded - and we could not but listen with interest to the consummate artist". There are, of course, notable differences between Donkin and Anse, notably Anse Bundren's faith. It would be difficult, for example, to conceive of Donkin as sharing the sentiments expressed below:

I am the chosen of the Lord, for who he loveth,
so doeth He chastiseth. But I be durn if He
don't take some curious ways to show it, seems
like. (p.111)

This is gentle comedy at Anse's expense. The elevated tone and repetitive dentals of the biblical language ("a garbled recollection of Heb. 12:6" as the editor of the Vintage edition notes) seem singularly awkward, if not inappropriate, in Anse's toothless mouth. The mock-elevation of the biblical language itself is undercut by the worldliness of Anse's unwittingly ironic rejoinder ("But I be durn [. . .]"). At any rate, Anse Bundren is, mostly, spared the scathing irony of Donkin's presentation.

There are, in addition, several scenic similarities between *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*. For example, Cash's tools are lost (though found again) during the 'rescue' of Addie's coffin from the flood. In the rescue of James Wait after the

storm, the tools of the ship's carpenter are deliberately thrown overboard in the feverish haste to free him. James Wait's rescue, it is suggested by the narrator, is in some sense reprehensible. Likewise, the recovery of the coffin, as suggested by Cash, is an ethically and morally questionable act, "it seemed to me that when Jewel worked so to get her outen the river, he was going against God in a way" (p.233).

The sudden memory of James Wait's presence after the storm has a demoralizing effect on the crew, "Suddenly someone cried: - 'Where's Jimmy?' and we were appalled once more" (p.39). In their frenzy to unbury their comrade, the crewmen forget the wholesome certainties of their duty and their work, to rediscover the moral and spiritual morass of agonizing uncertainties that are bound up in the figure of James Wait.

In both *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*, much is made of good workmanship and allegiance to one's craft, in the completion of Addie's coffin, for example, as well as in the commission of a seaman's duty. The loss of the carpenter's tools in both books, provides a comment on the status of the scene (of which the loss forms part) that the reader witnesses, the 'tools' (belonging, as they do, to carpenters) acquiring a resonant Christian significance.

Much of Addie's dying is described in terms redolent of that of James Wait. There is one exceptional example, which, as Cedric Watts convincingly argues, Conrad himself borrows from Maupassant.²¹ Wait's "two bony hands smoothed the blanket upwards" (p.95) is matched by Dewey Dell's positioning of her mother's hands; she "stoops and slides the quilt from beneath them and draws it up over them to the chin, smoothing it down, drawing it smooth" (p.51). Anse also "touches the quilt [. . .] trying to smooth it up to the chin" (p.52).

Clearly, Faulkner too might have been familiar with the description of Forestier's death in Maupassant's *Bel-Ami* which Watts claims as a source for Conrad. In another

example of scenic similarity, Podmore implores Jimmy to pray and repent just as Cora begs Addie "to kneel and open her heart and cast from it the devil of vanity and cast herself upon the mercy of the Lord" (p.168).

Such verbal echoes and parallelisms demonstrate that Faulkner's rereading of *The Nigger* directly influenced the writing of *As I Lay Dying*. More important for my concerns is that these striking similarities point to and illuminate close affinities between the novels in terms of theme, treatment, narrative technique, characterization and moral tone. The resemblances adumbrated above are not merely arbitrary and unrelated correspondences, they feed directly into the broad range of themes and features that *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger* have in common. There exist great similarities, generally, between the aesthetic and value-structures of the two novels, e.g. the hill/valley and sea/land oppositions, the value of duty, the preoccupation with the themes of loyalty, obedience and hard work.

Both books involve a journey from a place of relative primitivism to one of relative civilization; from the hills to Jefferson, Bombay to London. The books are concerned with the presentation of the various and varying perspectives of those whom the journeys touch and the influence or effect wielded by the dying on those around them. These perspectives are dramatized within the context of a radical conflict both between/within individuals and within the communities of which they are part.

Both journeys are, in part, rites of passage. The flood and the storm, in *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger* respectively, are trials or tests by which we may judge the participants in terms of what they say or what they do. In turn, the moral and ethical status of what is said or done is problematized. In the Faulkner particularly, the reader is often left unsure as to what, in fact, *has* been said or done, adding to the moral complexity of any judgement.

Both books are concerned with problems of proper and improper conduct and issues of good and evil. They combine an examination of the possibility of community and solidarity based on shared values and perspectives, with an awareness of the extreme difficulty of reconciling the needs of disparate temperaments or conflicting social groups. There is an obvious correspondence here between the crew of the *Narcissus* and the community who witness or comment on the Bundren 'pilgrimage'. Also, the crew members who figure principally in the story of James Wait find approximate parallels in the Bundren family itself.

The novels dramatize the reaction of simple people. Conrad and Faulkner conceive of individuals as competing subjectivities whose prejudices are expressed through language (or lack of it) and action. They are, in turn, divided within themselves: a division reflected in a tension or conflict between outer and inner expression.

Each juxtaposes a series of subjective voices which are constructed according to the linguistic and/or intellectual limitations of the speakers as well as the idiosyncrasies of the particular values or worldview implied or expressed in what they say. Moreover, the idea of voice is not limited to the figural²² (i.e. belonging to one or more characters) but describes also the mode of expression usually associated with authorial or 'omniscient' voices including, for example, the third-person narrator(s) of *The Nigger*.

It is the antagonism of conflicting speakers who act (and speak) out of allegiances to irreconcilable value-systems that lies at the heart of both works. It is the struggle, if not pure opposition, between the inner and outer life, self and community, and public responsibility and private wish that constitutes the meditative kernel of both novels. Donkin and Wait, Addie and the Bundrens, the voyages to Jefferson and London provide the focus of these meditations. As is natural in works of verbal art, these preoccupations find their expression in and through language.

The novels possess a further similarity in that they are concerned with the presentation of simple people, with giving voice to those whom we might refer to as the 'voiceless' (the marginalized, the poor), a chief feature of what we might term the 'experimentality' of both books.

I

Giving Voice to the 'Voiceless' and the Function of Narrative Voice

The complications of being simple

In the preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, Conrad refers to his novel as "an unrestful episode in the obscure lives of a few individuals out of all the disregarded multitude of the bewildered, the simple and the voiceless" (p.146). As I hope to demonstrate, there are strong parallels between Conrad's "simple" and "voiceless" crew in *The Nigger*, and Faulkner's poor whites in *As I Lay Dying*. In these novels, as elsewhere, Faulkner and Conrad grapple with the immense problems of giving voice to simple or inarticulate people.

In 'A Familiar Preface', Conrad declares that his intention in *The Nigger* was "to pay my tribute to the sea, its ships and its men"²³ and "to render the vibrations of life" of "the hearts of simple men".²⁴ In the same work, Conrad writes that "the temporal world, rests on a very few simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills".²⁵ The cliché submerged in this assertion, alerts us to a romantic element in Conrad. These "few, simple ideas", in which he professes belief are, however, placed under enormous pressure in his work. As he continually dramatizes, the simple and the inarticulate pose immense problems for representation and voicing. The unromantic Conrad, as Marlow says of Jim in *Lord Jim*, is aware that the "voiceless" 'complicate matters by being simple'.²⁶

In an essay on Wright Morris's treatment of what he calls "my kind of people, self-sufficient, self-deprived, self-unknowing",²⁷ Keith Carabine makes a number of relevant points. In terms of giving voice to the voiceless, the dilemmas that confront Wright Morris are similar to those

that confront Conrad and Faulkner. In *The Inhabitants*, Wright Morris, according to Carabine, prefigures "his subsequent discovery of what he calls 'a mind-blowing statement' of Yeats in his last introduction to his plays";²⁸ "As I altered my syntax I altered my intellect". It is a statement which makes an important linkage between language and perception. In *About Fiction*, Wright Morris expands on Yeats's formulation,

It says simply that syntax shapes the mind, and it is syntax that does our thinking for us. If the words are rearranged, the workings of the mind are modified. Man is not free to think as he believes: he is free to think along the lines syntax makes possible, as trains commute to those points where the rails are laid down. He is more of a prisoner of syntax than of sex.²⁹

As Carabine comments,

Morris's grasp of the resonances of this central insight is one key to his achievement. "His kind of people" are . . . "prisoners of syntax"; they are locked in by the inevitable ("self unknowing [*sic*]) belief in, and acceptance of the clichés which encapsulate and entomb their experience.

As Carabine observes, any writer who wants to "speak up" (Wright Morris's phrase) for simple people must find a balance between letting the simple voice speak for itself and speaking for the simple voice. As Carabine puts it, "faithful mimicry begins either to demean the characters; or, if the author is felt to be earnestly pumping 'significance' into them he becomes like Steinbeck a solemn bore".³⁰

The extremes of failure that Carabine describes are, in part, to do with the degree of figural distance in a given narrative, defined as the sympathetic assonance or dissonance between the voice of the narrator and the voices of his characters (figures). There is a paradox here. When a

narrator speaks for a character, he may well speak with great figural sympathy though the speaking voice is clearly his. On the other hand, it is possible to create an impression of narratorial distance by allowing the character's voice to speak for itself (Donkin, Anse), syntax and diction unaltered. In other words, narratorial distance need not always imply a lack of sympathy for the figure.

In the 'Author's Note' to *A Personal Record*, Conrad professes "a special regard for the rights of the underprivileged".³¹ He warns, however, that this sense of "simple fellowship" is "as far as possible from that humanitarianism" which is "a matter of crazy nerves or morbid conscience". There is no actual contradiction here, yet Conrad's profession and admonition suggest an ambivalence. The crew of the *Narcissus* and the men Conrad knew during his years at sea, he refers to as "my friends of the sea",³² Conrad speaks of seamen in general and the crew of the *Narcissus* in particular as simple, worthy and inarticulate; his tale is on one level "an unrestful episode in the obscure lives of a few individuals out of all the disregarded multitude of the bewildered, the simple and the voiceless" (p.146).

Conrad was undoubtedly concerned with the rights of seamen and, throughout his career, wrote with some militancy in their defence.³³ This suggests that he would have regarded the crew of the *Narcissus* as not only "simple" but also "underprivileged". There is enough evidence in *The Nigger* and the preface that accompanies it, to confirm the validity of this reading though it would be wrong to *confuse* simplicity with lack of privilege. Clearly, Conrad sympathizes with his "brothers" (p.107). Yet, what of "crazy nerves" and "morbid conscience"?

On one level, Conrad is criticizing what he sees as sentimental and over-sensitized responses to perceived social and economic injustices which are in reality more to do with ignorance and political self-interest than true solidarity.

He warns against an excess of sympathy. Yet, he does not clearly draw the line at which legitimate sympathy or "special regard" ends and hysteria or egotism begins or, perhaps more properly, fails adequately to differentiate between them.

In 'speaking up' for the crew, *The Nigger's* narrators present us with conflicting views of the seamen; they are sentimentalized worthies, a dangerous rabble, fools and decadent sensitives at different stages of their journey. The fact that the text sponsors such radically competing views of the crew is testimony enough to the profound difficulties, the *complications*, of giving voice to the 'voiceless'.

There is the problem of differentiating, individualizing and giving authentic voice to simple people. This must be done without losing a sense of either their human complexity or becoming sentimental, patronizing or relying on stereotypes. The 'danger' of dramatizing such complexity from the 'inside' is that it can destabilize or 'discredit' certain of the qualities and characteristics with which the dominant narrative voices, the 'umbrella' narrators, seek to imbue them or wish them to exhibit, in order, as we shall see, to fit in with their world-view.

Naturally, this is a problem for Conrad as well as his narrators. Belfast, for example, as the genericism of his name implies, is a stock figure in terms of accent, behaviour and appearance. Yet, there is much, chiefly in the presentation of his emotions, that dismantles the stereotype and obliges us to engage in a process of continuing assimilation which prompts/sponsors provisional judgement and evaluation about who he is. This difficulty is clearly not limited to Belfast.

Notoriously, the manipulation of point of view in *The Nigger* is variable and by no means restricted to one kind of narrator or speaker. At times, the crewmen provide the focal point of the narration; things are seen from their collective point of view or from the point of view of individual seamen.

At other times, the narrating voice maintains its distance. On these occasions, the narrative tends to merge the sailors into a single entity (the crew) and to deny them specific voice or individuality. As the ship docks at the end of her journey, we are told,

One of the women screamed at the silent ship
'Hallo, Jack!' without looking at anyone in particular. (p.102)

Here, the individual sailors have become the generic 'Jack', again a stock figure. The line that follows, "and all hands looked at her from the forecastle head", shows that Conrad is aware of the consequences of this stereotyping and *plays* on the woman's 'generic' greeting and the crew's 'generic' response. Yet, as we shall see, there is a sense in which these simple people *see themselves* (are encouraged/coerced to see themselves or pretend to others that they see themselves) as stereotypes ('normal blokes', Jolly Jack Tars or whatever).

The conflicting attitudes to and views of the simple, form a major element in *The Nigger's* dialogism. The narrative view of the crewmen shifts constantly from individual to stereotype. The text is continually vascillating in its presentation of the seamen. It is a staple of Conradian criticism that this apparent inconsistency constitutes an incoherence, a serious aesthetic failure, which mars the novel's artistic unity. This position is, as I have said, a critical blind alley and the way to break out of it is to apply the Bakhtinian model and to ask two related questions: who speaks and from what perspective?

For example, for whom is the talk of the Scandinavian sailors a "meaningless mutter"? (p.47) The answer is the conservative, Anglophone speaker who narrates at that moment. There is an unwillingness or incapacity on the part of this narrator to dramatize the voice(s) of the Scandinavians or to

speculate with sympathy on what they may be saying. The matter is further complicated by the fact that the crewmen are also unable to understand them. What appears on the surface as incoherence is in fact a result of the innovative polyvocal and dialogic schema of the novel. The competing perspectives on the crew are in conflict or dialogue.

The process by which simple people are presented and given voice in *The Nigger* is one both of revelation and suppression. As Owen Knowles writes, "His [Conrad's] characters are differentiated by their speech but never fully revealed by what they say".³⁴ The narratorial and figural voices in the text are mutually revealing. Characters are revealed both by what they and what others say. Revelation, ultimately, lies in our reading of these voices. There is, as the tone of Knowles' criticism implies, a certain mystification by omission which is characteristically Conradian.

Typically, in both Faulkner and Conrad, 'simple' people are either spoken for by different voices or made, themselves, to speak in more than one voice; some if not all of these voices often appear irreconcilable. This creates extraordinary difficulties of 'knowing' for the reader. As a result, revelation is slow, painful, accumulative and inconclusive. To what end and what effect is the figural voice the object of the narrator's voice? What image of the obscure and the simple does the narrative sponsor?

In the earlier fiction, *Almayer's Folly*, for example, the matter is relatively straightforward. The controlled use of Free Indirect Discourse keeps the figural voice in its place. In *The Nigger*, by contrast, there is a crisis of authority (in both a thematic and technical sense) created by its narratorial and epistemic indeterminacies where figural and authorial voices sponsor radically contradictory and radically unreliable viewpoints or versions of the truth.

In *As I Lay Dying*, the presence of an obtrusive, controlling authorial presence is brought into the foreground

by the typographical and editorial innovations characteristic of the novel (italics, monologues attributed by chapter-heading, the drawing of a coffin). We are made unequivocally aware of the author's presence (the rendering of an idiot's consciousness in a literary monologue is a paradox which draws attention to the author/narrator). Yet what Guérard calls "Faulkner's overriding [. . .] voice"³⁵ is not omnipresent. This is what generates paradox in the novel. Like *The Nigger*, the narrative of *As I Lay Dying* absorbs, then discards conflicting voices, neither totally assimilating them nor resisting them. The narrative in both novels could be thought of as a series of radio waves which constantly interrupt, attenuate or reinforce one another.

In a comment also applicable to Faulkner, Knowles writes of Conrad that his characters "are valued for voiceless strengths which speak far louder than words";³⁶ we may perhaps be tempted to go further than Knowles and conclude 'strong' because voiceless. We cannot help but be wary of a method of 'giving voice' that eulogizes silence. We may ask what it is that we are not being permitted to hear? What Brent Harold has to say about *The Sound and the Fury*, could be applied, equally, to the Bundrens and Conrad's seamen, "The values usually assigned to Benjy are the virtues of his defects".³⁷ If we replace "defects" with 'limitations' then we have a basis for describing some of the complications, successes and limitations of the mode of representation of simple people in *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger*.

The questions of what constitutes virtue, defect and limitation lies at the heart of the problem. Singleton for instance is 'approved' by *The Nigger's* dominant narrators. He is valued for his laconic devotion to duty, his subservience and his unflinching loyalty. Within the conservative schema of *The Nigger*, to echo Knowles' observation, voicelessness is strength. Conversely, for Donkin and at times for much of the crew, Singleton is seen as aloof or senile or out of touch.

Though he is almost without voice, he is made to represent certain values.

Yet, to make characters 'speak' they must be given voice. Speech, as Knowles remarks, brings differentiation. Given the social and economic conditions under which the crewmen speak, it is hardly surprising that their authentic voices, or that which they feel but are unable to express, interferes with or disrupts the conservative values sponsored by the novel's dominant voices (see Fogel).

Let us look first at aspects of the characterization of Singleton who is crucial to an understanding of the presentation of simple people in Conrad's novel. As the *Narcissus* nears land, Singleton becomes talkative. He becomes superstitious and imputes to Wait motivations which he does not possess. The physical ordeal of thirty hours at the wheel finds its psychic parallel in Singleton's traumatic realisation that he is old. He ceases to be a centre of reliable value in the novel. Just as the Wait we see at the beginning of the book is very different from the Wait who dies a coward, so the 'early' Singleton becomes gradually submerged. By the end of the voyage, he disappears altogether. On land, the simple sailor is 'all at sea'.

Yet, this transformation in Singleton is not only to do with the sea/land opposition that forms another aspect of the novel's dialogism. In an essay on 'Pantaloon in Black', Walter Taylor observes of Nancy Mannigoe (a character in the short story 'That Evening Sun') and Dilsey that "their very heroism is a kind of subservience".³⁸ Indeed, from one perspective, their heroism lies precisely in their subservience. Yet, this view is complicated by the fact that her 'subservience' is founded, at least partly, on her Christian principles, principles which her white masters flout. However, it can be argued, though the text does not directly suggest this, that there comes a point when Dilsey's self-sacrifice takes on the character of a crime against herself (remember that this is one of the appeals that Donkin

makes to the crew). Likewise, Singleton's thirty-hour stint at the helm, as the text acknowledges, is a spiritually self-slaughtering act.

At no point however does either Singleton or Dilsey give vent to a sense of outrage or injustice. This is one major reason why they so *complicate* representation. They resist 'enlightened' humanist stereotypes, yet we can see how their reaction to suffering may appear to endorse the conservative values which inhere in both *The Nigger* and *The Sound and the Fury*. If we take this view of their silent stoicism, I think we are justified in speaking of their unwillingness or incapacity to give voice to a sense of injustice as 'unarticulated alienation'. Though a contentious formulation, in that it relies on the application of the critic's values to the text rather than those of the text itself, it earns its keep by giving us a *way into* or rather a sound basis for comparing and contrasting the representation of simple people in *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*.

In the Faulkner novel, characters do give albeit inarticulate voice to their alienation. They are neither demonized (like Donkin) nor scorned (like Wait) in the process. There is no pity for Donkin and little for Wait in the novel. 'Inarticulate alienation' is conveyed by the way in which the conflict of inner and outer worlds is given verbal manifestation as in Cora's monologues. Faulkner's technique enables his characters to speak with both their own voice (multi-layered as it is) and the public voice which has been, in part, appropriated and created by others. Note that Dilsey's section in *The Sound and the Fury* is not narrated by Dilsey, although many critics write as if it were. Though she does speak in quotation marks, in the main, the narrator speaks for her. In *As I Lay Dying*, the poor whites do speak for themselves.

What is remarkable about *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*, especially, are the technical innovations they bring to the vocalizing of contradiction within the individual or groups

of individuals and, by extension, within the social order as a whole. *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury* are in part solutions to the problem of dramatizing and articulating the struggle between conflicting perspectives in human affairs, between public and private worlds, inner and outer realities.

In both novels, the concept of voice is crucial in terms of what is said and from what perspective it is said. Further, we must consider how it is said, by whom, to whom and with what purpose. *As I Lay Dying* is thought and uttered by individual characters both as individuals and representatives of groups of individuals. The work, though composed ostensibly of monologues, is essentially dialogic. The characters, through their language, become representatives of social and economic groupings as well as qualities and, crucially, *ways of seeing*. Anse is guided by self-interest, cynical yet innocent, tricked by words older than himself. Jewel is intemperate, active and passionate, Cash stoic and reserved.

The fields of vision of these characters overlap, interfering with and/or reinforcing one another, in antagonism and in sympathy if not harmony. Faulkner achieves a mirroring, a complementarity, a sharp sense of opposition and, above all, a mapping out of the differences between various speakers and discourses. Faulkner resorts to the use of stock characters less than Conrad in *The Nigger* and is in far greater control of them when he does. He has a masterly sense of cliché whereas Conrad sometimes allows the cliché to 'use' him rather than remaining in control of it.

Faulkner usually leaves it to his characters to stereotype each other. He then subverts such stereotyping by evoking the authentic, individual voice of the character who has been stereotyped. Plainly, these people are not stereotypes (though, we may remark, tangentially, that in the search for personal identity, there are those who define/identify themselves through the stereotype). This identification is

intimately related to the conventions which obtain in the society of which they are a part, as well as limitations of language and intellect).

Both Faulkner and Conrad are keen to find the similarities between people, common ground, to provide a basis for shared values, a basis for solidarity (of which, they implicitly acknowledge, there are, potentially, many different kinds). The dominant voices of *The Nigger* present the differences between individuals in terms of absolute oppositions rather than as a continuum. *As I Lay Dying* seeks rather to explore these differences as well as to define them. Faulkner recognizes that the quest for shared values must centre firstly on the difference, conflict and antagonism between individuals rather than on the similarities between them.

According to Bakhtin, for a writer to speak authentically, he must give authentic voice to his speakers. That is to say, their voices must to begin with be convincingly grounded in social reality. In *The Nigger*, Conrad does give voice to revolutionary and subversive discourses and does give perspectives on the seamen that challenge the conservative values of the narrators. Though it would be an obvious error to identify Conrad with his narrators, it must be said that the failure to treat Donkin with pity as well as scorn constitutes an important aesthetic omission.

We cannot believe that it is Donkin's eloquence alone that makes him so persuasive nor that the crew's sympathies are generated purely by egotism and stupidity. In some sense, Donkin, however repugnant or reactionary, is right. Whether this limitation or suppression is Conrad's or the narrators' is moot and perhaps irrecoverable. Nevertheless, the suppression remains.

As far as Faulkner is concerned, his ear for the social voice is acute. The voices given to black characters in Faulkner are undoubtedly true to the social and economic conditions which governed the expression of black people in the South, conditions which equally governed the expression

of whites. However, Faulkner, in my judgement, fails to create fully-fledged, authentic black voices. His black characters, with the possible exception of Lucas McCaslin or Rider, are rarely fully-formed and multi-faceted or dramatized from within. Yet, there is a great deal of humanity and deep understanding in Faulkner's portrayal of black people which was unprecedented for his own time. No writer can completely escape the prejudices of his heritage, however.

It is the dominant social discourses of Faulkner's present as well as those of his past that lie inscribed most strongly in his representation of blacks. At his best however he transcends them and much of his work can be read as a critique of these dominant discourses and the appropriation of the voice of black humanity on which they rely. Even so, the struggle between competing visions of the black constitutes one of the great "irreconcilable antagonisms" in Faulkner's work.

There are serious limitations to the range of temperaments and types that Conrad is able to represent. There are, disappointingly, few female characters in Conrad that fully convince. Faulkner, by contrast, dramatizes a far wider range of differences and extends the 'voice franchise' to women, blacks and even mental defectives (though Stevie's circles may give some clue to his inner life, he is never dramatized from within). Nevertheless, even in Faulkner, the voices he gives his female and in particular his black characters, struggle to rise above certain imaginative limitations (Faulkner's, that is).

The representation of the automatic mass movement of blacks in the story 'Raid' furnishes a good example. There is evidence enough to suggest that Faulkner intends their mass automatism and collective suicide as a sign of the collective injustice to which blacks were subjected to by the Southern order. Such representation remains ambivalent, however. The presentation of blacks as unthinking, automatic creatures

bent on a collective act of self-destruction sounds negative overtones and is not entirely incompatible with certain racist discourses and white-oriented views of them.

Faulkner's and Conrad's work 'ignites' when their characters rise above the confines of the dominant discourses of their time.

I do not wish to give the impression that either Faulkner or Conrad deliberately sets out to distort or misrepresent the voices of their simple people. On the contrary, this enterprise is crucial to both writers, one which they take seriously but one in which they succeed and fail. Their failure in part testifies to the extraordinary difficulty of finding words to convey the thoughts and feelings of simple, inarticulate people. Without doubt, both Conrad and Faulkner possess a great sympathy for the experience of the underprivileged, for the rights of the dispossessed. However, both writers possess personal allegiances which profoundly affect their own voices (and those which they give their characters).

Conrad's inarticulate characters (Jim, Stevie, the crew,) barely speak at all and when they do their syntax is halted, confused. They are 'spoken for' by their creator. His authorial tools, the perspectives of scorn and pity are, however, forces for good and ill, doing justice and injustice to these voiceless people though at its finest, Conrad's work does "render the highest kind of justice" (p.145), not only to "the visible universe" but to his simple people as well.

As I Lay Dying is from this point of view Faulkner's most successful novel. It manages to give voice to an extraordinary range of temperaments and personalities. The novel's monologic structure allows each speaker to speak for himself. Though we are constantly made aware of the author's presence as a controlling influence, his is not the measure, necessarily, by which we are asked to judge. The narratorial presences in *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger* are merely

presences amongst others. This is how, in the end, both writers manage to give authentic voice to their simple characters; it is that they expose their own authorial/narratorial voices and their figural voices to the same scepticism. As a result, there is a great degree of epistemic power-sharing in these texts. Each speaker/perceiver is the centre of his own universe, its arbiter and law-giver. Our sense of this is complicated, in *The Nigger* particularly, by the subversion of conventions which normally confer reliability on the narrative voice (e.g. the operation of polar structure and the 'umbrella' narrators).

Ultimately, giving voice is an act of the imagination before it is anything else. It is the result of at least some degree of conscious intention and, at its best, in the work of both writers, and particularly in the texts presently under discussion, it rises above mere ventriloquism. Taylor quotes Faulkner's 'A Letter to the Leaders of the Negro Race' (1956) where he writes "a white man can only imagine himself for a moment a Negro".³⁹ The remark was, perhaps, influenced by the nature of his audience. If he believed it to be true, he based a great deal on such a meagre resource.

At the University of Virginia, he was less reticent, claiming that "man, whether he's black or white or red or yellow still suffers the same anguishes".⁴⁰ This universalizing, essentialist and trans-historical tendency in Faulkner is matched in the uncompromising yet romantic conservatism of the narrators of *The Nigger*. Faulkner's gnomic observation provides the basis for the positing of ultimate values (whether virtues or limitations). This observation brings us to the notion of endurance, a key concept as far as the simple people of Conrad and Faulkner are concerned. The word has three meanings;

- 1) To see through, tenaciously and courageously.

2) To go through suffering, blind, a victim of fate.

3) To be made to suffer wrongs and to do so voicelessly, uncomplainingly.

Our reading of simple people in the work of these two authors will vary, depending on which of these definitions we, as readers, personally favour.

Singleton, the "voiceless" and aspects of *The Nigger's* conservative narration

In terms of giving voice to the voiceless, the presentation of Singleton is crucial. Initially, for the officer-narrator, Singleton is not enigmatic in himself but representative of a general enigma surrounding seamen. Following a consideration of this "Mystery!" (p.3), there is a narrative shift which settles on Singleton, telling of his life and some of his distinguishing characteristics: he "had sailed to the Southward since the age of twelve" and "boasted, with mild composure" of his insobriety. We are told that "he seldom was in a condition to distinguish daylight [. . .] lost in an absorption profound enough to resemble a trance" as he 'navigates' *Pelham*.

This last simile however unites two contrasting and apparently irreconcilable views of Singleton: though the "trance" is a drunken one, there is a suggestion of the seer, the oracle or the holy man about Singleton. Like Melville's Queequeg, covered in tattooed 'hieroglyphs', Singleton, also tattooed, is a mysterious signifier. For the reader, it is precisely Singleton's *disparateness* which generates this sense of mystery and which so complicates his presentation. He is as much a cipher for the crew and officers as he is for the reader, "The men who could understand his silence were gone" (p.15). His enigma is emblemized in the form of the ship's cat who sits, sphinx-like, "Opposite to him, and on a

level with his face [. . .] in the pose of a crouching chimera".

Yet, early on, the dominant tone of Singleton's presentation is approbatory. His skill as a seaman, his ancient sea-wisdom and his uncomplaining commitment to duty and hard work make him a paradigm of good conduct despite being a drunkard and helpless on land. He is above the petty jealousies and concerns of the crew, sitting "unmoved in the clash of voices and cries" (p.3) in the forecastle. There is a significant, romantic element in his presentation; he is part of an old order, a child of the sea. He belongs to an innocent age, expert in his craft and unstinting in his devotion to duty.

The strong suggestion of the pre-Lapsarian in Singleton is related to his wordlessness. He is not merely taciturn, rather, he evokes the notion of a time before language complicated life/issues and before the possession of language enabled seamen (and, perhaps, the lower orders generally) to express resentment or dissatisfaction with their lot and threaten the dominant social and economic scheme of things. We remember that shipboard mutinies were a commonplace, especially on long or taxing voyages. Of the modern-day crew, the narrator writes, "if they have learned how to speak they have also learned how to whine" (p.15).

The narrative seeks to establish a distance between Singleton and his shipmates. In aligning himself with the values which he takes Singleton to represent, the narrator, also, is distanced from the seamen. The line "The men who could understand his [Singleton's] silence were gone" (p.15) is clearly meant as a pejorative, if regretful, comment on the majority of the crewmen of the *Narcissus*.

Critics have pointed out apparent incompatibilities in the characteristics with which Singleton is endowed by the text. His "wisdom" (p.14), for example, speaks "*unconsciously* through [. . .] old lips" (my italics). Presumably, Singleton would regard as mere common sense what the narrator takes for

wisdom: "Ships are all right. It is the men in them". Yet, the reader is forced to ask what kind of wisdom it is that can be spoken unconsciously, the concept of 'unwitting wisdom' being a difficult one. It depends on a romantic investiture comparable, say, to that which Wordsworth makes with his Leech Gatherer, and which relies, absolutely, on a sense of simplicity. The narrator's interest in Singleton demonstrates his 'romantic' interest in simple people.

There is also an apparent contradiction in Singleton being at once "meditative and unthinking" (p.15) whilst capable of exercising an "alert understanding" (p.16). Perhaps the paradox can be resolved by saying that Singleton is not "unthinking" in the sense that he cannot or does not think; he is "unthinking" in the sense that the word is used in the phrase 'unthinking devotion'. In the commission of his duties and in his capacity to do the right thing, he is spontaneous and unhesitant. Wait is also referred to as "unthinking" (p.72) in his fear of death and damnation as evoked by Podmore; Wait's cowardice is as spontaneous as Singleton's courage.

At this point, the reader should ask 'who listens?' as well as 'who speaks?'. If it is the crewmen who speak then it is the narrator who 'listens', generally organizing and selecting what the reader is permitted to hear. The depiction of the crew has already hinted at the possible threat which they may pose. In the first pages, the narrator alternates between a kind of submerged presence on the one hand, and the assumption of a definite personality on the other, interjecting and commenting upon what is described. With the description of Singleton, which precedes Belfast's charade, the narrator asks himself with a hint of disingenuousness:

What ideas do his [Bulwer Lytton's] polished and insincere sentences awaken in the simple minds of the big children who people those dark and wandering places of the earth? (p.3)

The seamen, here, are described almost as nomadic savages; indeed, Singleton, "tattooed like a cannibal chief" (p.2), we are told, "resembled a learned and savage patriarch" (p.3). Despite his "barbarian wisdom", it is "a wonderful and bizarre phenomenon" for the narrator, that these "rough, inexperienced souls" should enjoy Lytton's "elegant verbiage". Yet, for whom is this phenomenon a "Mystery!?" In the next paragraph, we are given a clue to the identity of the speaker; "Singleton [. . .] had lived (as we had calculated from his papers) no more than forty months ashore".

The statement in parentheses suggests that the speaker is a member of the ship's company with access to Singleton's documentation. In addition, the narrator speaks in the first person plural, which tends to reinforce the assumption that he is an officer (one of a superior group) though this voice is by no means entirely inconsistent with that of a crew-member (remember, that the crew, also, is *fascinated* by Singleton).

The implication is that the narrator who finds the seamen's taste in literature so mysterious is, in fact, an officer with pronounced and decided literary tastes/interests of his own. Without speculating as to his 'true' identity (one critic has argued that he is the third mate [though third mates were rarely gentlemen] of the *Narcissus*),⁴¹ it is clear that the values that inform the language of this narrator are those of a gentleman officer interested in but unable or unwilling to fathom the inner life of his 'simple' crewmen.

In addition, he speaks with the polish, the glibness, if not the insincerity which he attributes to the author of *Pelham*. The references to *Pelham* also work meta-fictionally. Conrad, here, is contrasting the sincerity of his own sentences, the sentences of a man who does understand Singleton and his ilk, with those of Bulwer-Lytton who does not. For this speaker (as for Bulwer-Lytton?), the seamen are

savage, exotic; they are mysterious and alien like the natives of some newly-discovered continent (see Levenson).

They are presented, also, as children who should be seen (i.e. obey orders, discharge their duties) and not heard, men whose 'voices' are surplus to requirements. Conrad overtly refers to them as "the simple and the voiceless" (p.146) in the preface to the novel; yet he charges himself with the task of both making them speak *and* speaking for them. He also grandly contextualizes their voices for us in a manner intended to influence the way we hear them. The view of these inarticulate, simple and obscure people that one narrative strand of *The Nigger* seeks to sponsor is traditional, romantic, even sentimental, yet radically uncompromising in its particularity:

The men who could understand his [Singleton's] silence were gone - those men who knew how to exist beyond the pale of life and within sight of eternity. They had been strong, as those are strong who know neither doubts nor hopes. They had been impatient and enduring, turbulent and devoted, unruly and faithful. Well-meaning people had tried to represent those men as whining over every mouthful of their food; as going about their work in fear of their lives. But in truth they had been men who knew toil, privation, violence, debauchery - but knew not fear, and had no desire of spite in their hearts. Men hard to manage, but easy to inspire; voiceless men - but men enough to scorn in their hearts the sentimental voices that bewailed the hardness of their fate. It was a fate unique and their own; the capacity to bear it appeared to them the privilege of the chosen! Their generation lived inarticulate and indispensable, without knowing the sweetness of affections or the refuge of a home - and died free from the dark menace of a narrow grave. They were the everlasting children of the mysterious sea. Their successors are the grown-up children of a discontented earth. They are less naughty but less innocent, less profane, but perhaps also less believing; and if they have learned how to speak they have also learned how to whine. But the others were strong and mute; they were effaced, bowed and enduring, like stone caryatides that hold up in the night the lighted halls of a resplendent and glori-

ous edifice. They are gone now - and it does not matter [. . .] a truth, a faith, a generation of men goes - and is forgotten, and it does not matter! Except, perhaps, to the few of those who believed the truth, confessed the faith - or loved the men.
(p.15)

This is idealisation; "the everlasting children" belong to the past. The narrator speaks with nostalgia in a voice as sentimental, perhaps, as those he denigrates. Yet, it is a hard sentimentality, "They are gone now - and it does not matter" (a severe and admonitory intonation of the current view or the view of the "Well-meaning") though we are in no doubt that the speaker is one amongst "the few of those who believed the truth, confessed the faith - or loved the men" and who considers them "indispensable".

The passage is also a compact summary of this conservative narrator's values in as much as he privileges the habits of mind and behaviour of the 'old' kind of sailor at the expense of the new. The "Well-meaning people", to whom the narrator refers, neither understood/understand nor, by implication, "loved the men". Again, the narrative resists the humanist stereotyping of these "voiceless men" and, by implication, the discourses of 'agitators' who would use their plight for political purposes.

The passage throws up what is probably the novel's major problematic: the 'real' nature of the crew of the *Narcissus*. This narrator sees them as "grown-up children", neither simple nor voiceless because they have "learned how to whine". The tone of the passage is elegiac of the 'old' sailors and bitterly critical of the new. Yet, in the bulk of the book, the majority of the crewmen are presented as loyal and hard-working. They are, for the most part, alive to the threat posed by the 'whiner', Donkin ("They all knew him" [p.6]), who claims to speak for their grievances. Even so, they show themselves to be susceptible, in some degree, to his strategies.

One of the major differences between them and their predecessors, however, is that they know "doubts" and "fear" as well as "hopes". They are no longer able to "understand" Singleton's silence. Even so, there is a deal of ambiguity here. Though the narration is retrospective, it remains unclear whether the crew of the *Narcissus* belongs to the past, the present or some composite of both. The phrase "the everlasting children of the mysterious sea" was used for the novel's American title, *The Children of the Sea*. As a title, it must refer to the crewmen of the *Narcissus* rather than their predecessors, especially since the passage explicitly states that the "everlasting" as opposed to "grown-up children" have all but disappeared by the time the *Narcissus* makes its voyage (towards the end of the era of sail). Yet, the crewmen of the *Narcissus* are explicitly described as "grown-up children" who belong, not to the sea, but to "a discontented earth" (the steam age).

In truth, they seem to be a composite entity, displaying characteristics both of "the everlasting children of the mysterious sea" and "the grown-up children of a discontented earth". This is, perhaps, another way of saying that the view of the crew that we are given, is a transitional one or, at least, a view of a social group 'in transition'. Though they are 'learning' or have "learned how to whine", which they do, at various points throughout the novel, the crew of the *Narcissus* is presented as simple, obscure and relatively voiceless still. They still number amongst the "inarticulate and the indispensable" (the degree to which they are "indispensable" because "inarticulate", is moot).

The image of "the Mint, cleansed by the flood of light" (p.107) which comes near the end of the novel is anticipated by "the lighted halls of a resplendent and glorious edifice". If we regard the Mint as a symbol of the Establishment, representing the interests of Queen, country and Empire and the values of finance and trade, then the metaphor of "stone caryatides" is a resonant one; these men, it suggests, are

the physical supports of the Establishment. As far as this thesis is concerned, these matters are of relevance not because they point to the historical and socioeconomic grounds of the narrator's distaste but because they help us to understand the basis of his antagonism, i.e. who the narrator is and what he believes.

The 'new' kind of sailor who has "learned how to whine" poses a threat to this order. The old kind, as personified by Singleton, was its very buttress. Yet, this is complicated by the insistent opposition throughout the book between sea and ship, on the one hand, and land, on the other, the "discontented earth". For example, we note how absurd, insignificant and *helpless* Singleton becomes once he has disembarked.

The novel surprises and confuses because it canvasses different views of the simple. It 'champions' them and elevates them above the articulate and the wise, claiming, even, that the latter are in some sense "redeemed" (see below) by the former. We note that the opening paragraph of the fourth chapter is in a gnomic present tense. The Olympian tone which this sounds is reinforced by the description of the sea in terms usually reserved, in theology, for the godhead:

On men reprieved by its disdainful mercy, the immortal sea confers in its justice the full privilege of desired unrest. Through the perfect wisdom of its grace they are not permitted to meditate at ease upon the complicated and acrid savour of existence. They must without pause justify their life to the eternal pity that commands toil to be hard and unceasing, from sunrise to sunset, from sunset to sunrise; till the weary succession of nights and days tainted by the obstinate clamour of obstinate sages, demanding bliss and an empty heaven, is redeemed at last by the vast silence of pain and labour, by the dumb fear and the dumb courage of men obscure, forgetful and enduring. (p.55)

This "unrest" is "desired" and a sign of "full privilege" because mankind chose "unrest" when it ate the fruit of good and evil, discontented, as it was, with life in the Garden. This passage gives a strong sense of a post-Edenic world. It provides us with a compressed representation of *The Nigger's* overall value-structure (as well as, I believe, with the main terms of the Faulknerian world-view, more of which later). The passage evokes the novel's 'official' values, to use the Bakhtinian term, and gives bench-marks by which, it is urged, we should judge and evaluate.

'Dumbness', in both senses, it is being suggested, is preferable to the intellect and eloquence of a particular kind of "obstinate" sage whom, perhaps, we can equate with the "Well-meaning people" and "sentimental voices" of the earlier passage quoted above at length. Uncomplaining dedication to toil is raised above all other virtues. We note that the "unrest" of these simple people is "desired" not only by their masters but by themselves, as we have said, in that they choose to go to sea, choose "unrest" (all Conrad's stories are, in a sense, 'tales of unrest') and a life commanded by "eternal pity", "reprieved" only by the sea's "disdainful mercy". The narrator, here, is sponsoring a radically conservative view of the simple and the voiceless.

Yet, their presentation in the work as a whole belies their avowed simplicity; they *complicate* matters by being simple. Singleton is the exemplar of these "simple minds" (p.3), these "big children". Indeterminacy and ambivalence surround his character. He is an enigma, a poser of riddles like the Sphinx. His voice, which we strain to hear, is an "inward whisper". Though he is "not permitted to meditate at ease upon the complicated and acrid savour of existence", he is "meditative" nevertheless. He is able to read, albeit with difficulty, though when he collects his pay at the journey's end, he is unable to sign his name (though being able to read and not to write is not an unknown phenomenon). Lastly, he is both right and wrong about Wait, he is both oracle and fool.

These and other differences between what we might call the 'early' Singleton and the 'late' could, perhaps, be accounted for by the moral collapse he suffers after his thirty-hour stint at the helm. To rely too heavily on a linear explanation of what happens to Singleton however would be a mistake. *The Nigger's* major strategies are not about cause and effect. Rather, the narrative sets up conflicting perspectives on its simple characters. This is the essence of its dialogism.

In *The Nigger*, these simple people are subjected to extraordinary tests (matching the concept of "desired unrest") of duty, loyalty and endurance. The agents of these trials are essentially the storm, Donkin and Wait. They each impose pressure on the seamen as they struggle in the *proper* discharge of their duties. Likewise, throughout the novel, the conflicting views of the voiceless are themselves tested and placed under enormous pressure.

Class and race antagonism

In the opening chapter of *The Nigger*, we are given two contrasting views of the seamen: the first, as an unruly mob, friendly yet undisciplined and potentially threatening; the second, as ignorant, naïve and childlike. The first view is reactionary-conservative; the second is paternalist-conservative evoking, as it does, ideas of savage nobility and Edenic innocence as well as the less flattering qualities of intellectual stupidity and severely limited awareness. The contrast between these views could perhaps partly be explained by the fact that this first view (contained in the first pages of the novel) is of the crew assembling, i.e. *not yet at sea*. The 'unruly mob' motif is however also invoked to describe them during the incipient mutiny and at various other points in the novel.

In any event, these views also bring to mind stereotyped, colonialist images of the native: grateful, obsequious,

dutiful and hard-working on the one hand, treacherous and lazy on the other. This implied identification of seamen and natives provides a motif and links the imperialist-racist discourse in the novel with the social and economic antagonisms which cluster around the relationship between officers and crew. The alternation between the severe and relatively benign views of the crew is regulated largely by the degree to which the crewmen are seduced by Wait and Donkin into disregarding their duty and their work. The farther the seamen deviate from their proper concerns, the more likely it is that the reactionary-conservative view of them will be stressed.

At the beginning of the book, a "hum of voices" (p.1) is "heard" in the fore-castle. The originator(s) of this "hum" is/are not identified (note the use of the passive mood) nor is there any but an implied subject to hear. The mass of human sound emanating from the fore-castle is as yet unindividuated and undifferentiated. The process of differentiation and individuation between different human sounds begins in the disputation between the new hands and their Asiatic ferrymen. Their row is about money:

the new hands began to arrive in shore-boats rowed by white-clad Asiatics, who clamoured fiercely for payment before coming alongside the gangway-ladder. The feverish and shrill babble of Eastern language struggled against the masterful tones of tipsy seamen, who argued against brazen claims and dishonest hopes by profane shouts.

The values of this third-person narrator are clear enough. Phrases such as "brazen claims" and "dishonest hopes" emanate from a value-system not so much sympathetic to the new hands, as unsympathetic to the "claims" of social, economic or racial 'inferiors'. The values implied here are reactionary and imperialist, if also paternalist in the amused, detached tone of their expression. The values of the narrating voice

creates an implied set of relations which allows the seamen's voices to be "masterful" and requires the protestations of the Asiatics to be "feverish and shrill" (let us not forget also that the seamen are drunk though we rarely if ever see them so aboard ship). This prepares us for one aspect of their presentation, the fact that they are prone to insobriety whilst also making the ferocity and unruliness of their exchanges with the natives more convincing).

These relations bind not only the new hands to the Asiatics but, as will become apparent, the crew of the *Narcissus* to their masters. Just as the crewmen are paid to sail, so the Asiatics are paid to sail the new hands to the ship. In the ferocity of the disputation between the Asiatics and the sailors, there is a foreshadowing of the situation that occurs on the *Narcissus*. The "tipsy" seamen's "masterful tones" parallel the authoritative grunt of Mr Baker which Aaron Fogel describes as both "a universal contract and a personal tonality".⁴² The squeaking resentment and protest of Donkin, who himself speaks in a kind of Eastern babble (Cockney) finds a parallel in the "feverish and shrill babble" of the Asiatics.

The parallels between the relations of the new hands and Asiatics, and the officers and crew of the *Narcissus* work ironically to remind us that the officers and crew, for the most part, are bound by a single language (in as much as they speak English). They are in reality as much separated by 'language' (in the sense of social idioms or Bakhtin's social speech types) as the new hands and their native oarsmen. The difference in 'the way they speak' is primarily social, a question of idiom or dialect (Archie and Belfast speak English with national accents). The fact that the crew and the officers apparently possess a common language (English) obviously masks this difference. As one crew-member comments with unwitting irony in an argument over the matter of what makes a "gent": "it's the way they speak" (p.19).

To begin with, the exchange between the new hands and the Asiatics is presented in a picaresque manner with a tinge of the mock-heroic. The hyperbole of "howls of rage" and "shrieks of lament" over tiny sums of money and the drunkenness of the sailors create a sense of comic distance. The natives are fiercely impudent, an impudence to which the seamen respond with roguish assertiveness. The episode occurs simultaneously with the swift business of making the craft sea-ready. It forms part of the series of statements which begins, "The decks had been swept, the windlass oiled and made ready to heave up the anchor" (p.1), and is related in short clauses which create a sense of movement and urgency. There is then a switch of tone (most evident on a second reading):

The resplendent and bestarred peace of the East
was torn into squalid tatters by howls of rage
and shrieks of lament raised over sums ranging
from five annas to half a rupee.

Whether the "shrieks" and "howls" are produced by the Asiatics, the new hands or both is left deliberately unclear. From being clearly differentiated a few paragraphs before, natives and crew are gradually merged into a single disputatious mass. A page later, the crew is described in feral terms as speaking in "growling voices" (p.2) and in an image reminiscent of the "white-clad Asiatics":

big arms in white sleeves gesticulated; the growl-
ing voices hummed steady amongst bursts of laughter
and hoarse calls. (p.2)

Though these exchanges are good-natured and far removed from the fierce (although not unhumorous, at least, on the part of the crew) exchanges with the natives, the implication is clear. A subtle identification of native and seaman has been achieved. From differentiating the "masterful tones" and

"shrill babble" of the seamen and the Asiatics at the outset, the sequence ends by conflating them. In this identification of Asiatics and seamen, the narrative manages to confer some, if not all of the characteristics which it has implicitly attributed to the Indians, on to the seamen as well. The ideas of indisciplined behaviour and threatening language in both natives and crew are tied to the notion of a latent menace inherent in both, coupled with suggestions of their racial or social inferiority.

Another important thematic element introduced in this key passage is the idea that the unruly clamour for money or resources goes against a natural or metaphysical order of some kind ("The resplendent and bestarred peace of the East was torn into squalid tatters"). Yet, the "howls of rage" and "shrieks of lament" are, after all, the clamour of the market place, the ultimate driving force behind the entire imperialist enterprise and the reason, writ small, for the voyage of the *Narcissus*. If the "peace of the East" is no more, it has been shattered by precisely the mercantilist impulses which brings the ship to Indian shores. On this issue, as on every other, *The Nigger* is deeply ambivalent.

This initial 'overhearing' of the crew in vocal battle with the Asiatics is in marked contrast to the friendly and socializing exchanges which accompany the descent of the new men into the forecastle. The snatches of banter and amicable conversation come naturally as the men get to know one another. Here, the narrative embarks on a process of partial individuation, representing the words, in quotation marks, of crew-members. As they get to know one another, their conversation becomes co-operative rather than contentious.

Nevertheless, there is a generic quality to these exchanges. In as much as they lack detail and a specificity of characterization, the reported conversations are intended to be taken as types rather than the actual utterances of individuals. Indeed, they are neither attributed nor attributable to any one crewman in particular. An element of

unruly competition between the men is retained despite the friendliness of their speech, they "pushed against one another in the middle of the fore-castle [. . .] All [. . .] speaking together, swearing at every second word".

The crew is, literally, polyglot, composed of a number of different nationalities. The dominant narrative forces in *The Nigger* do all they can to suppress the *polyglossia* of the crew, its variety of voice, character and language. The ideological needs of the 'authorial' narrators dictate that these differences and peculiarities of culture, class and temperament must either be glossed over, rendered meaningless ("meaningless mutter") or made to seem faintly absurd (e.g. Belfast's red-haired bad temper). The crewmen are presented in best light by these dominant narrators when they, voluntarily, subject their own identities to the needs of the prevailing order. This, clearly, is a matter of perspective: the view of the crew which these narrators sponsor is that of the 'old' kind of sailor, loyal, devoted and hard-working.

The initial exchange between the chief mate and the seamen at registration, the "roll-call to [. . .] inglorious and obscure struggle" (p.9) is a paradigm of 'proper' verbal/labour relations between officers and crew. The seamen are allowed a form of differentiation, i.e. a name. This is an essential requirement if the officers are to manipulate and manage them effectively and efficiently. This is the extent of the personal identity/voice that the former allow them. Their voices as they answer their names (most of which the reader never learns) are controlled, their answers pre-determined.

The crewmen answer "'Yes, sir!' or 'Here'" to Baker's command to identify themselves. The tenuous and momentary nature of this virtual differentiation is emphasized in that they respond, each "detaching himself from the shadowy mob". The use of "shadowy" emphasizes the idea of the crew as obscure and also as threatening. The use of "mob" emphasizes their status as rabble and their potential for political

chaos. This in turn justifies the need for their subjection, control and repression.

The narrative, at times, seeks to present the crew as a uniform, undifferentiated mass consciousness. This is because there is a 'danger', both for the ship's hierarchy and the conservative narrator(s) prejudices, in allowing the crewmen individual voices. Notwithstanding, the seamen do differentiate themselves. We will look at some of these sequences in due course. It is no coincidence that the most accomplished and fully-developed figural voice in the novel is that of Donkin, the great spokesman of *ressentiment*.

In *The Nigger*, difference is perceived as destabilizing whereas in *As I Lay Dying*, we are presented with a continuum of differences set up between pairs of oppositions (male, female, rich, poor). Further, in *The Nigger*, internal contradiction is at once revealed and suppressed. In the Faulkner, internal contradiction is simply revealed. It is everywhere and is an actual condition, pre-requisite even, for the speaking *moment*. The overlay of oppositions (Singleton-Donkin, Wait-Allistoun, Baker/Creighton-the crew) helps give the novel its curiously janiform and unresolved value-structure.

The crew is presented as, essentially, a collective entity; note the insect imagery of "Voices buzzed louder" (p.4). Here, as the noise increases amongst the seamen, Belfast humorously re-enacts an insubordinate episode from his last billet. Belfast is, in many of his features, a stock character (as the substitution of his name Craik by the generic Belfast suggests).

Conrad's partially successful attempt to render his dialect serves to differentiate the character without individuating his voice. Belfast's play-acting foreshadows the serious, mutinous situation which subsequently occurs on the *Narcissus*. Belfast's *braggadocio* and glorious (perhaps "dishonest"?) claims are undercut and made to seem absurd; "'Don't 'ee believe him! He never upset no tar; I was there!'

shouted somebody". Belfast rehearses in comic miniature the kinds of spurious emotions and self-beliefs that will attend the activities of the real mutineers.

As Henricksen points out, when Allistoun challenges the crewmen to give voice to their grievances, he enacts, in miniature, a process of voice-appropriation. To give the men adult voices would disrupt the dominant, conservative-paternalist view of them as simple, ignorant and childlike. When called upon by their captain to speak, they mumble and fidget like a class-room of recalcitrant children. The narrator implies that they have nothing "worth saying" (p.82).

It is clear however from what has gone before, that there is something on their minds. Indeed, Allistoun has to interrupt them to stop them speaking. It is not that they have nothing to say, because they have been saying it to each other for some time, "They found comfort of a gloomy kind in an interminable and conscientious analysis of their unappreciated worth" (p.62); it is that they have neither the confidence nor the authority to address Allistoun. They have the words, albeit simple ones, but lack the voice:

They wanted great things. And suddenly all the simple words they knew seemed to be lost for ever in the immensity of their vague and burning desire. They knew what they wanted, but they could not find anything worth saying. They stirred on one spot, swinging, at the end of muscular arms, big tarry hands with crooked fingers. A murmur died out. - 'What is it - food?' asked the master, 'you know the stores have been spoiled off the Cape.' - 'We know that, sir,' said a bearded shell-back in the front rank. - 'Work too hard - eh? Too much for your strength?' he asked again. There was an of-fended silence. - 'We don't want to go shorthanded, sir,' began Davies in a wavering voice, 'and this 'ere black - . . .' - 'Enough!' cried the master. (p.82)

The rhetoric of the passage seeks to convey, as convincingly as possible, the folly of the crew. It ridicules

their demeanour and appearance with a touch of the grotesque. Allistoun, the *master*, immediately appropriates their voices by synthesising and sarcastically giving voice to excuses, pseudo-grievances (whose triviality is designed to embarrass the crew), in the first place, and coming down very hard at the first squeak from the seamen in the second. Allistoun continues:

'Tell you what's the matter? Too big for your boots. [. . .] Know half your work. Do half your duty. If you did ten times as much it wouldn't be enough . . . I tell you - your best is no better than bad. You can do no more? No, I know, and say nothing.' (p.83)

This is an attempt of course to shame the men out of mutiny. It is also interesting dialogically. Essentially, Allistoun is conducting a question and answer session with himself. To allow the crewmen to express their arguably legitimate complaints, would disrupt the view of them the conservative narrator is seeking to sponsor. These kinds of criticism which follow very much the line of Jameson's and Fogel's are valid and substantiable.

It is tempting, as I have suggested, to interpose a humanist evaluation of how the captain behaves and of what the crew might want: better working conditions, compensation for the possessions they have lost in the storm and the rest. However, it is impossible to separate the men's sense of dissatisfaction and its expression in the attempted mutiny, from the influence and agency of Donkin. His appeals to the crew are rational and justifiable. Yet, there is a powerful irrational motivation behind his words and actions; in his rage he wants "to wring necks, gouge eyes, spit in faces" (p.81). This is a case, as with the Professor in *The Secret Agent*, of "personal impulses" being "disguised as creeds".⁴³

In forcing Donkin to replace the belaying-pin, Allistoun is taming the beast of rebellion. Donkin is described in feral and supernatural terms: he "snarled" his words (p.84),

"showed yellow teeth" and eventually "screamed *at the ship at large* and vanished beyond the foremast" [my italics].

Allistoun breaks Donkin's spell and the men calmly resume their duties. In his scream "at the ship at large", Donkin is revealed as the enemy of the ship and the entire ship's company including the crew whom he claims to represent. Indeed, he is the enemy of sea-life itself (toil, discipline and so on).

Allistoun, in marked contrast, knows that the discipline of the sea makes toil "unceasing". Privation is the lot of men disdained and nearly destroyed by the sea. As the narrator who begins the fourth chapter states, this in itself is a "disdainful mercy" (p.55) which "the immortal sea" "confers in its justice"; that "mercy" is "the full privilege of desired unrest". If we could recapture the crewmen's "simple words" (p.82) which are lost "in the immensity of their vague and burning desire", they would probably articulate a desire for rest, peace, good food, home comforts, shore life, in fact. Rather, their desire would be for some idealized version of shore life since that offered by late Victorian London was one, in the main, characterized by misery and poverty.

Allistoun bestows a stern form of pity on the crew by refusing to pander to these soft and softening, unrealistic aspirations. He is cruel to be kind. He even refuses to recognize the discipline and genuine fortitude of a body of men who have just fought their way through a storm, a severe physical and emotional trial.

There is a parallel here between the captain's lecture and the storm: Allistoun, remember, is described in these terms, "He [. . .] began to *storm* at them coldly" (pp.82-83, my italics). His refusal to pander to the men is a hard mercy. Yet, it enables Allistoun to regain full control of the *Narcissus*. Any other course of action, it is suggested, could have resulted in mutiny. Though some may feel that the extent of Donkin's influence over the crew just after the storm is

more to do with the inflamed passions of tired, wet men than with his exploitation of deeper resentments, the master's uncompromising attitude is an essential ingredient of his mastery of the situation.

To sum up, the view of the crew as unproblematically loyal is subverted by what happens in the narrative. We discover that the crew harbours 'unexpressed faithlessness' and 'unspoken disloyalty' as well as the "unexpressed faith" and "unspoken loyalty" (p.6) that are claimed for them by the conservative narrator. Their loyalty to their captain is to do, in part, with a recognition of economic necessity as well as the coercion implied in the authority of what they represent.

We may, as I say, feel that the 'mutiny' is an expression of momentary, if extreme, dissatisfaction on the part of the crewmen with their lot. For a short time, despite their repugnance for him, the seamen allow Donkin to take advantage of their anger. This sense of injustice or resentment is perhaps one that all who work experience on occasion. Yet, Donkin's influence, I would suggest, goes deeper than that. If their susceptibility to Donkin were limited to the moments just after the storm when they are most angry, then we could rely on the 'occasional dissatisfaction' thesis. Clearly however the reasons for Donkin's power are more profound.

The crew's 'loyalty' to Donkin (or Wait for that matter) is presented, particularly by the retrospective crewman-narrator, as the result of some inherent flaw (stupidity, weakness). Their lapse comes as a result of folly, egotism and emotional blackmail though it grows out of an understandable sense of grievance. The 'authority' of Donkin and Wait relies on an appeal to the irrational as well as the rational in the crewmen, however. Donkin and Wait exploit the naïve passions and "credulities" of the crew as well as their reasonable, if vague, sense of injustice. The opportunist Donkin, reviled as he is, holds sway through his eloquence and an appeal to what is weakest in the men.

Donkin and Wait

The authority of the officers over the crew of the *Narcissus* is sustained firstly by a recognition on the part of the men of the ethics of seamanship and the necessity for some kind of hierarchy ('pecking order') aboard ship. It is also buttressed by an apprehension of the power of the established order which they represent. The influence that Wait and Donkin wield could, in a sense, be described as coercive though it is of a subtle, if compelling, nature.

Though the crew, from the beginning, see Donkin and Wait for what they are, they treat them both with a degree of charity. As it turns out, particularly in the case of Donkin, this charity is misplaced. In their very kindness, however, they are beguiled by a short-sighted 'wisdom'. Conrad's point here is to do with a mankind tragically eager for self-delusion and susceptible to those who, like Donkin and Wait, trade upon their "credulities".

The narrative in order to convince dramatically must lay a sound basis for Wait and Donkin's appeal whilst revealing them as what from the perspective of the novel's dominant voices at least they really are. This partly explains the ambivalence of their presentation. Why Wait is presented first as a formidable, then as a weak, frightened, dying man. The text portrays him as both threatening and unthreatening, imposing and pathetically grotesque. This is also why Donkin's voice is represented with such force, such eloquence, whilst, as a material entity, he is shown to be weak and repulsive. Wait and Donkin must be both pathetic and dangerous (attractive) in order to perform the functions the text 'assigns' them.

However, by equating Donkin and Wait in this way, I do not want to blur the important differences between them. Wait's appeal lies partly in the audacious spectacle of a man evading death by *pretending* to sham. It lies also in the solidarity he simultaneously inspires in his *fellow* sailors.

This manifests itself in acts of general kindness on the part of the men, the building of his cabin and his 'rescue'. The poignancy of the crew's dilemma is that this sense of solidarity *obliges* them to lie for Jimmy, to others as well as themselves (to their revulsion, we may add).

Though Donkin, also, inspires charity, his attraction lies more in an appeal to the crewmen's pride, vanity and to a sense of their own grievances than to a sense of solidarity. In any case, the grounds of Wait's appeal are much more complex in all respects than Donkin's. The figure of the labour agitator was not uncommon in sea-fiction of the time whereas the kinds of complexities and dilemmas brought on by the character of Wait (a black man) was *new* and recognisably Conradian:

And in the confused current of impotent thoughts that set unceasingly this way and that through bodies of men, Jimmy bobbed up on the surface, compelling attention, like a black buoy chained to the bottom of a muddy stream. Falsehood. It triumphed through doubt, through stupidity, through pity, through sentimentalism. We set ourselves to bolster it up, from compassion, from recklessness [. . .] Jimmy's steadfastness to his untruthful attitude in the face of the inevitable truth had the proportions of a colossal enigma. (p.85)

Despite these differences, Donkin and Wait have this in common, that they elicit ambivalent responses from the crewmen. Early on we read of Wait, "We hesitated between pity and mistrust" (p.22). The crewmen serve Wait with "rage and humility" (p.23). Later, as they respond to Donkin's appeals, the crewman-narrator tells us, "Our contempt for him [Donkin] was unbounded - and we could not but listen with interest to that consummate artist" (p.61). The threat posed by Wait is nicely summarized in the following, "He was demoralising. Through him we were becoming highly humanised, tender, complex, excessively decadent" (p.85).

Note it is *through* and not *because of* Wait that the crewmen are 'endangering' themselves by acquiring the capacity to think and intellectualize. Donkin may be supplying them with the language of rebellion but the onus and responsibility is very much with them. There is also an undercurrent of irony in describing the crew of the *Narcissus* as "decadent" (especially, when we think of the 19th century meaning of the word). Note, I am not analysing these formulations as I do so elsewhere. It is sufficient for the moment to draw attention to similarities as well as differences of characterization between Wait and Donkin.

We naturally ask how it has been possible for these simple people to become "excessively decadent"? We touch here upon an element of *The Nigger's* dialogism to which Hawthorn particularly draws our attention.⁴⁴ How could a group of people who elsewhere in the novel are described as "big children" (p.6), be so wrought upon? The status of the "we" voice in this passage is problematic:

He was demoralising. Through him we were becoming highly humanised, tender, complex, excessively decadent: we understood the subtlety of his fear, sympathised with all his repulsions, shrinkings, evasions, delusions - as though we had been over-civilised, and rotten, and without any knowledge of life. (p.85)

The style and vocabulary of the voice that evokes the image of a "decadent", sophisticated body of seaman, bespeaks education, intelligence and eloquence. The voice in the above passage is that of the retrospective crewman-narrator who now, at the 'narrating' rather than the 'witnessing' moment, 'knows better'. Yet, the vision of the crew the passage evokes, even in its own terms, is inconsistent. These crewmen, it is being claimed, are "complex, excessively decadent" whilst also "without any knowledge of the meaning of life".

The crewman-narrator's voice is a moralizing voice. Even if, as has been suggested, it is the voice of an officer rather than a crewman, he still seems to be speaking for the ship's company, *en masse*. We note that even Allistoun is seduced to compassion (an error of judgement) in telling Wait that he believes him to be healthy when he knows in fact that he will soon die (a compassionate if not "sentimental" deceit), a 'lie' which directly leads to the attempted mutiny.

James Wait, like Singleton, is referred to as "unthinking" (p.72) in his fear of death; Wait's terror is as spontaneous as Singleton's courage. Singleton is both a paradigm and an elemental force, "old as Father Time himself" (p.14) and one of "the everlasting children of the sea" (p.15). The narrative discriminates between Singleton (and the second-eldest seaman) and the rest of the crewmen who are his "successors [. . .] the grown-up children of a discontented earth". Singleton is barely given a voice and is certainly in no need of one though Donkin, of course, thinks otherwise.

The crew looks to Singleton instinctively for guidance yet their attitude is as divided towards him as towards Wait and Donkin. They move from the impression that Singleton "seemed to know nothing, understand nothing" (p.25) to the confidence of "'Old Singleton says he will die'. It was a relief!" (p.26) to the realization that Singleton's answer "after all [. . .] meant nothing [. . .] All our certitudes were going". The instinctive confidence of the crew in Singleton is undermined by Donkin's verbal seduction and the shamming of James Wait.

In the case of Wait, the narrative offers conflicting perspectives in terms both of the narrating voice and the shifting attitudes of the crewmen. On Wait's appearance, the voices of narrator, crew and officers come together in the narrator's repetition of the word "'Nigger'" (p.10):

A surprised hum - a faint hum that sounded like the suppressed mutter of the word 'Nigger' - ran along the deck and escaped out into the night. The nigger seemed not to hear. (p.10)

It is a word which naturally raises the spectre of racial prejudice. It is also a word which comfortably belongs to the vocabulary of seamen, officers and narrator alike (i.e. monoglossia). The simile, "like the suppressed mutter" and the metaphor, "ran along the deck" are coyly suggestive. The reader of course assumes that the "surprised hum" not only sounds like the word "'Nigger'" but *is* the word "'Nigger'". The officers are conclusively implicated in the use of this word by the phrase "amazed like the rest" which comes near the beginning of the paragraph.

The word "seemed" is used in much the same way as "like" with the added complexity that Wait appears *not* to hear deliberately, a deliberate non-hearing which parallels the seamen's deliberate attempt at non-speaking: the involuntarily "suppressed mutter". Hearing and speaking must be suppressed as faculties if order is to be maintained. Though officers and crew are here united in their attitude to Wait, his appearance on deck heralds the end of that unity. From this point, they no longer speak with one voice on the subject of James Wait. The crewmen oscillate in their estimation of Wait and Donkin as does the narration in its attitude to what it narrates. It has already been pointed out that the presentation of the crewmen is benign or severe according to the degree to which they sympathize with or are drawn by Donkin and Wait.

In the depiction of their vicissitudes the narrative veers from the internal voice of the crewman-narrator to the outer 'objectivity' of an omniscient voice which at times even dramatizes the inner thoughts of the dying Wait. The crewmen are often described in their thoughts and actions by a singular noun, "the forecandle [. . .] was going to sleep" (p.13). The changing and divided feelings of the crew are

presented as in some respects part of the inner life of a single entity. At the same time, "Two light snores that did not synchronize, quarrelled in funny dialogue" hints at the dissension and conflict which Wait and Donkin are to inspire. For the book's narrators, collective action on the part of the crew can be good or bad depending on what inspires the action.

When they respond positively to Donkin's gambits, they are described as "that crowd" whose "naïve instincts" (p.7) cause them to be led easily astray. Earlier however "They all knew him" (p.6) implying that the seamen are wise to the self-seeking and work-shy Donkin, that "ominous survival testifying to the eternal fitness of lies and impudence" (p.6). Again, two contrasting (and conservative) views of the crew are exploited here: easily duped rabble on the one hand, stalwarts on the other. These views are of course in conflict with one another.

It is also ironic (and a 'sad truth' perhaps) that a 'good' crew, from the officers' point of view as well as Donkin's, is one that is easily led. This dichotomy is echoed in Donkin's own reflections on the gullibility and stupidity of the crew on one hand, and their intractability and general stubbornness on the other. In less than a page, he goes from "'I talk - what's the odds'" (p.68) to "'They would swallow any yarn'".

Donkin and the conservative narration ascribe contradictory characteristics to the crew. Their views are partial and external based on an idea of the crew as a single and fickle collective consciousness. The chief mate likewise is restricted in his knowledge of what is happening to the men; he is perplexed at the sudden recalcitrance of what would otherwise appear to be a perfectly good crew.⁴⁵ The distance that exists between the crew, the narration and characters such as Donkin and Baker varies according to the degree to which they act or speak in a manner which reinforces or bears out the values of the narration. When the behaviour of the

crew falls outside the value-system of the speaker, that behaviour tends to be met with bewilderment and/or harsh judgement.⁴⁶

As the spectre of mutiny looms in the forecastle, the crew becomes decisively 'they'. In their limited awareness, they *knowingly* misinterpret Allistoun's act of sympathy, the confinement of Wait, as one of cruelty and react accordingly. The sailors whom for Donkin are not "men" but "A driven lot of sheep" (p.68) have become for the conservative narrator feral beings that speak in "mixed growls and screeches" (p.74). The narrative here is 'located' well outside the crew, drawing attention to but neglecting to report the arguments of the crewmen: "A lot of quarrels were set going at once". The crew is reduced to a "dark mass" (p.75), ominous and threatening, and denied individuality. They are presented collectively as an unpredictable mob, "the dark mass stamped, eddied, advanced, retreated". Here, the crew is described in terms which suggest the stampede of wild animals or the movement of an elemental force.

The narratorial 'they' persists at the moment of the central confrontation between captain and crew. Giving voice to the crew at this stage, as we have already observed, would threaten the reactionary coherence of at least one of the text's narrative strands. The object of the ship's discipline from the outset has been to control the crewmen's language as well as behaviour; the "divers tones" (p.16) with which they meet Mr Baker's roll-call. Self-expression on the part of the crewmen from the point of view of narrator and officers is neither desirable nor acceptable.

They are allowed the kind of collective 'expression' deemed appropriate for seamen and the members of a ship's company: namely, coöperative labour under authority. It is only with the collective act of the burial of James Wait that the crewmen come once again into harmony with their officers and each other. At the moment of Wait's off-loading, "The crowd stepped forward like one man" (p.99) with the assuredness and

singularity of purpose of a sole individual rather than the threatening unpredictability of the mob. Their collective movement is also expressive of their common horror before the inevitability of death.

The burial of James Wait restores unity and solidarity amongst the seamen. His presence and his pretence have divided the crew, spreading deceit and dissension. The body of the 'dying' Wait is morally rotten and infects the seamen with its corruption. This at least is one dominant narrative strand or interpretation of what Wait represents and suggests contrasts and comparisons with the corpse of Addie Bundren in *As I Lay Dying*.

Wait like Kurtz and Donkin is both a voice and a presence. It is Wait's voice which so marks him out at the beginning of *The Nigger*. At the roll-call, he breaks ranks with the men both physically and vocally, and stands out from "the shadowy mob of heads" (p.9). His voice carries an audacious ring, and in the context of his exchange with the chief mate, the utterance of his very name becomes an impertinence. Wait in this opening scene gives voice to a bold impudence only implied in the responses of some of the other men to the calling of their names:

They answered in divers tones: in clear ringing voices; and some as if the whole thing had been an outrage on their feelings, used an injured intonation. (p.9)

Wait manages to capture and combine these tonalities of outrage and clarity with a disarming, civil yet insolent urbanity. Wait is differentiated from an "indistinct and motionless group" of crewmen. He is distinguished less by his appearance than the sound he makes, yet there is an important difference between his visual and vocal presence. The power and definiteness of his voice contrasts with the visual uncertainty of his physical description: "The whites of his eyes and his teeth gleamed distinctly but his face was

indistinguishable" (p.10) and his name on Mr Baker's roster is "all a smudge". This creates an aura or a sense of mystery around Wait and prepares us for the "colossal enigma" he is to become for the crew.

The implacability of this first appearance and the impression it has on James Wait's workmates parallels the initial appearance of Joe Christmas in *Light in August*. The first appearance of Wait and Christmas is dramatic: Ford Madox Ford (referring to his and Conrad's literary methods) wrote of the practice of initially giving a "strong impression" of a major character and then working "backwards and forwards over his past".⁴⁷ Though we learn little of Wait's past, he retains that same air of mixed inscrutability, mystery and threat, and both Wait and Christmas are of course black.

The role of the crewman-narrator

In the first few pages of *The Nigger*, we are given outside views of the crew from a detached and in the case of the officer-narrator⁴⁸ lofty perspective. In order to depict the limited awareness of the seamen, Conrad uses a crewman-narrator who can both dramatize (from the outside) *and* share their thoughts and feelings as it were from within. Judgements or evaluations given with the benefit of hindsight (as if this same crewman-narrator were telling the story after many years) are mixed with 'inner' renderings. The crewman-narrator helps give voice to the voiceless, evoking and analyzing the spontaneous reactions of the seamen to events, providing a vehicle for the representation of their thoughts, feelings and emotions whilst capturing the immediacy of experience. As Cedric Watts puts it:

the degree of subjectivity invoked by the first person plural has now licensed the narrator to share the uncertainties and limited knowledge of the crew.⁴⁹

The role of the crewman-narrator and the way the thoughts and *mixed* feelings of the seamen are rendered from without and within provide the focus of the next few pages. As we have already observed, the feelings of the crew for James Wait and their attitude to his illness are racked with doubt and suspicion: "We hesitated between pity and mistrust" (p.22). Likewise, they are profoundly ambivalent, as we have noted, in their feelings for Donkin: "We abominated the creature and could not deny the luminous truth of his contentions" (p.62).

The crewman-narrator who speaks here is able to give voice to the various and shifting thoughts and feelings of the seamen without the necessity of attributing particular viewpoints to particular individuals. He speaks on behalf of the crew's collective consciousness and in the very act of giving voice to a group of individuals submerges their individuality.

Conrad dramatizes the perspectives of his simple characters by assuming the voice of a shipmate who is capable of sharing, reporting and defining the feelings and spontaneous reactions of the crew: "A rage to fling things overboard possessed us" (p.41), for instance. In fact, much of the rescue scene is related in this voice as is much of the storm episode. Both these events see the crewmen acting under pressure and in the face of strong emotion.

The crewman-narrator is used to render the intense yet limited sensations of men forced to deal urgently with immediate situations. He also serves the purpose of communicating the general view of the seamen, e.g. "It looked as if it would be a long passage" (p.63). In general, he reports the feelings, opinions and sympathies of the crew at the time. The views articulated belong not to the time of narration (years later) but to the witnessing time; they are the views of the experiencing (young and inexperienced?) crewman-narrator.

At times, the crewman-narrator manages at once to evoke the feelings of the crew and to give an ironic dimension to the narrative. In the following example, which comes after the storm and before the mutiny (the fourth chapter) he does not criticize or openly scorn the crew for their credulity (remember, he also is implicated in it) but merely implies it:

We were oppressed by the injustice, surprised to perceive how long we had lived under its burden without realizing our unfortunate state, annoyed by the uneasy suspicion of our undiscerning stupidity. Donkin assured us it was all our 'good 'eartedness,' but we would not be consoled by such shallow sophistry. We were men enough to admit to ourselves our intellectual short-comings. (p.62)

The retrospective narrator now (at the narrating moment) sees that Donkin was guilty of "shallow sophistry" as do the men at the witnessing moment. It is clear however that, *at the time*, the men including the crewman-narrator do not realize that Donkin's 'sophistries' are meant to be "shallow" and part of a deeper game. The "intellectual short-comings" to which they admit, at the time, are not the same as those of which the narrator *now* realizes they were guilty. So, there is a distancing between the present narrator and his 'old' self and the crew. He is aware of a level of "undiscerning stupidity" beyond that of which the men, at the time, are aware. The retrospective narration of the crewman-narrator provides direct and indirect commentaries and reflections on the behaviour and activities of the crew.

The following quotation represents the views of the older, experienced crewman-narrator, judging and evaluating, and belongs to the time of narration: "And we were conceited [. . .] We remembered our danger, our toil and conveniently forgot our horrible scare" (p.61). This is an example of narratorial distancing through direct judgement.

The temporal removal inevitably explicit in the use of the past tense reinforces this sense of distance as does the unsympathetic, judgemental tone of what is said. The sequence of which these lines form part occurs after the storm and as Donkin begins, with success, to incite the men. It ends with a remarkable transition from 'collective' (first-person plural) to third-person narration:

Our little world went on its curved and unswerving path carrying a discontented and aspiring population. They found comfort of a gloomy kind in an interminable and conscientious analysis of their unappreciated worth; and inspired by Donkin's hopeful doctrines they dreamed enthusiastically of the time when every lonely ship would travel over a serene sea, manned by a wealthy and well-fed crew of satisfied skippers.
(p.63, my italics)

This brief sequence incorporates features of conventional, 'objective', third-person narrative in that we get a sense of what is happening, i.e. there is a foment of rebellion amongst the crewmen. Yet, the implied scorn of "little world", "interminable [. . .] analysis", "Donkin's hopeful doctrines" and the burlesque of their 'enthusiastic dreams' give clues to the identity of the speaker. Despite the shift in person, it is possible that this is still the voice of the crewman-narrator. The term "skippers" implies that the speaker is probably a sailor himself. Though like the other conservative narrators he expresses a certain contempt for the men, in so far as tone and diction are concerned, his voice does not suggest that of a lofty, entirely unsympathetic or socially superior narrator.

The humour of his description of their fatuous aspirations tends to soften these criticisms. This humour is universal insofar as it appeals to a common feeling: most of us like to belly-ache about our job from time to time. The fact that these humorous comments clearly belong to a member of the crew has the effect of distinguishing them from those of the

conservative speaker who at the end of the first chapter earnestly reflects on the demise of "the everlasting children of the sea" (p.15). If the tones heard in this passage are not those of the crewman-narrator, they perhaps belong to a Baker or an Allistoun, rather than a Creighton. The last flick of all sounds most like Allistoun. These speculative attributions are of course moot.

The dramatization of the reactions and feelings of the crew are not limited to the crewman-narrator. Third-person narration is used for conventional objective description as well as to convey the physical immediacy of a situation and to highlight the emotions and spontaneous responses of the seamen. The following combines these two modes:

Their toes scraped the planks. Lumps of green cold water toppled over the bulwark and on their heads. They hung for a moment on strained arms, with the breath knocked out of them, and with closed eyes - then, letting go with one hand, balanced with lolling heads, trying to grab some rope or stanchion further forward. The long-armed and athletic boatswain swung quickly, gripping things with a fist hard as iron, and remembering suddenly snatches of the last letter from his 'old woman.' Little Belfast scrambled in a rage spluttering 'cursed nigger.' Wamibo's tongue hung out with excitement; and Archie, intrepid and calm, watched his chance to move with intelligent coolness. (p.40)

There is no diegetic reason apart from the imposition of a formal consistency to ascribe these lines to the crewman-narrator. There is nothing in the passage itself, e.g. the use of the first-person plural, to justify such ascription. This passage occurs during the rescue sequence in which there are several shifts from first- to third-person narration and back again. This cannot be explained within the diegesis as will become clear. At the point where a crewman cries, "Where's Jimmy?" (p.39), the narration is 'collective' in the first person, "we were appalled once more". Clearly, on page

39, the crewman-narrator is not amongst the five men who "look for the best way to get forward" (pp.39-40).

Yet, by the time they reach Jimmy's cabin, the crewman-narrator is one of their number: "We worked fiercely, cutting our hands and speaking brutally to one another" (p.41). The passage just quoted is on page 40 and occurs somewhere between the transition from third-person to the collective voice. As we have said, such speculations are in any case moot. It is more productive to concentrate on the properties of the speaking voice rather than the too narrow issue of assigning a specific diegetic identity.

As we have said, the passage works partly as objective description, telling us what is happening. However, it also suggests an image of the crewmen which contrasts with the usual perspectives provided by the retrospective narrative of the crewman-narrator. Here, individual members of the crew are presented in non-judgemental terms with specific, *individual* feelings, exhibiting a genuine heroism and capacity for endeavour in their own right.

With the exception of Wamibo, the deaf mute, the actions, emotions and language of these sailors as well as the mere physical description of what they are doing squares uneasily with the image of "grown-up children" (p.15). Belfast's "'cursed nigger'" sounds more like the voice of a real sailor than the stock buffoon he is presented as on other occasions. There is a clash then between the presentation of the crewmen as more or less absurd 'types' on the one hand, and as mature individuals capable of intelligent and heroic actions on the other.

The short sentences and the use of the hiatus injects the scene with a sense of the urgency which attends the men in their difficulty. The narrative here is very close to the seamen, if not dramatizing from the inside, at least giving a sense of their inner life and the immediacy of their subjective experience. For example, "intrepid and calm" belongs to objective description (though it may also be

'subjective' in the sense that Archie may regard his activities in this light after the event).

Though "toes scraped", "strained arms", "breath knocked out of them" and "balanced with lolling heads" are phrases that belong to objective narrative, they also bring us *inside* the characters in that they closely involve the reader with the immediacy of the seamen's physical sensations whilst providing strong and precise visual observation. The word "strained" for instance simultaneously describes a physical state whilst conveying a sense of the inner emotions of the sailors (their 'strain'). The description of the water breaking over their heads in the form of "lumps" increases our sense of sympathy, involving us even more deeply in these emotions through the physical impressiveness of the metaphor.

However, we are not strictly speaking within the perceiving consciousses of these crewmen. The reader is nevertheless made to feel sympathy (if not to identify) with the struggle to reach Jimmy. What is happening inside them is implied by direct quotation and FID, as well as descriptive detail. The reader may make good guesses at the crewmen's emotions, identifying and sympathizing with them.

The crewman-narrator is often used to contextualize (*put into perspective*) and provide an external judgement on the events he recounts. He is also capable of reflective generalizations and meditations, sometimes referring to the seamen as 'they' in order to distance himself from them. Clearly, as we have said, the time of narration post-dates the time narrated quite considerably as is implied by the elegiac or nostalgic tone of much of what he writes (especially near the story's end) and though implicated at the time in much of the crew's 'folly', he is of course wise *after* the events he describes.

He says of Wait, "He had found the secret of keeping forever on the run the fundamental imbecility of mankind" (p.23). The crewman-narrator's own "fundamental imbecility" is of course no longer "on the run". Note that Donkin depends

for his influence not on a stupidity common to all men but the "naïve instincts" of a particular group of men, "that crowd" (p.7). This perhaps is an important distinction between the influence of Wait and Donkin.

A strong sense of the crew's ambivalence and indecision as well as its gullibility is captured in the crewman-narrator's retrospective narrative. At times however it is impossible to attribute a given thought, feeling or observation conclusively either to the narrating time or the witnessing time. Consider the following passage towards the end of chapter two when doubt over whether Wait is shamming or not really begins to take hold of the crew:

He was not very fat - certainly - but then he was no leaner than other niggers we had known. He coughed often, but the most prejudiced person could perceive, that, mostly, he coughed when it suited his purpose. (p.26)

This appears to be ratiocination, a weighing up (remember the homophony of *Wait* and *weight*) of the case, yet we read it as evaluative. The humanist reader is distanced from the evaluations of the crewman-narrator by the exhibition of his own prejudice (in the use of the word "niggers") and in the complacency of his reasoning, a complacency which is reinforced by the elegant glibness of a formulation almost Thackerayan in its elaborateness. Further, the reader is compelled to ask, if Wait's deception is so obvious, how does he manage to confuse and divide not only the crew but the officers of the *Narcissus* as well?

The keyword in the quoted passage is "prejudiced". In this context, the word refers to prejudice in favour of Wait (its primary sense here). The novel's dominant voices however (including that of the crewman-narrator) are prejudiced *against* Wait on grounds of temperament, class and race. Here, the crewman-narrator conjectures as to the view a "prejudiced person" may hold concerning Wait. If "prejudiced" is read in

its secondary meaning, the meaning of the passage is inverted: 'only a most prejudiced person could possibly suspect Wait of shamming'. A conclusive 'even' placed before "the most prejudiced" and which would confirm the primary sense of "prejudiced", has been left out and allows this significant ambivalence.

This ambivalence as well as causing the reader to question the crewman-narrator's reliability cleverly mirrors the extremes of the crew's mixed feelings. There is a further complication: the second half of the passage at least can be taken as an observation belonging not to the narrating but the witnessing moment. As such, it can be read as FID, a reporting of the inner or outer thoughts/utterances of a crew-member, at the time, who struggles to make sense of James Wait.

In short, the crewman-narrator gives voice to the movements of the crew's sympathies and the nature of their tribulations. The basis of his knowledge is personal recollection. He speaks in places with the limited awareness of a crew-member who was there but also, retrospectively, (as he writes *after the event*) commenting on the implications of what the crew did, said and felt and on aspects of the matter of which they (and he) were, at the time, unaware.

Matters are complicated by the fact that the basis of his knowledge appears to shift into near-omniscience in places (a disruption of consistency of focalization, Genette's *paralepsis*⁵⁰). He writes that to be violent to Wait was "The secret and ardent desire of our hearts" (p.73). The reader may well ask the question, secret from whom? Further, how can it be that the crewman-narrator is privy to the secret desires of his shipmates, secrets of which perhaps they themselves know nothing? Much of what he reports as fact therefore may be mere conjecture. Nevertheless, the impression is firmly established that James Wait is shamming. Ill or not, the emotions that he excites in the crew are themselves sham; the seamen collaborate in their own

deception. The counterpoint to this dominant narrative movement is to be found in the dialogues between Donkin and the dying Wait, and in the evocation of Wait's inner thoughts.

Donkin, "the consummate artist"

The most powerful vocal presence in *The Nigger* is arguably that of Donkin. Though in a figurative sense he qualifies as voiceless, being one of an obscure multitude, he possesses the most distinctively differentiated voice in the novel. Like Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, this 'simple' character is 'blessed' with "the gift of expression"⁵¹, i.e. *not* voiceless. Donkin's labour rhetoric is his attempt to differentiate himself from the 'voiceless' by purporting to speak for them. The crew and officers are united in their revulsion for him. The book's narrators pour scorn on him without restraint.

Scorn with the faintest tinge of pity is the overwhelmingly dominant mode of his presentation. Yet, amongst the crewmen, his is the most strident and occasionally persuasive voice. Further, the consistency of the irony and grim comedy with which he is rendered, tends particularly for the modern reader to undermine its own basis. In the end, we recognize of course that Donkin appropriates the crew's grievances for his own selfish ends. It is not that we fail to see Donkin for the scrounger and the shirker that he is, it is more that from our contemporary perspective at the risk of allying ourselves with "philanthropists and self-seeking landlubbers" (p.6), we see the working conditions of the crew as unjust.⁵²

To begin with, we, as the crewmen, respond to Donkin with a sense of genuine pathos, "He looked as if he had been cuffed, kicked, rolled in the mud; he looked as if he had been scratched, spat upon, pelted with unmentionable filth" (p.5): in other words he is in part at least a victim. Initially, his "misfortune" seems "deserved" for no apparent reason.

There is a difference however between the reader and the crew: note that "They all knew him" (p.6) though we for the moment do not.

Our responses to Donkin are complicated because as we read, reassess and reevaluate what we have learnt, in retrospect, our sense of the unreliability of the novel's conservative voices tends to make us wary of their opinions and testimony. This sense of unreliability stems largely from the intensity and apparent exaggeration of the narrator's blasts at Donkin's character. Nevertheless, we engage with the striking tone of his description as "a startling visitor from a world of nightmares" (p.5).

The vigour of the narrator's hatred for Donkin surprises us. The degree to which he is disturbed by Donkin's appearance does give a strong hint of the threat he will pose to the crew, the ship and the authority of the officers:

This clean white fore-castle was his refuge; the place where he could be lazy; where he could wallow, and lie and eat - and curse the food he ate; where he could display his talents for shirking work, for cheating, for cadging; where he could find surely some one to wheedle and some one to bully.

Our surprise continues. The tone and uncompromising directness of this sequence for example disrupts humanist ideas of tolerance and temperance. Yet, we cannot avoid feeling as the story unfolds that the tenor of the narrator's criticisms are justified. Donkin's concerns are not for the crew but purely for himself. Further, in the way he manipulates the crew's feelings, he is already establishing himself as a "consummate" actor/performer.

It would be a clear misreading of Donkin (quite obvious on a re-reading) to take him solely at his own self-evaluation as put upon, abused and unjustly treated: "a sympathetic and deserving creature" (p.6) as the ironizing narrator has it.⁵³ Though Donkin's motivations may be self-seeking and

hypocritical however (he *is* shiftless and dishonest), the meaning of his words if not his intentions carries weight with the crew as with us despite the fact that "They all knew him" (p.6).

He appeals to a genuine sense of charity and solidarity on the part of the crew. The seamen are also dupes to their own credulity and the vanity perhaps of a self-regarding 'selflessness'. Donkin's eloquence is strengthened considerably by the fact that we recognize that his words contain at least a grain of truth and of course this is what makes his presence so threatening to the prevailing order.

That Donkin should be as seductive for us as he is for the crew is a deliberate feature of Conrad's strategy in that we come to share the crew's mixed feelings. Donkin is in a sad and austere formulation "an ominous survival testifying to the eternal fitness of lies and impudence" (p.6). Within an evolutionary framework, the source of his influence and the key to his survival it is implied is his command over language and his "talents" as a performer.

Donkin's "lies and impudence" are of a particularly eloquent kind. The words "survival" and "fitness" suggest Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' (which relies on another meaning of "fitness"). This in its turn implies that Donkin, the eloquent liar, is in some sense superior to those around him. The word "ominous" is also resonant. This narrating voice is clearly deeply troubled both by Donkin and by the idea that his ability to lie convincingly puts him in the ascendancy. The narrator's initial disturbance at Donkin's appearance is within his own terms fully justified. Donkin represents a threat whose full potential is almost realized.

The figure of Donkin is surrounded by the ambivalence characteristic of the novel. To begin with, the assertion "They all knew him" (p.6) is repeated within the same paragraph. The spitting of the "taciturn [. . .] shellback" functions as a disdainful comment on what Donkin represents. The seamen it would appear are as aware as the narrator

claims they are of who Donkin really is. Yet within the page we are told that "He knew how to conquer the naïve instincts of that crowd" (p.7). Does the narrator misjudge his crew or does he simply give voice to an ideal of who/what the crewmen are, i.e. 'they should know who Donkin is?' Perhaps the resolution to this apparent contradiction lies in the fact that it is only when Donkin appeals to the crew's sense of charity that they lose their capacity for 'sound judgement'.

We can of course only make such an assertion with the benefit of hindsight. Remember, that in giving him clothes, they are acting according to the dictates of craft (and humanitarian) "solidarity". This is what Donkin actively exploits when he refers to himself as their "chum". Donkin is, after all, truly destitute and a figure of genuine pathos, "I'm dead broke. I 'aven't got nothink [. . .] 'As any of you 'art enough to spare a pair of old pants for a chum?" (p.6).

There is a pun here on 'art' and 'heart'. Ironically, it is Donkin who practices his 'art' on the 'hearts' of the seamen. As he coaxes the men to mutiny in the fourth chapter, reviled as he is, his talent with language, his capacity to speak (there are obvious parallels with Kurtz) is irresistible:

He talked with ardour, despised and irrefutable.
His picturesque and filthy loquacity flowed like
a troubled stream from a poisoned source. (p.62)

Donkin's voice poses a direct challenge to the authority of the ship's officers and the values they represent. During the storm, it is "The master's ardour [note that Donkin "talked with *ardour*", my italics], the cries of that silent man that inspired us" (p.53). It is the loquacious rhetoric of Donkin however to which the crewmen succumb before Allistoun finally reasserts his authority. In identifying Allistoun as "silent", a sense of the virtues of taciturnity as opposed to the evils of eloquence, which is always distrusted in Conrad,

is reinforced. During the storm, the crewmen forget about Donkin and Wait, committing themselves through necessity to the proper and necessary business of their craft (in both senses).

It is in the period of leisure and self-congratulation which follows the storm that they become susceptible to Donkin. In the loss of their possessions and the destruction of the forecandle by flood, the crewmen are in a sense *donkinized*. The solidarity, camaraderie and unity of purpose which has characterized their conduct under pressure fall prey to disharmony: "In the dim light cursing voices clashed" (p.58); the men are angry "overwhelmed by their losses" (p.58). It is against this background of genuine hardship, material loss and suffering that Donkin's rhetoric problematically takes hold.

The profound ambivalence of the seamen's attitude to their tormentors, Wait and Donkin, is nicely summed up in the phrase, "despised and irrefutable" (p.62). Donkin's "loquacity" is not only "picturesque" in the euphemistic sense that it is loaded with expletives; it is "picturesque" also in that it conveys a sentimental, 'picture-postcard' view of the crew and their circumstances, "We were indubitably good men; our deserts were great and our pay small". They are according to Donkin "a bloomin' condemned lot of good men" (p.61). The crewman-narrator's report is crucial in that it bears testimony to Donkin's repulsiveness and mendacity whilst at the same time giving substance to the power of Donkin's appeal.

Here we see the '"consummate" performer' at work:

He advanced confidentially, backed away with great effect; he whispered, he screamed, waved his miserable arms no thicker than pipe stems - stretched his lean neck - spluttered - squinted.

The irony of "impassioned orations" and the accompanying 'commentary' of wind and sea (which 'speak' calmly and

quietly like Allistoun and unlike Donkin) reinforces the image of Donkin as a grotesque liar:

In the pauses of his impassioned orations the wind sighed quietly aloft, the calm sea unheeded murmured in a warning whisper.

It is not entirely clear whether these reflections belong to the narrator at the time he witnesses the events or whether they belong to the time of narration (though "unheeded" seems to suggest the latter). What is clear is that in spite of their better judgement and their reservations which operate *at the time*, the seamen are still seduced by Donkin. They are aware of simultaneous mixed feelings, yet are unable to deny Donkin: "We abominated the creature and could not deny the luminous truth of his contentions".

It is the grain of truth in Donkin's discourse, as we have said, that makes him so formidable. In the face of the crew's privations, there is, as it were, a case to answer. Donkin's "material interests"⁵⁴ are for the narrators opposed both to those of officers and crew and, in identifying with Donkin, the crewmen are behaving foolishly. Yet, we ask, in what sense do Donkin's appeals to the seamen differ from the officers' blend of coaxing and coercion.

Donkin's utterances often sound like the sentiments of reactionary nationalism and imperialism *translated* into Cockney. Though the narrator expresses contempt for Donkin's racist views, it is the source and tenor of their expression rather than their substance to which he objects. In what sounds like a bald expression of the values of Empire as well as those of an extreme Anglocentrism, Donkin, ironically described as the "votary of change" (p.8), states, "Those damned furriners should be kept under [. . .] If you don't teach them their place they put on you like anythink" (p.7).

This could easily come from the mouths of Donkin's masters (applied to the crew).

Donald M. Kartiganer's observation on Thomas Sutpen applies equally to Donkin: if he "horrifies the community, it is largely because he is a pure, naked version of its own deepest principles".⁵⁵ Donkin's actual near-nakedness parallels Sutpen's at the beginning of *Absalom, Absalom!* Sutpen combines naked lies with naked ambition; Donkin, though his ambitions are obvious enough, clothes his lies in partial truths. Like Wait, Kurtz and Sutpen, he both revolts and fascinates, appalls and intrigues.

Donkin claims to speak for the seamen against the officers, appealing to the crewmen's sentimentality (a "good 'eartedness" [p.62] which he exploits as ruthlessly as he accuses the officers of doing) and vanity, as well as to their genuine and particularly for the modern reader substantiable sense of injustice. Yet, at the end, we recognize that Donkin betrays precisely those for whom he claims to speak and, in truth, speaks only for himself. Ultimately ignored and rejected, in a final, self-revelatory flourish of "filthy loquacity" (p.62), he spits venom at the seamen, "Ye're the scum of the world. Work and starve" (p.105). These are perhaps the only sincere words he utters to the crew, as a whole, in the entire novel.

Conrad wrote in his author's note to *The Secret Agent*, "I have no doubt [. . .] that there had been moments during the writing of the book when I was an extreme revolutionist".⁵⁶ Conrad, the flesh-and-blood author, is keenly aware of the queer 'authority' of Donkin's 'critique' of the working conditions of the crew even if his views are hypocritical. Some of the sentiments and ideas to which Donkin gives voice have some basis in truth. In an article on the sinking of the *Titanic* and elsewhere, Conrad vigorously defends seamen against the interests of ship owners and governments alike. Conrad understood the motivations of "philanthropists and self-seeking landlubbers" (p.6) in their sympathies for the

Donkins and the Singletons alike, though he saw them perhaps as misplaced.

Conrad was sensitive to the parallels between the procedures of the ruling classes and the rhetoricians and practitioners of anarchy who each claimed to represent the best interests of the lower orders, to have their best interests *at heart*. We note the many affinities in *The Secret Agent* between the activities of 'criminals' on the one hand, and law enforcers on the other. There are certain parallels, as we have seen, between the activities and objectives of Donkin and the order (as represented by the officers) which he claims to oppose.

This juxtaposition between and partial equivalence of the forces of law and order, agents of the maintenance of the *status quo*, on one side, and the agents of political radicalism, on the other is brought out in a variety of ways. It's important to remember that Donkin, as a personality, is thoroughly discredited within the novel's *diegesis*. However, there are certain telling features to his characterization and the creed to which he gives voice which, though they do not subvert his status as villain and egotist, lead us to take his grievances seriously. In this sense, Donkin does not only speak 'for himself'.

Firstly, there is his name which was perhaps selected for its Dickensian suggestiveness. However, Conrad might have named him after an associate of W.E. Henley, H.B. Donkin⁵⁷ who shared Henley's uncompromising conservatism. Let us speculate for a moment that this was actually the case. What point, if any, might Conrad have been trying to make by juxtaposing the hideous Donkin with Henley's friend and collaborator? Such 'impertinence' on the part of Conrad sits uneasily with the almost sycophantic fervour with which he pursued Henley and the 'Grail' of publication in *The New Review* of which he was editor.

Secondly, if we think of Donkin as an orator, an "artist" (p.61), he, like Conrad, claims to be concerned (albeit

hypocritically in Donkin's case) with the revelation of truth. In the preface to the novel, Conrad declares his preoccupation with "that glimpse of truth" (p.147), a "one illuminating and convincing quality - the very truth" (p.145), "the truth, manifold and one" and "the substance of [. . .] truth [. . .] its inspiring secret" (p.147). There are also a variety of ocular metaphors in the preface to do with truth amongst which is the much-quoted statement of artistic intent, "to make you see" (Conrad's italics).

My point is that much of the preface, in terms of metaphor and diction though, of course, not tone, is strongly suggestive of the terms in which Donkin's eloquence and "the *luminous truth* of his contentions" (p.62, my emphasis) is described. The "disinterested concern for our dignity" (p.61) which the narrator ironically ascribes to Donkin is a parodic refraction of Conrad's high-minded tone and declaration of intent in the preface. Though in context Donkin's is a false 'luminosity', clearly, to bring the preface and Donkin's "filthy loquacity" into correlation at all is, potentially, to change the way we read both. In the skill and strength of his rhetorical appeals, like his creator who also possesses the "gift of expression", Donkin is, for the simple crewmen at least, the "consummate artist" (p.61).

Lastly, consider Donkin's "filthy loquacity" which "flowed like a troubled stream from a poisoned source" (p.62). This image reminds us of the way the Thames is described towards the end of the book. The following sequence contains an implicit critique (articulated through metaphor and suggestion) of the 'land' ("the poisoned source"?), the values of the metropolis and, by extension, of the Empire. There is also in the docking of the *Narcissus* a suggestion of the agency of supernatural forces hitherto associated with Wait and to a less extent Donkin:

from both sides the land approached the ship. She went steadily up the river [. . .] the tall factory chimneys appeared in insolent bands [. . .] like a

stragglng crowd of slim giants, swaggering and upright under the black plummets of smoke, cavalierly aslant [. . .] an impure breeze shrieked a welcome between stripped spars. (p.101)

Words like "insolent", "swaggering" and "stragglng" are words that have hitherto been associated with Donkin and Wait. The threat which Donkin has represented for the *Narcissus*, the threat of social subversion and anarchy is echoed in the image of dirty chimneys closing on the ship in "insolent bands".⁵⁸ This echoing, in a bold reversal, suggests a startling *equation* of Donkin's 'progressive' beliefs and the industrial might (the result of one kind of progress) which is the root of the very power of Empire. The passage continues in an evocation of Blakeian 'dark, satanic mills' and 'wage-slave' horror:

A low cloud hung before her [. . .] it throbbd to the beat of millions of hearts, and from it came an immense and lamentable murmur - the murmur of millions of lips praying, cursing, sighing, jeering - the undying murmur of folly, regret and hope exhaled by the crowds of an anxious earth. The *Narcissus* entered the cloud; the shadows deepened; on all sides there was the clang of iron, the sound of mighty blows, shrieks, yells. Black barges drifted stealthily on the murky stream. A mad jumble of begrimed walls loomed up vaguely in the smoke, bewildering and mournful, like a vision of disaster [. . .] A bridge broke in two before her, as if by enchantment; big hydraulic capstans began to turn all by themselves, as though animated by a mysterious and unholy spell. (pp.101-102)

There are parallels as far as mood and metaphor are concerned between this description and the language which is used to describe Wait ("enchantment", "mysterious and unholy spell"). The crewmen themselves are clearly implicated in "the murmur of millions of lips praying, cursing, sighing, jeering - the undying murmur of folly, regret and hope". This is a summary, a microcosm of the range of voices we have heard on the ship. This cacophony and Donkin's "filthy

loquacity" (p.62) are related; he (and Wait) have engendered "praying, cursing, sighing and jeering" amongst their fellow crewmen, playing on their "folly, regret and hope", amplifying their "immense and lamentable murmur". An important point is being made. Because the "murmur of folly, regret and hope" is "undying", it will always find expression, seek redress. Conrad is charting the origins of the discontent which sponsors religions, creeds or political movements. It is this discontent that Donkin exploits in the crew.

The novel's complex dialogism lies outside as well as within the discourses of the novel's umbrella narrators though the voice that speaks this passage is not one of them. This voice is clearly romantic and nostalgic and belongs to a speaker who possesses a love and knowledge of sea life together with a mixture of melancholy, distrust and abhorrence for the land and the industrial order. Both implicitly link with Donkin insofar as they also lie in opposition to the ship, the exigences of the craft, the order of the sea. The disciplines of seamanship are a way of responding to and *controlling* the "murmur" of dissatisfaction and unfulfilled aspirations which according to the Conradian vision is the fate of mankind.

In the light of these observations, what precedes the 'Satanic mills' sequence is truly remarkable. It is the evocation of the mainland of Britain as "A great ship!" (p.101), "A ship mother of fleets and nations! The great flagship of the race". True, it is a ship with its burden of "dross", guarding "untold sufferings". Nevertheless, it also guards "priceless traditions", "ignoble virtues" and splendid transgressions". This is pure Conrad. We go from this near-triumphalism to the sombre and ominous shrieking of an "impure breeze" as the *Narcissus* enters the Thames estuary, "the land, closing in, stepped between the ship and the sea".

One feature of this extraordinary transition between voices is the disappearance of the qualitative balancing of

formulations such as "priceless traditions and untold suffering [. . .] glorious memories and base forgetfulness". As the *Narcissus* nears the shore, the land reveals little to redeem it. The identification of ship and land ("A ship mother of fleets and nations") disappears to be replaced by the positing of an opposition or hostility between sea/ship and land, "from her bows two lines went through the air whistling, and struck at the land viciously, like a pair of snakes" (p.102).

The implication of this general sense of opposition between the land and sea is that life at sea is relatively free of the corruption and "impurity" of shore life. This is given metaphorical impetus by the polluted cloud which the *Narcissus* enters as it nears dock. The 'cloud' motif, typically in Conrad, suggests incertitude, moral confusion, the onset of something ominous (the "murmur", perhaps; the 'origins' of discontent). Yet, as the tale itself confirms, this particular casting (land-corrupt, sea-pure) at least of the land/sea opposition is unsustainable. As the dualistic metaphors and similes Conrad uses to cast the 'opposition', are a 'fiction' (an effect of Conrad's art) so the land/sea opposition, likewise, is a fiction.

In sum, the plain fact that the *Narcissus*, her voyage and the activities of the Merchant Marine, in general, are wholly implicated in the life of the land lies at the heart of *The Nigger's* complexity. There are then connections to be made between Donkin's "filthy loquacity" (p.62), the "troubled stream" of his eloquence and "the murky stream" (p.101) of the Thames. Again, to draw such parallels, to make such connections profoundly alters the way in which we read the novel.⁵⁹

In part, Donkin represents the disintegrating and decaying tendencies of shore life and shore thinking. He is both lazy and incompetent when it comes to the life of the sea. Yet, paradoxically, the *Narcissus*, its crew and the craft of seamanship itself depend for their existence precisely on

that same "murky stream" and the forces of cultural transformation (decadence?) and social change of which it is the conduit. Ultimately, the people who live on shore, in the name of Empire and trade, take the 'shore' to the 'sea'.

The Nigger and As I Lay Dying; some theoretical linkages

The Nigger of the 'Narcissus' is a radically divided and (certainly in terms of the critical responses it elicits) a divisive text. The book embodies profoundly unresolved attitudes to the story it relates. This conflict is mirrored in the narrative strategies employed and in the clash between the competing perspectives offered. In all these respects, Conrad's novel anticipates *As I Lay Dying*. To iterate briefly the Bakhtinian basis of my methodology: Wait, Donkin, Singleton, the crew on the one hand, and the community of poor whites, Addie, Anse, the Bundrens, on the other are the originators, the borrowers and the objects of language. Each speaks in his own distinctive voice (in the Bakhtinian sense), an inscribed language whose basis is ideological, valorized and valorizing.

Clearly, these communal voices are in conflict with other voices in the text. The interaction of competing voices articulates what Albert Guérard (writing on Conrad) calls "the continuing conflict between sympathy and judgement".⁶⁰ Each 'participant' in the text wittingly or unwittingly provides his or her own perspective. These perspectives are limited. Faulkner and Conrad juxtapose limited awarenesses, giving voice and life to the words and the internal if not external *worlds* of simple people: sailors, poor, uneducated, white Southerners, "grown-up children" (p.15).

Like *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *As I Lay Dying* is a multiple narrative. In the Conrad, the narratorial shifts are relatively unobtrusive. In contrast, the Faulkner actually draws attention to a change of narrator. *As I Lay Dying* consists of fifty-nine labelled monologues distributed

unequally amongst fifteen characters of more or less limited awareness. Each monologue incorporates reported dialogue, conversation, self-communion and what Dorrit Cohn calls "psycho-narration",⁶¹ the authorial evocation of 'inner' material of which the figural character may or may not be unaware. For example, Faulkner, speaking at the University of Virginia, describes Vardaman: "He saw things that baffled and puzzled him".⁶² This is the essential state of the perceiving consciousness in Faulkner and Conrad. Their characters and their narrators are "baffled" though at different levels of understanding, since terms such as 'simple' or 'voiceless' are not absolute but relative.

If the narrative of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* is an essentially shifting thing then that of *As I Lay Dying* could be described as a single, free-floating mass settling on each character in turn. The basic structure of Faulkner's novel, the contiguous arrangement of ostensibly monologic utterances variously attributed, is an ingenious solution to the problem of presenting consciousness. Both novels are constituted by the play of multiple perspectives. In terms of giving voice to simple people or individuals of limited, even severely limited awareness, Faulkner performs a task similar to Conrad's in that he presents and juxtaposes different (and conflicting) perspectives and subjectivities, treating them with both sympathy and ironic distance. He, like Conrad, attempts to dramatize from within as well as from without; the reader looks to the 'testimony' of each speaker in the process of evaluating any one voice or perspective.

Faulkner creates distance in *As I Lay Dying* through subjecting his characters to comic or ironic treatment. Creating ironic distance from the speaker of a monologue presents difficulties. Irony implies the presence of a 'voice' separate from that of the ostensible speaker. The reader cannot rely on the attribution of any one of the monologues in order to define, exhaustively, the perspectives that inhere within it: Faulkner's method is more subtle than

that. In any one section, the voices/perspectives of the author, the speaker of the monologue and the broad range of other characters blend and compete, now in sympathy, now in discord. Faulkner creates, in the words of Bonney on Conrad, "an ironic discrepancy between voices".⁶³

In a formulation which again applies equally to Faulkner, Owen Knowles remarks that the "spoken word" for Conrad is "poised between monologue and conversation, report and mimicry"⁶⁴. Knowles goes on to write, "He [Conrad] allows us to become privileged listeners with access to the often ironic clash between secret motives and public language" and to draw attention to "the incompatible monologues lurking mysteriously beneath the give-and-take of conversation".

In the 'Author's Note' to *The Secret Agent*, Conrad speaks of his "ironic method" and insists that "ironic treatment alone would enable me to say all I felt I would have to say in scorn as well as in pity".⁶⁵ Central to this treatment is what Werner Senn calls the "dialectic of involvement and distancing"⁶⁶ which constitutes one of the chief affinities between the two writers. This "distanced comic perspective",⁶⁷ as Bunselmeyer calls it in a work on Faulkner, is as much a feature of Conrad's as Faulkner's method.

Like Conrad, Faulkner uses regional accents and the peculiarities of particular idiolects to distance his characters by making them grotesque or comic. The idea of distance here includes the feeling of sympathetic condescension which such a presentation can create. Belfast's brogue tends to distance him from the reader. The tendency of his presentation is to make the reader see from the outside and as a result to suspend or qualify sympathy.

Wait and Donkin in particular are depicted as grotesques. Their defining features are exaggerated almost to the point of caricature (examples of over-individuation, perhaps). The major characteristic of their treatment is one of scathing irony though this is less true of Wait than it is of Donkin.

As I Lay Dying lacks this element of savage irony. The novel is in itself a carnivalization⁶⁸ of genres from the epic to the pastoral. When Darl refers to Anse's deformed feet or Dewey Dell to Peabody's obesity, however absurd, comic or exaggerated these physical characteristics may be, they do not amount to caricature, if caricature is taken to mean the exaggeration of a physical property or defect which is to be read as a metaphor for some inner, fallen moral or metaphysical state.

It is an aspect of Faulkner's genius in *As I Lay Dying*, that he manages to make the same character completely repellent at one moment, sympathetic (if not appealing) the next. The limitation of Conrad's ironic method in *The Nigger* is that once distance has been created between, say, the reader and Donkin or the reader and Wait, it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to ever again bridge the gap. The reader feels that the views of the seamen that we receive throughout the novel are incompatible with one another; at one moment they are portrayed as fools, the next they are a crew of profoundly loyal and thoroughly decent fellows (though these qualities are not necessarily incompatible, taken together, they tend to disrupt the 'integrity' of the crew's characterisation).

The external views of James Wait cannot be reconciled with one another; they certainly cannot be reconciled with what we learn of his inner life through the omniscient narrator. Faulkner's irony is more subtle, capable of being kindlier. Faulkner's choice of method in *As I Lay Dying* enables to him to evoke individual voices without the mediation of conventional narrators. It is also simpler than Conrad's in the sense that it more clearly 'sets off' or demarcates the various voices (consciousnesses) in a way which makes it easier for the reader to 'combine' them in the construction of what he reads.

In addition, Faulkner exploits and carnivalizes his stereotypes, highlighting the shortcomings of stereotyped

views of character. The voices assigned to the crew in *The Nigger* depend largely on class and national or racial identity. Rarely is a character portrayed with an individual voice. Rather, the characters are projected types who possess a generic rather than individualized psychology. In *As I Lay Dying*, voice (vocalized perspective) stems not only from social class, gender and national identity but also from a set of 'private' determinants: *individual* experience/history, psychology/temperament and linguistic/intellectual capacity.

Each character exists and speaks under pressure; he/she is the centre of a battle between competing forces. As with the idea of the 'double-bind' in psychology (where irreconcilable demands on the individual can be satisfied only by a kind of splitting of the ego), this conflict results in a schism between inner feelings and outer expression (or non-expression). This leads to a separation between public and private utterance, reflected, naturally, in language. An examination of the language of Cora, Anse, Vardaman and Dewey Dell will give a deeper insight into Faulkner's strategies.

Lastly, it is worth noting that these novels were innovative in that they *concentrated* on the lives, perceptions, feelings and so forth, of simple people, the seamen and the poor whites. This, a major affinity between the novels, is part of what constitutes their 'experimentality', more of which later.

Cora, Vardaman and Dewey Dell

Cora Tull's language in her first section (the book's second) is conversational and idiomatic. In fact, the reader's *overhearing* begins in *medias res*, the implication being that her monologue is part of a continuum (a verbal 'snapshot'): "So I saved out the eggs" (p.6). Her tone is a mixture of piety, righteousness, deference and timidity. This first remark is not in speech marks. The rationalization of her commercial loss which Cora goes on to describe is a piece

of self-colloquy which goes to show that language can be used for self-deception as well as to deceive others.

The biblical subtext and the sonority of her pious language lends a simple-souled vanity to her words. This is balanced both by a desire to demonstrate her thrift and common sense to herself and also by a fear of criticism. Cora is defining herself against an imagined other. This self-justification is also a rehearsal of what she will tell her husband, friends and neighbours. In short, Cora is 'encoding' what has happened or rather turning it into a 'story' or 'fiction' acceptable to herself and others.

There is also of course a submerged dialogue with the reader, implied in the conversation (with Miss Lawington) about which she tells Kate, as well as the conversation with Kate herself. Cora's protestations of righteousness are as much answers to unspoken questions as assertions in their own right. She responds to Kate's forthright condemnation of the rich town lady who fails to buy her [Cora's] cakes, indirectly and half-apologetically; she is unwilling to condemn her social superiors outright.

Cora mildly observes (at least to Kate), "I reckon she never had any use for them" (p.8). There is a contrast between the mildness of her outer expression and the severity of the judgement of her inner language, "If it is His will that some folks has different ideas of honesty from other folks, it is not my place to question His decree". It is precisely with the maintenance of her social and spiritual "place" with which Cora is preoccupied. There is a curious, if unconscious, impiety in this preceding quotation. Merely by drawing attention to "His decree" and contrasting it with her own perception that she is more honest than others, she unconsciously challenges (implicitly) that very decree whilst ostensibly confirming it. The reader hears/detects this implied questioning as a result of a 'collusion' with the author.

Again, Cora's divided attitude to Addie Bundren is expressed through the clash between her public and private speech. Her inner condemnation of Addie is resolute, "the eternal and everlasting salvation and grace is not upon her" and in stark contrast to her reluctance to condemn the well-to-do women of Jefferson. Ironically, it is not Addie's adultery (of which she is unaware) that Cora regards as sinful but her favouring of Jewel over Darl. Cora's own preferences are clearly implicated here insofar as *she* favours Darl over Jewel.

She remains ignorant of Whitfield's involvement with Addie, a man whom she describes with unwitting irony in conversation with Addie as "'a godly man; if ever one breathed God's breath" (p.167). As with her inner pronouncement on "those rich town ladies" (p.7), so it is with Addie: she does not voice her judgement to Kate. Instead, she pays her (Addie) a compliment, "'They turned out real nice', I say. 'But not like the cakes Addie used to bake'" (p.8). It is not that there exists in Cora Tull elements of hypocrisy, or that she is deliberately two-faced. It is that she possesses a divided heart. At the same time that she condemns Addie, she is compelled to identify with her suffering as a wife and mother and with what, as the reader later learns, she perceives as self-sacrificial in her. Cora also speaks out of respect for a dying woman.

The Cora heard in conversation with Kate differs from the one we hear in 'conversation' with the reader. The convention that what a character says silently to himself is sincere, if self-deceptive, holds true here. Faulkner exploits this tension between inner and outer language. Cora's language is the object, in the Bakhtinian sense, of Faulkner's, and as a result the reader is kept at a distance from her. Firstly, there is the irony of her misapprehension of Whitfield and the situation that exists between him and Addie, an irony admittedly afforded the reader only on a second reading.

There is also comedy at Cora's expense in her overblown judgemental and self-righteous attitudes. She *seems* blissfully unaware of the reality of the neo-feudal social and economic relations which bind her to her husband, on one hand, and the "rich" women of Jefferson on the other. She does not appear fully to perceive that she is a victim. She rehearses the explanation she will give her husband for the 'wasted' eggs, "It's not everybody can eat their mistakes I can tell him" (p.9). The remark is indicative of her 'logic'.

The unwitting absurdity of this concretization of a trope distances the reader, intellectually, from Cora. It also has the effect of engaging us with the text by amusing us. Whether we become more engaged with the character is moot. Cora's simplicity certainly creates in the reader, as does Belfast's cheerful brogue, a feeling of condescending sympathy or 'familiarity'. If the humour here distances us from Cora, insofar as we feel superior to her, we are also drawn into her reality in that we recognize the pathos of her situation. She is, we realize, motivated by her own poverty as well as an implicit fear of her husband, Tull.

As the novel progresses, however, scorn (an extreme of what we may feel for her) is mixed with an appreciation of her kindness, concern and good-heartedness (a quality implied by her name). In this first section also the reader (on a subsequent reading particularly) is made aware not only of Cora's fear of her husband but also of her horror of social humiliation. Moreover, the reader is compelled to accept the great sincerity of her piety and the strength of her belief. Cora exists in the grip of her very own "irreconcilable antagonisms": the domestic duties forced on her by her position, her responsibilities towards her family, her fear/deference for Tull and her submissive relationship with her social superiors and her Church.

In reaction to the hostility of her environment, she finds comfort, or at least refuge, in religion and the language of religion. Her judgements, her comforting formulations and



rationalizations are not the confident assertions they first appear. The forced cheer (and suppressed fears) of the tone and substance of what she says testifies to the existence of a will to believe her own words rather than the belief itself. This shows through her repetition of verbal formulations and her reliance on formulaic biblical language, for example.

Cora's awareness and self-awareness is naturally limited (a quality not of course the exclusive preserve of 'simple' people). As in *The Nigger*, it is rather the intellectual and linguistic limitations of simple people (the 'imprisonment of "syntax"' in Wright Morris's terms) to which attention is being drawn. There is a huge mismatch, particularly in the case of Vardaman and Dewey Dell, between their feelings about what they experience and the capacity (and need) to articulate what is felt.

Neither Cora nor Kate is able to articulate fully her feelings for the townswomen though Cora can express, inwardly, some of her anger. Kate is unable to go beyond the flat assertion that "She ought to taken those cakes" (p.7). In this, she is appealing to a set of values which the rich do not share. She also 'introduces' the idea of the value of 'giving one's word' which is so important, as becomes apparent, for the relationships both between Addie and Anse Bundren and words and deeds.

Faulkner's characters possess bi-partite souls, divided and unsure. This division is manifested in the surface and subterranean or hidden nature of their language. In Cora's first section, there are several simultaneous 'shadow dialogues': between Faulkner and the reader, Cora and the reader, the spoken and unspoken exchanges with Kate and the implied conversation with Tull, Miss Lawington and the Jefferson ladies. Cora's inner life is 'betrayed' by her inner language, and the space which exists between inner and outer expression is made apparent.

In *The Nigger*, the inner life of the crewmen is painted with a broad brush, depicted largely in the Manichean struggles between Allistoun and Donkin, the ship and the elements, and the metaphysical discourse between good and evil that are bound up in the figure of James Wait. The odd personal points, for example, Podmore's memory of his first and only night of drunkenness are there generally more from a sense of providing colour, or what structuralists call 'reality effects', than to reveal anything important about the characters. As we shall see, the inner life of Conrad's seaman is often rendered symbolically through the use of external images and the pathetic fallacy of attributing to the natural world (storm, night, fog etc), valorized, metaphysical qualities.

Though there is a symbolic level to *A I Lay Dying*, we do learn about the various speakers, principally through their speech. So Cora's double response (e.g. spoken and unspoken) is indicative of her personal psychology and character. For instance, there is a spoken and unspoken answer to Kate's criticism of the town lady, respectively:

- a) "'I reckon she never had any use for them'" (p.8).
- b) "Riches is nothing in the face of the Lord" (p.7).

Cora is capable of ratiocination, a luxury barely afforded Conrad's sailors. Her reasoning brings her to deal with her situation in one of two ways: as a public 'gesture' and as an inward expression of inner belief. To Kate, she rationalizes the unfairness of her predicament, "Well, it isn't like they cost me anything" (p.7, roughly corresponding to (a) above). Her pride in her work has been hurt: "They turned out real well" though this sentiment is thought and not spoken. When she expresses the sentiment to Kate, she qualifies it by making an unfavourable comparison with Addie's baking:

"They turned out real nice," I say.
"But not like the cakes Addie used to bake." (p.8)

She is, outwardly at least, uncomplaining and her public utterances are placatory, disguising the tone and tenor of her internal voice as represented by (b) above. As we shall see, the attributes of stoicism and uncomplaining (silent) endurance are judged positive virtues by dominant voices in both *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. Cora's belief in the idea of an ordered world controlled by the Christian God is charged with a sense of her own righteousness (a 'vanity' she withholds from Kate). For the reader who is able to contextualize her language and perspectives, her words are also charged with a sense of her own vulnerability.

Kate cannot get Cora to echo her own resentment against the rich town lady. Her publicly voiced criticisms are mirrored by Cora's unspoken religious discourse. Both the placatory nature of Cora's public stance and the judgemental, self-righteous piety of her inner tone are collaborative: the first in a social sense, the second, ideologically. Nothing she says directly questions or affects the positions of dominance enjoyed over her by either the town lady (who breaks her 'word' with impunity) or her husband.

In her language and values, Cora is both a victim and an upholder, conniving or collaborating with the system which victimizes her and makes her exploitation possible, perhaps looking to divine retribution for her vengeance. Cora's attempts to make sense of her situation requires certain suppressions (rationalizations) of what would otherwise prove intolerably burdensome knowledge, "So it was like we had found the eggs or they had been given to us" (p.8).

Like Conrad's sailors, Cora Tull has ambivalent feelings for her superiors yet is afraid, unable to articulate and perhaps not fully aware of what she may inwardly 'feel'. The crewmen of the *Narcissus* likewise feel they have something

more to say to Allistoun but cannot give expression to their grievances. Cora cannot fully articulate her sense of injustice since she cannot articulate values (bases for judgement) that lie outside or beyond those which sustain her. Highlighted here is the problem of how an individual can give voice to sentiments which he or she lacks the linguistic capacity ("syntax") to evoke or which somehow lie outside the limitations of his/her character.

Yet, Faulkner, in the very act of showing us Cora's 'inner' responses, is suggesting the existence of layers in Cora's psyche of which she is probably unaware. Her "They turned out real well, too" recurs in the monologue with an almost choral (*Cora-1*) insistence, a refrain matched by Kate's, "'She ought to taken those cakes'". In the repetition of Cora's refrain, there is an implied competition with Addie Bundren which extends, as the novel will show, from the minutiae of domestic life (baking, etc.) to the great issue of motherhood (a theme ironically mirrored by Cora's reflections earlier in the passage on egg husbandry) and the whole question of a woman's 'duty'.

Even so, the tone of this self-given compliment is equivocal in its humility; she does not say 'I bake good cakes' but that "they turned out real well". It is a thought too which is simultaneous with Cora's other internal utterances. In one sense, the monologues are a linear rendering of what could be conceived of as continuing, simultaneous thoughts and sensations which conflict with one another. The language Faulkner gives to his characters is on close inspection an unravelling of a tangle of competing, inner thoughts.

Faulkner exploits the tensions between public and private speech and the values which generate them. The reader may smile at the contrast between "Riches is nothing in the face of the Lord" (p.7) and "'Maybe I can sell them at the bazaar Saturday,' I say". The irony here is created by the discrepancy between the elevated, stern and uncompromising

tone of the internal statement and the banality and obvious contingency of the second (which is spoken). Here we can see the 'distance' between Cora and the Lord: to live by the moral precept contained in the first utterance would be extremely difficult for Cora Tull since she needs money to live. For her, if not for God, money is important. As she says to herself, if not to Kate, "I could have used the money real well" (p.9).

Secondly, there is a sudden shift in terms of figural distance from the lofty, grand view of the Christian cliché ("Riches is nothing [. . .]") to the comparatively urgent subjectivity of the second. The second statement tends to subvert or challenge the first. This 'subversive' juxtaposition of utterances is also a characteristic of Conrad. The statements of course can be seen as mutually undermining. The order of the statements however lends a greater subversive strength to the banal undercutting of the spoken statement. The irony or 'discrepancy' between these statements, or the perspectives they imply, is clearly not appreciated by Cora.

In Conrad and Faulkner, the important issue is one of how character and voice are defined by limitations. We must ask of what is the speaker aware or unaware and how is the sense of his/her unconscious (or unknowing) life conveyed.⁶⁹ The major difference between Cora Tull and the crew of the *Narcissus* is that she is better educated. Remember 'simplicity', as we have noted, is a relative state. She can read and used to be, like Addie, a teacher. Cora's first section is in the past tense and is the result of meditation (however limited). The meditative faculty of the crew, apart from the equivocal 'meditations' of Singleton (and those of the crewman-narrator), is rarely if ever reproduced in detail.

Cora has the ability and has had the opportunity to reflect on her situation: to be interpretative, in other words. Her meditation is a result also of the conventions of the

monologue. Though he often appears to eschew omniscience, Faulkner presumes to know/explore the inner life of his character; like the Lord, he can see into her heart. We, as readers, share this privilege and are also in a position to set off one monologue against another.

In *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, the seamen are largely denied this luxury. Generally, they are portrayed as reacting immediately to the things that happen to them. Cora's reconstructions and rationalizations are more final and closed than the crew's. Cora is at least able to give herself a sense of understanding even if this sense is quite deceptive. In *The Nigger*, only the narrators and the officers (Baker in particular) are really given the opportunity to go over what has happened in detail.

As I Lay Dying explores the relationship between simple people and language; this includes their own 'language' as well as that of others. *As I Lay Dying* is concentrated on the process of language production. From our critical vantage point, we can see it as a process, necessarily stressed and pressured because of the linguistic and intellectual limitations of those who speak.

Dewey Dell's half-finished thoughts and utterances, ungrammatical idiom and tentative, paradoxical assertions, reminiscent of Conrad's Jim, testify to her inability to make sense of her world and, therefore, to make sense of her world through language. Her story of seduction and unwanted pregnancy is after all a very old one, a *fabliau*. For her however the experience is a new one. Her language borders on incoherence: "I am my guts. And I am Lefe's guts" (p.60).

Similarly, Vardaman's language reads at times like a parody of ratiocination, "And so if Cash nails the box up, she [Addie] is not a rabbit" (p.66). Dewey Dell and Vardaman do not possess linguistic or intellectual capacities commensurate with the magnitude of what they feel, sense and perceive. The inadequacy of their language *vis à vis* their

actual experience is a source of comedy and pathos in *As I Lay Dying*.

They are unable adequately to express, understand and interpret. Vardaman is able to give limited expression to his secret motives (e.g. his desire for a toy train) to Dewey Dell because she is in sympathy with him, caring and responsive. Conversely, Dewey Dell is unable to confess her condition to anyone. Sadly, MacGowan's crass observation holds some truth:

Them country people. Half the time they don't know what they want, and the balance of the time they can't tell it to you. (p.243)

The disjunction between inner turmoil and outward expression is at issue in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. For instance, at the very point at which the crew is called upon by Allistoun to voice its grievances, there is a breakdown of expression. Presumably, the seamen have been able to articulate to one another something of the nature of their dissatisfaction, though it is Donkin, in the main, who gives voice to their frustrations (or *claims to*). Yet, they are unable to convey them to an intellectual/social superior. The crewmen are separated from their captain by social situation and education. Even Donkin, when confronted by Allistoun and dispossessed of the belaying pin, fails to find the words he needs.

The town dweller MacGowan's sense of distance (cynicism and lack of sympathy) from or superiority over Dewey Dell is reinforced by the fact that she comes not only from the country, one 'frontier', but the hills, another and more remote frontier. McGowan mimics the 'imperfections' in Dewey Dell's dialect though we naturally are aware of the 'imperfections' in his. There is also obviously a difference of gender with respect to MacGowan. By virtue of her condition, she is already isolated from those around her. Her

interlocutor (MacGowan) is her superior as far as gender, class and education is concerned, hence his condescension. McGowan proceeds to seduce her once more (note, that he withholds from her his true intentions towards her, just as she is unable, easily, to communicate her true need to him):

I stopped at the glass and smoothed my hair, then I went behind the prescription case, where she was waiting. She is looking at the medicine cabinet, then she looks at me.

"Now, madam," I says; "what is your trouble?"

"It's the female trouble," she says, watching me. "I got the money," she says.

"Ah," I says. "Have you got female troubles or do you want female troubles? If so, you come to the right doctor."

"No," she says.

"No which?" I says.

"I aint had it," she says. "That's it."

She looked at me. "I got the money," she says.

So I knew what she was talking about.

"Oh," I says, "You got something in your belly you wish you didn't have." She looks at me. "You wish you had a little more or a little less, huh?"

"I got the money," she says. "He said I could git something at the drugstore for hit."

"Who said so?" I says.

"He did," she says, looking at me.

"You dont want to call no names," I says. "The one that put the acorn in your belly? He the one that told you?" She dont say nothing. "You aint married, are you?" I says. I never saw no ring. But like as not, that they aint heard yet out there that they use rings.

"I got the money," she says. She showed it to me, tied up in her handkerchief: a ten spot.

"I'll swear you have," I says. "He give it to you?"

"Yes," she says.

"Which one?" I says. She looks at me.

"Which one of them give it to you?"

"It aint but one," she says. She looks at me.

"Go on," I says. She dont say nothing. The trouble about the cellar is, it aint but one way out and that's back up the inside

stairs. The clock says twenty-five to one.
"A pretty girl like you," I says. (pp.243-244)

This exchange is charged with comedy and pathos. It compares with the confrontation between Allistoun and the crew from *The Nigger* which we have already looked at:

What did they want? [. . .] They wanted great things. And suddenly all the simple words they knew seemed lost forever in the immensity of their vague and burning desire. They knew what they wanted, but they could not find anything worth saying. (p.82)

MacGowan's simultaneous manipulation and dismissal of Dewey Dell finds a parallel in Allistoun's treatment of the crew. McGowan is not principally interested in finding out what Dewey Dell really wants and Allistoun is actually concerned with suppressing the desires of the seamen. The difference of course between the crew and Dewey Dell is that, because of the monologic structure of *As I Lay Dying*, we know directly, in sympathetic detail, the extent and nature of her inarticulate or inarticulable desires.

However, we can only make intelligent guesses at how the crew feels by reading between the lines or *making conjectures* as to what their "simple words" might have been. As for the nature of their "vague and burning desire", we can only speculate: comfort, good wages, relief from the uncompromising demands of life at sea. The difference between the seamen and Dewey Dell is that in the latter case we are brought inside the thoughts and feelings of the 'voiceless' figure. We know Dewey Dell's history and sympathize.

Far from being allowed 'inside' the crew, we are presented with an inarticulate and absurd body of men. The narrator creates for the reader a sense of pathos for *and* distance from the crew. References to Davies' "wavering voice" and another's "shaky exasperation" show that the speaker is not without sympathies for the seamen. His narration is divided,

however. He knows they want "great things" yet he is unable/unwilling even to paraphrase or interpret for us what it is that they could want.

Under these conditions, Allistoun's voice becomes the dominant one; he explicitly states that what the men have to say is valueless. In spurious imposture, Allistoun gives ironic voice to the frustrations of his crew: "'What is it - food?' [. . .] 'Work too hard - eh?'" (p.82). Like Allistoun of his crew, MacGowan has a good idea of what troubles Dewey Dell from the outset. What we become acutely aware of as readers is the painful inarticulacy of the crewmen, a powerful sense of their 'voicelessness'. Though Allistoun dominates, it is the 'voiceless' with whom the reader, particularly the humanist reader, sympathizes.

In her exchange with MacGowan, we sympathize with the 'voiceless' Dewey Dell even if we feel a sense of distance from her. Our sense of distance from her interlocutor however is less equivocal. Though we may find his remarks comic, we are repulsed by his arrogance, insensitivity and cynicism: "'It won't hurt you. You've had the same operation before'" (p.247). There is great pathos, as well as broad humour typical of the fabliau of farce, in the contrast between Dewey Dell's inner feelings/suffering and in the awkward phrases which represent her articulation of these feelings. We are however given the opportunity of 'hearing' her, albeit inarticulate, self-expression. In contrast, we are rarely *brought inside* the crew of the *Narcissus* in a way that 'reveals' their authentic voice - even the narrative of the crewman-narrator (who was one of their number) is retrospective and judgemental.

Yet, we may feel, paradoxically, Faulkner may be considered more presumptuous than Conrad in that he assumes a greater degree of 'omniscience', if there can be degrees of such a thing. To be *brought inside*, is to be aware of an author who, like the Lord according to Cora, can 'see into hearts'.

The figure as 'narrator'

A sharp variation in the reporting of a 'fact' (how Darl behaves at his mother's bedside) occurs early on in the novel between Cora and Dewey Dell. This is an example of polar structure. The immediate juxtaposition of conflicting versions of 'what happens' dramatizes the collision between discrete perceiving and 'relating' consciousnesses. The following passage occurs at the close of Cora's second section (the novel's sixth):

It was Darl. He come to the door and stood there, looking at his dying mother. He just looked at her, and I felt that bounteous love of the Lord again and His mercy. I saw that with Jewel she had just been pretending, but that it was between her and Darl that the understanding and the true love was. He just looked at her, not even coming in where she could see him and get upset, knowing that Anse was driving him away and he would never see her again. He said nothing just looking at her.

'What you want, Darl?' Dewey Dell said, not stopping the fan, speaking up quick, keeping even him from her. He didn't answer. He just stood and looked at his dying mother, his heart too full for words. (pp.24-25)

Compare this with Dewey Dell's account in the following section (her first):

And so it was because I could not help it. It was then, and then I saw Darl and he knew. He said he knew without the words like he told me that ma is going to die without words, and I knew because if he had said he knew with the words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us. But he said he did not know and I said 'Are you going to tell pa are you going to kill him?' without the words I said it and he said 'Why?' without the words. And that's why I can talk to him with knowing with hating because he knows.

He stands in the door, looking at her.

'What you want Darl?' I say.

'She is going to die,' he says. And old turkey-buzzard Tull is coming to watch her die but I can fool them.

'When is she going to die?' I say.

'Before we get back,' he says.

'Then why are you taking Jewel?' I say.

'I want him to help me load,' he says. (pp.27-28)

We feel justified in assuming that these conflicting accounts describe the same event since "'What you want Darl?'" occurs in both passages. According to Cora's monologue, however, Darl does not speak to Dewey Dell. This may be 'resolved' by the suggestion that there is telepathic communication between brother and sister or that Cora suppresses her memory of an exchange unflattering to Darl. We note Cora's predilection for Darl, a 'love' which becomes more clearly defined as the novel progresses.

This is clarified on a re-reading. Likewise, at this stage, we are perhaps not entirely sure what Dewey Dell is referring to when she utters "And so it was because I could not help it". On a second reading, we enjoy fully the comedy of 'displaced' explanation/justification for her 'illicit' love-making. The issue of re-reading is an important one since, in order to make sense of the opposition between the accounts of Cora and Dewey Dell, we must defer judgement, holding these conflicting views of Darl, for example, simultaneously in our heads. Even so, perhaps ultimately, these conflicts are not satisfactorily resolved and there is no Marlow to help us find our way. Attention is being drawn to the limited and biased nature of the perceiving consciousnesses (Cora's and Dewey Dell's) which describe and relate.

In *As I Lay Dying*, the reader is presented with a host of 'narrators', each unreliable to varying degrees. Faulkner uses or draws attention to the artifice of the convention of the monologue. In so doing, he fulfils certain obligations (lyrical description, abstract speculation, exposition) conventionally fulfilled by the omniscient narrator whilst at the same time 'giving voice' to 'simple' people.

Faulkner overcomes the disadvantages that come with the abandonment of a traditional authorial voice. He does so

partly by exploiting what Dorrit Cohn calls "psychonarration",⁷⁰ communicating to the reader perceptions and information concerning a particular character's inner life about which she or he is unaware. Faulkner carries this technique one step further.

In apparent paradox, the characters supposedly in monologue often impart information they could not ordinarily possess, or register impressions described either in a language not their own or consisting of material of which they cannot, strictly speaking, be aware. This alerts us to the presence of authorial control, in terms of vocabulary and/or imagery, that goes beyond the limitations of a given speaker (a simple country girl, for example).

The effect of this strategy is two-fold. Firstly, it enables Faulkner to impart information to the reader and so provide perspectives (the conjecture of Uncle Billy and Peabody for example) which in the course of things his abandonment of the omniscient mode would render him unable to do. He can do this without undertaking the particular responsibilities/drawbacks of omniscience. Of course, Faulkner ushers omniscience in by the back door. By disguising reporting as conjecture (see Guérard), Faulkner performs the work of an omniscient narrator whilst apparently refraining from direct authorial engagement. So, he enables us to 'hear' the voice of a community and a community of voices as well as his own.

Secondly, he is able to include the perspectives or language of one character in the discourse of another, and in so doing contrast or 'mix' their various perspectives. At times, it is truly difficult, if not impossible, to determine who is speaking. By exploiting his narrative innovations, Faulkner actually succeeds in making an issue out of what and to what extent his speakers are aware or unaware (raising issues of 'knowing' and intuition). What is never in doubt is Faulkner's engagement with the text.

His disengagement is as I say only *apparent*. We are continually alerted to the author working through or manipulating his figures (Dewey Dell, Anse, Cora). We are more 'aware' of Faulkner in this respect than of an 'obtrusive' writer like George Eliot. This awareness comes partly as a result of the kinds of collaboration and demands which the text implicitly invites from and makes of the reader.

Darl Bundren - 'surrogate author'

Critics have tended in some degree to identify Darl with Faulkner; nineteen of the fifty-nine monologues are after all attributed to him. Darl's style, diction and general sensitivities are poetic or literary (in an unpejorative sense) as are Dewey Dell's on occasion. Much of the reader's 'objective' information about the Bundrens and their homestead, physical description in particular, comes in the passages attributed to Darl. Clearly, Darl shares, albeit problematically, some of the attributes of authorship. He acts at times as 'surrogate author'. This enables Faulkner to explore some of the issues that complicate 'authorship', at a remove.

In this observation on Darl, Tull unwittingly supplies a suggestive authorial metaphor:

I always say it aint never been what he done
so much or said or anything so much as how he
looks at you. It's like he had got into the inside
of you, someway. Like somehow you was looking
at yourself and your doings outen his eyes. (p.125)

This is anticipated by Dewey Dell's

and then I saw Darl and he knew. He
said he knew *without words* [. . .]
and I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with

the words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us. (p.27, my emphasis).

And in a piece of superb metafictional irony, Tull tells us, "He [. . .] looks at me with them queer eyes of hisn *that makes folks talk*" (my emphasis). Of course, we know that it is Faulkner that is making "folks talk". And so, for much of the book, we do look at the characters through the eyes of Darl, though, as the quotation above demonstrates, by no means exclusively. In general, "how" the speakers "look" at or regard each other, the perspectives from which they view one another lies at the very heart of the novel.

Although Darl is a central presence, he does not supply a narrative frame in the manner of Marlow's interlocutor in *Chance*; nor, despite being given more space than the others, would it be accurate to describe his as the book's dominant voice. The words of Addie and Whitfield for example are charged for the reader with an interpretative significance out of proportion to the space they occupy in the text. This is because they are involved in the 'testimony' of others and because we also rely on *their* 'testimony' to untangle ('decode') the complications of the novel.

As soon as we receive either an opinion or a perspective on a particular character or event, we immediately seek corroboration. Though we may imbue the words of Tull with more reliability (or sincerity?) than those of Anse, in the end we can rely on no one single figure to supply our interpretative perspectives.

Nevertheless, Darl's language is structured in a specific way even if, ultimately, Faulkner refuses to privilege his perspectives. Stretches of his language would read like fairly conventional, 'omniscient' prose (i.e. lose its 'queerness', in Tull's terms) if the tense were transposed from past to present and the person from first to third (the person need not necessarily of course be transposed). This

can be shown by appropriately adapting the novel's opening paragraphs:

Jewel and Darl came up from the field, following the path in single file. Although Darl was fifteen feet ahead of Jewel, anyone watching them from the cotton-house could see Jewel's frayed and broken straw hat a full head above Darl's.

The path ran straight as a plumb-line, worn smooth by feet and baked brick-hard by July, between the green rows of laid-by cotton, to the cotton-house in the centre of the field, where it turned and circled the cotton-house at four soft right angles and went on across the field again, worn so by feet fading in precision.

As we have noted, Darl is in part a technical innovation introduced to compensate for the lack of an omniscient or quasi-omniscient narrator. It is unlikely for example that he would describe the Bundren farm in quite the way he does at the beginning of the first section, purely for his own benefit. Faulkner cleverly masks Darl's most spectacular feats of omniscience by suggesting the possibility of some kind of mysterious affinity or telepathy between Darl and members of his family, notably regarding Dewey Dell's pregnancy and Addie's adultery.

The manner and substance (the peculiar detail) of Darl's 'narration' alerts us however to a particular kind of consciousness which might be described as 'queer' or 'odd'. He knows (or claims to know) that Jewel is fifteen feet *behind* him. He talks of four *soft* right angles. The notion that he is prescient or telepathic likewise immediately raises issues of authority/knowledge and reliability. From the outset, we are led to question Darl's sanity though, ironically, his paranormal tendencies imbue him with a 'queer' kind of 'omniscience'.

In the twelfth section which is assigned to Darl (his fifth), he is not even present at his mother's bedside since, as Anse tells Addie, "him [Jewel] and Darl went to make one

more load" (p.47). Yet, as we 'know', Darl is aware that she is dead since he actually describes the scene of her death as if he were there. The italicized sections of this monologue belong to Darl as he goes "to make one more load" with Jewel. This *paralepsis*, to use Genette's term, is carefully controlled and does not disrupt our sense of what is and what is not consistent with the conventions of the text we are reading. Instead, we are drawn into speculations concerning Darl's privileged knowledge.

We become concerned with how Darl knows what he knows. Faulkner here is 'playing' with the notion of authorship by juxtaposing the idea of Darl's paranormal or telepathic powers (which, as we have observed, can be considered a *species* of omniscience) with the conventions of all-knowing authorship. Yet, we note that, for Faulkner, the mere possession of knowledge, privileged or otherwise, guarantees neither understanding nor the capacity to act effectively (Hightower, the Compsons). Further, Darl's privilege or knowledge also provides a basis for his family's resentment of him (Dewey Dell and Jewel). His status as an outcast links to huge concerns to do with the social/moral/economic status of the novelist or artist for which we have no space here.

In *As I Lay Dying*, we cannot simply rely on the attribution of any given passage to a particular character in order to define its perspectives. The voice of the characters and the voice of the author blend and compete with one another, now in sympathy, now in discord. Though Darl's actual speech is colloquial, uneducated even, ("'You could borrow the loan of Vernon's team'" [p.18]), much of the idiolect of the sections assigned to him is literary/poetic or lyrical.

In his first section, we are by no means certain the extent to which Darl is aware of the precise, dispassionate accumulation of detail attributed to or articulated by him. He may well be serving merely as a vehicle, a means of registering impressions. He appears a mere conduit, a transparent glass, a seeing yet insentient eye. Unless Darl

is blind or engaged in a feat of imagination, he obviously physically sees what is described in his name. The question remains whether this is what he is consciously thinking at the time. Perhaps, his relationship to that which is described in his name is that of a camera lens to its subject, unaware yet conveying information.

In general, the extent of Darl's awareness is moot. Whether Faulkner's or Darl's, the aesthetic sensibility evinced in the following lines is clearly descriptive. Let us for the moment attribute the lines to Darl. It may strike us as odd that a grieving son should be capable of such detachment or merely pictorial engagement:

When I reach the top he has quit sawing.
Standing in a litter of chips, he [Cash] is
fitting two boards together. Between the sha-
dow spaces they are yellow as gold, like soft
gold, bearing on their flanks in smooth undula-
tions the marks of the adze blade: (p.4)

The colon immediately precedes and ushers in the comment "a good carpenter Cash, is". Yet, the continuity of tone in terms of diction and idiom is with the opening phrase of the paragraph. The paragraph continues in conventional narratorial style simply telling us what Cash is doing:

He holds the two planks on the trestle, fitted
along the edges in a quarter of the finished
box. He kneels and squints along the edge of
them, then he lowers them and takes up the adze.
A good carpenter. Addie Bundren could not want
a better one, a better box to lie in. It will
give her confidence and comfort. I go on to the
house, followed by the

Chuck. Chuck. Chuck.
of the adze. (pp.4-5)

In retrospect, the judgement, "A good carpenter" (a repetition), reminds us of Jewel's accusation that Cash works on the box in a conspicuous position, only to be seen and

praised for the quality of his craftsmanship. Darl's subsequent sentiments have a colloquial feel about them as if they were indeed the judgement of a community. They seem to emanate from the mouths of neighbours rather than that of a bereaved son. The use of Addie's full name tends to distance the remark from Darl although he could be feasibly intoning with self-conscious irony: in fact, both interpretations are of course possible.

These concluding lines are also clichés ("confidence and comfort", "a better box to lie in") which could belong to Cora or, indeed, Anse. The alliteration and the triteness of the sentiments separate these 'embedded' utterances from what we have already learned of Darl. Faulkner is juxtaposing the conventional, 'public' platitudes that accompany bereavement with the deeply personal pain that we may assume Addie's death has brought to her family.

The exact status of Darl's utterances is ambivalent. The irony is Faulkner's and, perhaps, Darl's, though the issue is left deliberately unresolved. The play of language here is complex. The language assigned to Darl is, indeed, the most complex in the novel. In this one short paragraph, we hear the idiolect of Darl, the poetic mode assigned to Darl, the descriptive mode characteristic of, but not limited to, Darl, and the voice of common opinion together with a hint of the voices of Cora Tull and Anse Bundren.

Lastly, we are made aware of the presence of the author in the playful spaces between the 'chucks' of Cash's adze. Faulkner is 'reproducing' physical sound. This forcibly reminds us that the author is in control both of the voice, the page and, by extension, the entire 'monologue'. Faulkner's authorial 'play' with his characters' consciousnesses 'defeats' as it 'invites' our interest in the speakers' psychologies.

It is clearly silly to suggest, as one critic does, that Addie Bundren is the only speaker in *As I Lay Dying* and that the variously attributed monologues are emanations from a

dead or dying body (though it is reasonable to attribute the novel's title to her, as the use of the first person indicates). There is a sense however in which narrative consciousness in the novel can be described, as we have said, as a single floating mass settling on one character then another, shifting continually in terms of distance, irony and perspective. The tensions lie between all the voices: the 'polyphony' as a totality, as well as the individual voice, must ultimately provide the reader's goal in the search for meaning. There is no easy reference point upon which we may rely, there is only the whole and its constituent parts.

It is in the play of multiple perspectives on character and event, voices and language that the reader 'constitutes' *As I Lay Dying*. Addie's death and its repercussions for the Bundren family are problematized from a variety of different perspectives, and the play and antagonisms of these perspectives are dramatized in language. There is a complex and continuing interplay of perspective in the novel which justifies the epithet 'polyphonic'.

The testimony of each character contributes to the pool of knowledge upon which the reader bases an understanding of what he is reading. The style, character and substance of what we read, its equivocations, convictions and denials, depend on the gender, class and psychology of the 'speaker'. The resulting perspectives manifest themselves in his/her language. It is the reader's task to evaluate the various feelings/responses of outrage, irony, sympathy and pity which the Bundrens and their activities inspire and shape. Our understanding of each utterance is conditioned by every other and the contexts in which they occur.

As a consequence each must be considered in the light of what goes after and what has gone before. Northrop Frye has argued, particularly in terms of our experience as readers (the search for motive, answers, clues), that the detective novel is the archetype of all fiction.⁷¹ Our estimation of a given voice or character is to a degree governed by the

judgements and perspectives that each holds concerning the others; this gives rise to the multi-perspectival schema of the novel. What we see dramatized in *As I Lay Dying* is the clash and conflict of limited awarenesses. We also see the subversion of voices who think they 'know': MacGowan thinks he knows Dewey Dell, Cora thinks she knows Addie, and the various narrators of *The Nigger* think they know the crew.

Like *The Nigger*, *As I Lay Dying* is multi-perspectival and polyphonic. The Faulkner novel can be seen as a more radical attempt to probe and display the conflict of voices in that it focusses not just on a few mostly 'representative' figures but on an entire community. This exploration is perhaps more deliberate on Faulkner's part than on Conrad's.

Faulkner refuses to privilege any one linguistic style or voice/language, not even that of the artist (e.g. the literary style 'attributed' to Darl) over any other, and whilst we may regard Anse with disgust and Darl with a certain amount of sympathy, we should not be blinded to the large grain of truth which 'taints' the egoistic sincerity of Anse Bundren's language and the qualities in Darl's language, evident in the novel's opening lines, which are manifestations of an unhinged personality (what Tull regards as his 'queerness') and which lead eventually to imprisonment in a lunatic asylum.

To read *As I Lay Dying* is to be obliged to divest oneself of preconceptions about truth and language, to think again about the way we react to language and how, in our minds, we tend to privilege linguistic expression of a certain kind. *As I Lay Dying* offers a paradigm of how we read: testing assumptions, forcing us to make provisional judgements and attempting to improve our understanding of what we are reading with every new piece of textual evidence. Whereas in most fiction this process remains subliminal and unacknowledged, in *As I Lay Dying*, it is foregrounded; the very process of reading/understanding is dramatized and placed at centre stage. Likewise, the more we read *The*

Nigger, the more we become aware of the process (problem) of reading.

Though narratorial omniscience is a mode associated traditionally with authorial freedom rather than constraint, Conrad and Faulkner recognize the limitations it imposes. They see omniscience as a literary sleight of hand, a complacent, conventional lie that falsifies the way in which we acquire knowledge or an idea of truth through language; in other words, it bears false testimony to the way in which we achieve understanding.

They short-circuit the idea of the all-knowing, all-disclosing author and in so doing eliminate its concomitant: the all-knowing, all-perceiving reader. They use disclosure to regulate the responses of the reader rather than to fulfil his expectations, and to engross him in a struggle to piece together a narrative - to make some sense of what he reads. This quest for meaning and, at times, for mere intelligibility is central to their art and ours (i.e. the art of reading).

The matter of how we can know and how we can know through language lies at the heart of their preoccupations. The traditional epistemological assumptions are subverted, questioned, treated with caution and distrust, or simply abandoned. For example, both Conrad and Faulkner refuse to privilege the intellect or the artistic sensibility as a way of learning about reality. Their intellectuals and sensitives, are ineffectual, baffled and, in the case of Faulkner, often on the edge of insanity (Paul B. Armstrong's *The Challenge of Bewilderment* may be of interest here).

Paradoxically, though these aware characters are less 'limited' than the simple people who make up the community, it does not enable them, necessarily, to act or, indeed, speak to any effectual purpose. In the end, it seems 'truth' is determined by the majority as opposed to the aware 'few'.

In a crucial passage occurring in Cash's fourth monologue (the novel's fifty-third), to which we shall return, Cash

testifies, in an almost Marlovian formulation, to the problematic and multiplicitous nature of truth:

It's like it aint so much what a fellow does, but
it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him
when he does it. (p.233)

This echoes Razumov's reflection that "a man's real life"⁷² lies in the aggregated estimations of his fellows. It is also both a metaphor for one aspect of the novel's narrative strategy *and* for a syncretic basis upon which to make moral or ethical judgements.

'Unreliable omniscience' and the figural voice: some observations

We have already seen how Faulkner ingeniously uses the voices of characters (whose spheres of awareness must, by definition, be limited) to perform the tasks usually charged to the omniscient narrative voice. These figural voices fulfil an expository function, conveying to the reader what we might call 'essential information': details of the trek to Jefferson, character description and so forth, e.g. the physical description of the Bundren farm in *As I Lay Dying* or basic information about the *Narcissus* and her journey.

Let us now examine the role of those narrative voices in the novels which, though formed in terms of style and structure according to the conventional norms of omniscience, prove themselves to be radically unreliable. What we initially perceive as an omniscient or at least knowledgeable narrative voice shows itself to be more of a discrete, shifting, narrative consciousness which takes on the shape of omniscience but does not fulfil its traditional functions.

In essence, the effect of the narrative strategies employed in both novels is to demonstrate not the greatness of awareness or knowledge displayed by the voices that speak

(narratorial or figural), regardless of the claims they appear to make for themselves, but to draw attention to their profound and insurmountable limitations. This gives rise to what may be referred to as a 'crisis of authority' in the books.

Jeremy Hawthorn comments on Conrad's attempts to give voice to simple or native people in *Almayer's Folly*:

While Conrad tries to get closer to the consciousness and way of thinking of these characters, he actually succeeds in getting nearer to a stereotyped paternalist-colonialist view of them".⁷³

Whilst in a general sense the tenor of the observation is sustainable, the confidence with which the assertion is made, particularly in the specificity of the "he" (referring to Conrad), is I believe ill-founded. It is ill-founded because it depends on an illegitimate conflation of author and narrator. Hawthorn relies on a confusion of 'who speaks?' and 'who sees?'. It is precisely the limitations of the figure to which our attention is being drawn, though clearly these limitations may well be an effect of the 'paternalist', 'colonialist' conditions of their 'world'.

With reference to a certain passage in *The Nigger*, Hawthorn seems to attach responsibility for the novel's ambiguities, uncertainties and 'inconsistencies' directly to Conrad, the career author:

Conrad cannot decide *who* is saying these words because he has not decided *what* his attitude to various things in the novella is.⁷⁴

Hawthorn here identifies a major feature of the book's narrative structure without understanding its exact nature. It is the novel's narrators and not Conrad whose differing languages and perspectives are in deep conflict. Further, the voices which *constitute* the narrative are profoundly

unconscious of one another, each locked in their own world of value and language, each imprisoned in their own system of verbal codes.

Though Conrad clearly orchestrates these voices, it is not necessary to become involved in a complicated discussion of authorial intentions which are in any case probably irrecoverable. It is enough merely to restore to Conrad the capacity of sophisticated, self-conscious artistry which Hawthorn, in this context, seems to be denying him. Far from the ambivalences and discontinuities of *The Nigger* counting as mere inconsistencies or aesthetic defects, they are central to just those issues highlighted and insisted upon by the narrative and which I would say precisely constitute Conrad's conscious 'subject'.

For Conrad it is "temperament" that "endows passing events with their true meaning" (p.146) and he characterizes *The Nigger* as "single-minded" (p.145). These remarks touch upon a dichotomy in the system of ideas which informs the preface to the novel. Temperament of course is infinitely variable. If it does play an essential role in the assignation of "true meaning", what does this tell us about the notions of 'truth' and 'meaning' that Conrad appears to be proposing? These qualities it would seem are attributive, conditional and multifaceted rather than essential/transcendent or 'objectively' determinable. The thrust of this is not reconcilable with "the truth, manifold and one" (p.145) of which Conrad speaks in the first lines of the preface.

This last statement is not even reconcilable internally. The idea of 'manifold unity' is a *conscious* oxymoron which arguably points to Conrad's 'true' position: namely one of profound ambivalence. This is a positive re-working of Hawthorn's position in the indented quotation above. Conrad's ambivalence is not some sin of omission or indecisiveness but a philosophical *stance* deriving from deep conviction.

This constant searching movement between the desire for some kind of monistic, simple, unitary truth on the one hand,

and the awareness of the multivalence and contingency of the 'meanings' which are made to carry the burden of truth on the other, locate the narrative and thematic *poles* of *The Nigger*. Multivalent exposition is perhaps the novel's dominant mode. The book consists of multilevel or layered narratives, a series of effectively simultaneous (simultaneous in terms of our response as readers in a quest for 'knowledge' of the text) discourses articulated by discrete yet contiguous narratorial consciousnesses.

In a sense, each of the various narrators, more or less opinionated or biased, unwittingly tells a narrative about other narratives. These narratives are juxtaposed and 'played' against each other. Some of the novel's narratives are more explicitly told than others, some merely implied. This multivalence is, as we have observed, experimental, and constitutes a major point of affinity with *As I Lay Dying*.

When it comes to the authoritative overview usually associated with omniscience, Foulke asks whether Conrad's narrator does, in fact, become "less fallible the higher he gets in the sky?".⁷⁵ Does the widening of an angle of perspective guarantee the presence of a wider truth or superior 'knowledge'? As Bonney asserts, "it must be remembered that reliability is solely a function of the conventions operant through an aesthetic device".⁷⁶ What is so radical about *The Nigger* (and *As I Lay Dying*) is the continual subversion of its 'dominant' narratorial voices; the 'omniscient' voice is not of necessity any more reliable than any other in the novel.

The voices which sponsor the covert and *overt* plot of *The Nigger* (see Watt's preface to the Penguin edition) both dominate in as much as they are expressed in a manner customarily associated with authority and authenticity. Yet, they are subtly questioned and undermined by the text's other voices.

Let us return to the enigma that is Singleton. For most of the novel, he is presented as possessing a mysterious,

elemental quality of prescience. He is "like an oracle behind a veil" (p.80). On one level, as Watts remarks, Singleton's superstitious view of Wait's plight and the relationship he bears to the *Narcissus* and her crew is endorsed; his death is quickly followed by a favourable wind and the sighting of land. Yet, for the crew, doubt survives Jimmy even if for the dominant narratorial voices it does not.

Singleton's belief that Wait retards the *Narcissus'* progress, and his conviction that Wait does not want to reach land is subverted by other voices in the text. The dramatisation of Wait's inner thoughts about his Canton St. girl and his desire to be back amongst the drinking houses of the East End puts paid to the implication of Singleton's belief that Wait does not wish to reach port. Jimmy is unaware of the preternatural, quasi-mystical level which Singleton invokes. Though this does not necessarily deny or subvert this mysticism, it confirms the stylistic ascendancy of certain narratorial structures in terms of what may be called fictional epistemology: how we know what we know about character and event within the diegesis.

The literary and stylistic conventions which govern the evocation of a character's *inner feelings* are after all merely conventions and surely susceptible of the same qualification that Bonney applies to the omniscient mode. Yet, how can the text supply the basis seriously to challenge what it tells us about Wait's inner thoughts? We are being presented with what Wait knows and feels about himself; the conjecture of other voices (figural or narratorial) can do nothing, in the end, to subvert or question this information. Wait's self-colloquy, albeit limited, possesses absolute authority in its own sphere. The voice which articulates the following passage is distinct in that it brings us inside Wait telling us what no other voice can (though it may claim to):

'There is a girl,' whispered Wait . . .
'Canton Street girl. - she chucked a third engineer of a Rennie boat - for me. Cooks oysters just as I like . . . Donkin could hardly believe his ears. He was scandalised. - 'Would she? Yer wouldn't be hany good to 'er,' he said with unrestrained disgust. Wait was not there to hear him. He was swaggering up the East India Dock Road; saying kindly, 'Come along for a treat,' pushing glass swing doors [. . .] 'D'yer think yer will hever get ashore?' asked Donkin angrily. Wait came back with a start. - 'Ten days,' he said promptly [. . .] He was very quiet and easy amongst his vivid reminiscences *which he mistook joyfully for images of an undoubted future.* (p.92) [my emphasis]

Similarly, the moment of the dead Wait's off-loading, the reluctance of the corpse to slip from the inclined plank is met with a gasp of foreboding and horror by the crew; the presentiment of something not quite natural. The suggestion of the operation of the super- or preternatural in *The Nigger* is often undercut, qualified or subverted as in this case. We, as readers, are made fully to share the astonishment of the seamen. Almost immediately however the boatswain produces a prosaic and convincing 'explanation' for what has taken place: Wait's body doesn't go overboard first time because the canvas which contains it snags on a nail (a piece of carpentry of which Faulkner's Cash would clearly disapprove, incidentally). The boatswain says to the ship's carpenter:

'now the mate abused me like a pickpocket for forgetting to dab a lump of grease on them planks. So I did, but you ought to have known better, too, than to leave a nail sticking up - hey, Chips?'
'And you ought to have known better than to chuck all my tools overboard for 'im like a skeary green-horn,' retorted the morose carpenter'. (p.100)

This exchange successfully resists the mystical undertow created by the burial scene (it does not actually reverse it. Arguably, the supernatural may merely be operating through *normal* or rationally explicable agencies). Clearly, on one

level, it is strongly implied that the superstitious fear which affects the crew is a nonsense, stemming from a mixture of stupidity, indiscipline, indolence, credulity on their part and professional negligence on the part of boatswain and carpenter.

The seamen 'indulge' themselves by entertaining horrid imaginings and fancies. Further, although the burial scene and other aspects of the Wait affair appear to disturb the equanimity even of the officers, the narrator is careful to locate the superstition ultimately in the minds of the seamen and to distance himself from their inner thoughts and feelings. For example, just after Wait's death,

it soon got to be known about the decks that the barometer had begun to fall in the night and that a breeze might be expected before long. This, by a subtle association of ideas led to violent quarrelling as to the exact moment of Jimmy's death. Was it before or after 'that 'ere glass started down'? (p.97)

Despite the narrator's use of the pet form 'Jimmy', the piece of quoted speech at the end of the passage is spoken in a quite different (unnamed) voice from the narrator's. Distance is created between the narrator and the speaker of these last words which reinforces the suggestion that this superstitious debate takes hold principally amongst the simple sailors, "grown-up children" (p.15) who, elsewhere, are described as being 'dumb and voiceless'.

The mystical subtext which from the outset the presentation of Singleton is made to underwrite is also effectively undermined. Singleton's taciturnity and his air of ineffable wisdom abandon him and the narrator, through the use of a free indirect style and a mimicking narratorial repetition, satirizes Singleton and his speech:

Singleton only was not surprised. 'Dead - is he? Of course,' he said, pointing at the island right abeam: for the calm still held the ship

spell-bound within sight of Flores. Dead - of course. *He* wasn't surprised. Here was the land, and there, on the forehatch and waiting for the sailmaker - there was that corpse. Cause and effect. And for the first time that voyage, the old seaman became quite cheery and garrulous, explaining and illustrating from the stores of experience how, in sickness, the sight of an island (even a very small one) is generally more fatal than a view of a continent. But he couldn't explain why. (p.96)

Here, Singleton's voice becomes the object of the narrator's. "Dead - of course" is an echo of Singleton's own direct speech (second sentence). The movement is from direct speech to a free indirect style. On this basis, "Cause and effect" belongs to Singleton. The words *may* of course 'belong' to the narrator. In any event, they express Singleton's view. From this almost childlike sentiment, we descend finally to the banal "But he couldn't explain why".

The sheer absurdity and glibness of the last part of the penultimate sentence is emphasized by the parenthetical "even a very small one", a piece of meticulous 'explanatory' detail which as the last sentence testifies explains nothing at all. As a result, the sentiments of the implied speaker, Singleton, are undercut. The gradual 'demythologizing' of Singleton from Delphic silence to talkative old salt is, in terms of characterization, one of the novel's clearest transitions. The lynch-pin of this movement is his thirty-hour ordeal at the helm.

At the word "Old!" (p.60), he takes "up the burden of all his existence". He is "possessed of sinister truth". By the end of the novel, we see Singleton through the eyes of the pay-clerk as a "disgusting brute" (p.105), an aging, decrepit sailor (this 'land' view of Singleton compares with the 'town' view of the Bundrens, e.g. Anse and Dewey Dell, in *As I Lay Dying*).

If this subversion were all there were to the mystical or 'covert' element in the novel, the issue would be relatively

straightforward. However, Singleton's voice is not the only one that sponsors the 'demonic view' of James Wait. Foulke's 'sky-high' narrator reinforces the feelings of the retrospective narrative of the crewman-narrator who speaks, collectively, for the crew. As the *Narcissus* languishes in the stillness, he tells us:

we commenced to believe Singleton, but with unshaken fidelity dissembled to Jimmy. We spoke to him with jocose allusiveness, like cheerful accomplices in a clever plot; but we looked to the westward over the rail with longing eyes for a sign of hope, for a sign of fair wind; even if its first breath should bring death to our reluctant Jimmy. In vain! The universe conspired with James Wait. Light airs from the northward sprang up again; the sky remained clear; (p.88)

Wait is consistently presented as a jinx at best, something profoundly menacing at worst. The idea of a conspiracy between Wait and "the universe" endorses and strengthens the symbolic, metaphysical and ethical resonances set up throughout the novel. These resonances are articulated and amplified by a variety of narrators and speakers. This view of Wait (metaphysical, supernatural) is neither limited to simple people in the novel nor merely a function of the superstitious mind.

The general tenor of Wait's presentation is too consistent for that. Yet, Wait is both the victim of his own supposed conspiracy and of a "universe" which is supposed to be conspiring *with* him. And if Wait is an unwitting conspirator (a paradox), like some black Oedipus, he is punished for an offence of which he remains unaware. The dying Wait is reduced to a terrified, suffering shell of a man, impotently waiting for death. This image is sharply at odds with the dominant view of "that hateful nigger" (p.95):

Jimmy's respiration was so rapid that it couldn't be counted, so faint that it couldn't be heard. His eyes were terrified as though he had been looking

at unspeakable horrors; and by his face one could see that he was thinking of abominable things. Suddenly with an incredibly strong and heart-breaking voice he sobbed out:

'Overboard! [. . .] I! [. . .] My God!' (pp.94-95)

It is wrong I think to describe *The Nigger* as being incoherent or incorporating incoherences as Hawthorn does. The urgency and the depth of the conflicts which we sense in *The Nigger* is due to the fact that within their own terms the voices, values, standpoints which compete for our sympathy are largely *coherent*. The point is that the novel is deeply ambivalent about the story and characters he presents. Inscribed within the text are narratives which sponsor radically competing interpretations and meanings.

We do not hear the voice of the 'I' narrator until near the end of *The Nigger*. He addresses his 'brothers of the sea': "Haven't we together, and upon the immortal sea, wrung out a meaning from our sinful lives?" (p.107). This does not testify to the multitude of possible meanings which officers, crew, narrators, and Conrad, ultimately, have offered up. The use of the singular "meaning" is, indeed, almost vexatious and deliberately elusive coming as it does at the end of the novel. The question is truly rhetorical in its disingenuousness and evasive quality.

The statement echoes this sentiment from Conrad's preface:

Fiction [. . .] in truth [. . .] must be [. . .] the appeal of one temperament to all the other innumerable temperaments whose subtle and restless power endows passing events with their true meaning and creates the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time. (p.146)

Contained in the word "appeal" is the desire to establish common ground, an epistemological consensus to act as a basis for "the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts" (pp.145-146). Clearly, the exigences of the seaman's craft and more

widely the principles and values which underpin British colonial and mercantile power, *within their own terms*, provide such a basis. They do so however only when the individual temperament chooses or is forced to accept their terms.

These matters relate to the same range of problematic issues which affect his evocation of "the truth, manifold and one" (p.145). Essentially, how is it possible for Conrad to create singular meaning, a unity of signification recognized by all, which extends beyond the fairly intelligible and unequivocal principles of seamanship? How can there be "true meaning" (p.146) when "passing events" are interpreted by "innumerable temperaments" in conflict with one another?

The juxtaposition of various and varying temperaments in *The Nigger* appears to confound any quest for "true meaning". Insofar as a novel is concerned, issues of human temperament must clearly be contained within a verbal and ideological framework. *The Nigger* does not merely juxtapose "disparate vocabularies"⁷⁷ or gently dramatize the subtle collision of different world-views, it *attempts* to bring them together in some kind of coherent whole - an enterprise which results in violent and unresolved conflict.

On the surface, the text sponsors and privileges certain world-views as opposed to others. Yet, when the rhetorical 'special pleading' of one narrative thread becomes over-emphatic or goes against the 'evidence' which is presented elsewhere, the authority of that voice is severely qualified or even undermined. Notwithstanding, certain value-systems and points of view are consistently invoked and reinforced. This happens, however, only according to certain aesthetic conventions. The important narrative voices of *The Nigger* as we have already said ultimately dominate only in the sense that they conform to the stylistic structures of traditional omniscient or authoritative narrative.

The slanted rhetoric of Conrad's narrators 'commandeers' the natural world and the natural/unnatural division for its

own ends (see Watts discussion of Lothe's 'metaphysical' and/or 'lyrical' narrators in his introduction to the Penguin edition of the novels). Speaking of Marlow's narrative strategies in *Heart of Darkness*, Bette London refers to his "coercive rhetoric".⁷⁸ Michael Boyd quotes Guérard from *Conrad the Novelist*: "meditative comment" serves the purpose of "screening" what he calls "the naked scene".

Interestingly, Guérard parallels Conrad's "meditative comment" to Faulkner's "overriding voice".⁷⁹ This masking of "the naked scene" is a characteristic of *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and indeed of much of the best of Conrad's work.⁸⁰ If we take Guérard's formulation, "the naked scene", as a way of describing the material base of a narrative (a perfectly reasonable reading). As Watts writes:

the dirty commercial arena which seems so anti-thetical to the sailing-ship has actually brought the ship into being: cash profit on imported goods is the 'sordid inspiration' of the *Narcissus*'s 'pilgrimage'. (The text has an invisible centre, for the cargo is never specified or described: an instance of political mystification by means of reticence rather than eloquence).⁸¹

Many of the conflicts in the novel have their material basis hidden or misrepresented. For example, the squabbling between the Asiatics and the crewmen, which we have already examined, is given a particular ideological slant by the narrator's rhetoric. The scene is recounted by a narrator whose implicit and sometimes explicit values are fundamentally opposed to the desires, needs and concerns of the lower orders.

It is precisely this insistent 'naturalizing' in the sense of presenting the ideological as normative *and* doing so through an evocation of the natural world (ideology through rhetoric, judgement) that subverts the values that structure it. Because this rhetorical level of discourse is just that, rhetorical, unmistakably and almost unceasingly, our

attention is redirected to "the naked scene". After all, the Asiatics are behaving in a wholly legitimate manner when they haggle with the seamen in their need to pursue their livelihood.

It is the exigences of authenticity, the requirements of verisimilitude, which compels the text to 'give voice' to Donkin. Perhaps Conrad chooses so to do, simply to demonstrate to the reader how loathsome Donkin actually is. Yet, why allow us to hear the inner voice of the dying Wait or to dramatize, from within, the undeniable courage and heroism of the seamen?

As far as Donkin is concerned, we may be in no doubt about the fact that he is presented with the most scathing irony, "The sympathetic and deserving creature who knows all about his rights" (p.6). The words "sympathetic" and "deserving" cannot possibly belong to Donkin; the narrator is contemptuously 'quoting' the language of sentimentalists and "philanthropists". With Wait, we are unable to establish whether the narrator is scathing through attributive mimicry or whether the words actually belong to Wait's inner life (or are merely a pose), "He was right as ever, and as ever ready to forgive" (p.11). This statement comes at Wait's first appearance. The pattern and diction of the utterance is consistent both with the pompous, sententious and righteous tone of the 'affronted' Wait *and* an ironic narratorial tone.

Throughout, the persuasive rhetoric by means of which the text attempts to demonize Wait is confronted, contradicted or subverted by the things we learn about his condition. In the end, it is difficult to resist the force of the claim that Wait makes at the beginning of the novel. We cannot but believe in a statement which is at the same time a statement of economic fact, as well as a general claim to a shared, common humanity with the other seamen - a statement of *solidarity/community*: "I belong to the ship" (p.10).

The foregoing bespeaks a fascinating dislocation between the world to which vocabulary and style belong and the world

which is (albeit suggestively or indirectly) presented. In similar fashion, Conrad deploys the strategies of classical realism: irony, omniscience, the Olympian utterance and the grand perspective. Yet he does so in a manner which is continuously open to question, conjecture and subversion. At times, in the space of a single page, Conrad's narrator not only contradicts himself but introduces, in style and vocabulary, a radically different perspective. An example is the movement of the three paragraphs contained in pp.100-102. The structure of the narrative voice in terms of tense and person remains consistent whilst style and content do not.

It is worth returning briefly to this remarkable sequence towards the end of *The Nigger* where we move from the assured conservatism of England as "the great flagship of the race" (p.101) to a London of "begrimed walls" and "tall factory chimneys" gathered "in insolent bands". Final, clinching images, as we have already noted, combine a sense of profound doubt with a strong flavour of social and existential calamity, on one level, via the threat posed by the Waits and Donkins of the world. In this one paragraph we move from panegyric to apocalypse.

We easily shift from one narrator to another before we even have time to realize that the 'identity' of the narratorial speaker has changed. There is more to this 'identity' than merely tense or person. In terms of how we read, however, tense and person are hugely influential in determining the continuous and continuing discriminations that we make in deciding who is speaking at any given point.

The matter is complicated further by the fact that even when the underlying conventions of the narrative change *visibly* in terms of editorial signalling (e.g. speech marks), we are still led by our traditional assumptions about reading simply to decide that this is either mere dialogue or quoted speech, or the subordinate (because subordinated textually) voice of a mere 'character'.

For example, when Donkin and Wait are shown in conversation, we do not necessarily immediately appreciate that theirs is not just dialogue, subject to the strictures of a controlling narrative presence but that they in fact exist as fully constituted narrative voices. Similarly, we are brought inside Wait according to a convention which we find so familiar as to allow it to pass almost unremarked. Yet, what we learn as a result fundamentally opposes other narrative tendencies within the book.

At the end, the narrative rhetoric which has served so powerfully in the novel turns back on itself. The narrator conflates London, the heart of civilisation and empire, with the forces of 'primitive anarchy' and disorder. The imagery of the passages that follow remind us of the opening of *The Nigger*, the cacophany of undisciplined, almost feral, voices and the unrestrained squabbling of seaman and Asiatic. The journey of the *Narcissus* ends in a manner which parallels its beginning midst "the murmur of millions of lips praying, cursing, sighing, jeering" (p.101) and "the clang of iron, the sound of mighty blows, shrieks, yells". This last is particularly redolent of the "howls of rage and shrieks of lament" which at the beginning of the novel tore the "resplendent and bestarred peace of the East".

As I Lay Dying possesses a metaphysical subplot of its own. It is strongly implied that Jewel, like Wait, is opposed to a 'natural' or God-given order. As Cash says, he can believe that his brother, in rescuing his mother's corpse from flood and fire, "was going against God in a way" (p.233). Yet, Jewel in his energy and capacity for action is a marked contrast to the sedentary, immobile Wait. His influence upon the Bundren journey is physical and hastening whereas Wait's is demoralising and allegedly retards the passage of the *Narcissus*.

If Jewel goes against the laws of God in saving his mother's body, then Darl goes against the laws (legal and ethical) of man in his barn-burning. Darl's attempts to

retard the Bundren journey are in a sense godly whereas Wait's are quite the reverse. Whilst we recognize the physical means by which Darl and Jewel attempt to influence affairs, the 'influence' which Wait appears to wield over the ship and her company is evanescent in comparison.

The supernatural elements which are contained in the figure of James Wait find a parallel in Addie Bundren. They are both housed or boxed in wooden receptacles (Wait's cabin, Addie's coffin) borne by the ship/wagon. The security of these cargoes is precarious. They are almost lost to storm and flood before being finally discharged. The figures of Wait and Addie Bundren obviously connect with ideas of bodily/physical decay, mortality and death.

Moreover, the dying/dead Addie and the dying Wait are symbols of moral as well as mortal corruption. They are physically corrupted and spiritually and ethically corrupting. Wait and Addie both become objects of specious solidarity for the crew and the Bundren family, fraudulent bases for collective action which divide whilst appearing to unite. Moreover, in *As I Lay Dying* a kind of metaphysical overlay is articulated through the language attributed to various characters and the suggestiveness of the metaphors and parallelisms they unwittingly invoke. The depiction of the 'inner life' of simple folk helps create this symbolic dimension as well as working on the level of Cohn's "psychonarration".

In Cora's first section, for example, she observes that "A snake will break up a hen-house quicker than anything" (p.6). In context: Cora has been speaking about egg-husbandry which as I have pointed out represents a submerged discourse on motherhood. We relate the suggestiveness of "snake" to the threat that sex poses to domestic stability (the "hen-house") and the violation of a sacred maternal and marital code which is broken by Addie. Lastly, the "snake", biblically, is the arch-tempter, which role, for Addie, is 'played' by Whitfield/Anse.

Just as the lyrical/metaphysical narrator of *The Nigger* is the principal articulator along with Singleton of the "covert" subplot, so Darl is the attributive source of much of what constitutes a valorizing rhetoric which sets mood and tone. Darl's sections are overwhelmingly in the present tense. The 'immediacy' of perception associated with its use suggests, *at first glance*, that the language belongs to an unevaluative if not unreflective observer whose role is restricted largely to the absorption of detail and 'objective' description.

As we have seen, Darl serves to describe physical locations, to set scenes, to postulate relationships and , generally to fulfil the role of a conventional omniscient narrator. As we have also observed, we can see evidence of a 'damaged' sensibility in Darl's aesthetic 'detachment' and the peculiarity of his observations.

His first monologue which opens the novel is laconic in style, detached and without sentiment in tone, reminiscent of the language of Renoir's protagonist in *The Pickpocket*. His language is non-committal and intensely observant/descriptive, deliberate and almost choreographic in its precision. Generally, Darl 'speaks' in the present tense and the 'unengaged' dispassionate character of much of his language tends to disguise its highly-charged valorizing nature. Let us examine how a sense of value is transmitted in the language attributed to Darl Bundren.

The following passage from the novel's twenty-seventh monologue (Darl's tenth) is reminiscent of both *The Nigger* and the opening passages of *Light in August* in terms of its treatment of motion and its evocation of a breakdown of normal spatial, physical and temporal laws:

We go on, with a motion so soporific, so dreamlike as to be uninferant of progress, as though time and not space were decreasing between us and it [Jewel's horse].

It turns off at right angles, the wheel-marks of last Sunday healed away now: a smooth red scoriation

curving away into the pines; a white signboard with faded lettering: New Hope Church. 3 mi. It wheels up like a motionless hand lifted above the profound desolation of the ocean; beyond it the red road lies like a spoke of which Addie Bundren is the rim.
(pp.107-108)

The paradox of dynamic immobility or stasis in motion is common in the work of Faulkner and Conrad. The above passage calls to mind the semi-mystical somnambulism with which the progress of the *Narcissus* is at times described. The simile here (introduced by "as though") works precisely in the way James Guetti (see p.18) describes in that it confirms the fact that space and *not* time decreases "between us and it". We apportion 'responsibility' for the perception of "time and not space [. . .] decreasing" to the perceiving consciousness of Darl. The language is charged with both the identity of an 'unhinged' speaker *and* the voice of an 'authorial' narrator. These two frequently inhere in the voice attributed to Darl Bundren.

Despite that word "healed", the dominant tone of the passage is one of hopelessness. The detail of imagery and metaphor works in the service of a hypersensitive despair conveyed in rhetoric of suggestive etiolation: "*faded* lettering" [my italics]. The scene is evanescent, on the edge of sensory apprehension. In this context, "New Hope Church" is charged with irony in as much as it can be taken as a suggestion of hope which the observer (Darl) cannot accept.

The image of the "motionless hand" recalls the hand that Tull raises in greeting earlier in the section and also brings to mind the image of the hand of a drowning human being "lifted above the profound desolation of the ocean". The range of metaphors are mechanical and dehumanized: Addie is at the rim of a wheel, the sign "wheels up". Wheeled motion implies mechanical movement and calls to mind the idea of automatic, involuntary and inescapable motion like that

say of Percy Grimm as he pursues Joe Christmas through Jefferson.

These metaphors act to distance us from the experience of the characters and from 'emotional' involvement. Phrases such as "red scoriation" and "red road" link the road to images of physical injury or wounding. The language draws our attention not to a reality outside itself but to the nature of the perceiving, 'speaking' consciousness itself, a consciousness capable of transforming the friendly wave of a good neighbour into a despairing vision of death. The entire dynamic trajectory of the passage, of the monologue in fact, is that of the dying fall.

The road sign, with all the resonance that the word "sign" contains, brings no hope "New" or otherwise. The next section (Anse's), in contrast, gives a conflicting view. For Anse, the journey is hopeful in the two senses that he will achieve "comfort" (p.111), new teeth and a new wife, and that "there is a reward" (p.110) for him above despite his "flouting" (p.111).

As the novel goes on, Darl's pictorial and aesthetic sensibilities become darker, tinted with the hues of apocalypse, doom and disaster. The suggestion that he is telepathic increases our sense of the play of the supernatural and metaphysical as does the idea that he is, ironically, doing God's work by trying to stop the funeral. It is a commonplace of Faulkner criticism that Darl's sanity deteriorates, culminating in an act of final lunacy (barn-burning). Our response to Darl is further complicated by the fact that Faulkner uses him to articulate, on the one hand, a quasi-authorial narrative (as we have seen) whilst drawing attention to the limitations and suspect character of his sensibility and point of view.

From the first, Darl's imaginative and 'poetic' sensibilities are much in evidence. I would argue however that early in the novel the *valorizing* rhetorical voice which

is to the fore in the passage quoted above is not necessarily in evidence:

When I reach the top he has quit sawing. Standing in a litter of chips, he is fitting two of the boards together. Between the shadow spaces they are as yellow as gold, bearing on their flanks in smooth undulations the marks of the adze blade. (p.4)

Yet, the tone here is 'valorized' or 'ideological' in that it asserts the ascendancy of a certain kind of narrative voice - the aesthetic/poetic. The implication is that this kind of pictorial 'evaluation', as is often claimed or implicitly assumed, somehow possesses a status beyond the ideological. Even at this early stage however we begin to associate the texture of Darl's description, the "marks", with his own 'damaged' poetic sensibility. This in turn encourages us to question or challenge his rhetoric.

The passage that follows evinces Darl's increasing tone of desolation and alerts us to a 'deterioration' in his sensibilities. It also contains Conradian elements in its rhythms and diction:

the unwinded cane and saplings lean as before a little gale, swaying without reflection as though suspended on invisible wires from the branches overhead. Above the ceaseless surface they stand - trees, cane, vines - rootless, severed from the earth, spectral above a scene of immense yet circumscribed desolation filled with the voice of the waste and mournful water. (p.142)

We note the use of Conradian words implying ultimate absence/negation: "rootless", "ceaseless", "immense", "spectral", words which evoke a sense of the mysterious, the ominous, the supernatural or the 'unreal'. There is also a suggestion in the simile "as though on invisible wires", of that very same *predeterminism* which plays a part in the motion of the *Narcissus*.

Darl's voice here is reminiscent of certain lyrical passages in *The Nigger*. The sweep of the rhetoric in this passage is sharply evaluative. Many of the words and metaphors are metaphysically, and therefore morally, suggestive. The pervading atmosphere of removal or detachment from experience of the physical world is emphatic. The speaker is divorced from experience, "severed from the earth".

The tenor of this evocation of the physical/natural world acts as a kind of commentary on the doings of the Bundrens, coming as it does at the point at which they cross the river, lose the coffin, then save it. Darl, the origin of these utterances, deems the river crossing, in fact the entire journey, to be wrong. Likewise, the narrator of *The Nigger* seems to invoke a sense of climactic threat or the 'fury' of the elements (to valorize through rhetoric), at times, especially when the crew seem to be going against some cosmic order or authority.

For Darl, as Cash suggests, the entire enterprise (the journey to Jefferson) is immoral, sinful and 'unnatural'; he spends much of his energy trying to prevent or retard the trek. Darl's imagery and general tone is, at least in part, an expression of *his* own profound anguish and disapprobation. The "earth", we note, is "severed" only for Darl. He is isolated in a personal apocalypse which no-one else can share and the quality of his language defines the limitations of his sensibilities and perception. His sense of despair is only one way of understanding man's experiences and actions; it contrasts with his father's Christian interpretation (arguably no less limited) of the journey which is based on the notions of 'test' ("flouting") and "reward".

Unlike the rhetorician of *The Nigger*, owing to the explicit monologic structure of *As I Lay Dying*, it is much more difficult to lose hold of the fact that Darl is only one perceiving consciousness amongst others. The limitations of his field of awareness are obvious despite his quasi-

authorial status, in other respects, as observer/narrator. The very committedness and strength of Darl's rhetoric tears itself assunder or unravels itself as we read. Its very persuasiveness, its very appeal and the distance of his language from the common/communal voices which surround him, alert us, powerfully, not to its superiority but to its isolation, its strangeness and Darl's 'queerness'.

Darl is, however, paradoxically not alone in his isolation; indeed, all are 'isolated' in one way or another (e.g. Anse, Addie, Dewey Dell). It is simply that Darl takes a particular view of his condition because of his inability to vitiate or dispel his sense of detachment and isolation. The rhetorical, valorizing process which is articulated in his name is the product of a specific narrating world-view.

We realize, ultimately, that Darl's voice is no more reliable than any other. It is just that the style of the language attributed to him is one conventionally associated with the authorial or authoritative (substantiating) voice. His sense of tragedy emanates not from the objective facts of his condition but from a perceptual predisposition. This is what makes him a true *isolato*.⁸²

It may be that Faulkner and Conrad distrust intellect and refuse to privilege the intellectual. However, Conrad's faith in intelligence and aestheticism, in *The Nigger* at least, seems far greater than Faulkner's. Undeniably, the voices in *The Nigger* which are structured according to conventional models of omniscience or authority are marked with an aesthetic sensibility and a moral 'intelligence'; they are educated voices and 'informed' voices. In *As I Lay Dying*, the 'gift' of 'omniscience', the voice of the poet/seer is given to a poor white, a madman who ends up incarcerated in a prison for the criminally insane.

As I Lay Dying and *The Nigger*: some linkages

The narratives of both *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying* present enormous problems of understanding for the reader. In the last resort, how are we to *choose* between different versions of the truth? As Bakhtin states, "When the novel becomes the dominant genre, epistemology becomes the dominant discipline".⁸³ The problem is made more complex by the fact that we can no longer judge the reliability or otherwise of a given voice by examining the conventions which govern its expression. The 'omniscient' voice is no more or less reliable, necessarily, than the most limited figural voice (Wait's for instance). Where then does the locus of authority lie? Often, as we shall see, a contrary or contrasting view of the same materials will follow hard on the heels of a given interpretation or perspective.

Neither novel ultimately privileges the voices whose structure resembles or most resembles the conventional structures of omniscient or authoritative narrative. The narrative process is subverted, convoluted through a species of double- or multi-discoursing, working through what Hawthorn calls "double attribution".⁸⁴ However, he explicitly denies the possibility of "simultaneous double attribution" insisting rather on the attribution of utterances as

consecutive or alternating, as with a person who sees Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit in rapid succession as duck/rabbit/duck/rabbit and so on.

In a discussion of *An Outcast of the Islands* he goes on to talk about narrative ambiguity in the context of Free Indirect Discourse. Without becoming too embroiled in Hawthorn's argument, I feel obliged to state that this is actually the point. It is the possibility, in fact, in some cases, the inescapability of "simultaneous double

attribution" that lies at the centre of an understanding of how the texts work.

For instance, we have the phrase from *The Nigger*, "He was right as ever, and as ever ready to forgive" (p.11). The utterance may be a free indirect reporting of Wait's own verbalization of the situation. It may either be the narrator's formulation of a thought that Wait might have had, had he considered the matter or his *own* response to Jim's 'splendid condescension' towards the crew (a reversal, incidentally, of the 'nigger' stereotype). It may also be a piece of reported speech actually spoken by Wait, though this, admittedly, is less likely. It may even be read as narratorial irony, a mimicking of Wait's pomposity, "scornful [. . .] condescending", a reading given some authority if we think in terms of the narrator's reaction to Jimmy's 'pose' (p.11).

The ironic reading, however, is most evident on a re-reading of the passage. Wait's ascendancy is not really treated ironically to begin with. He is "cool, towering, superb"; he speaks in a voice whose "rolling tones" fill "the deck without effort" and he is "*naturally* scornful", "*unaffectedly* condescending" (my emphasis). These oxymorons tend to complicate our responses; his "scorn" may be "natural" to him or indeed it may be the product of affectation. A certain creeping irony becomes apparent, however, if we read in full the sentence to which the above quotations belong:

He was naturally scornful, unaffectedly condescending, as if from his height of six foot three he had surveyed all the vastness of human folly and had made up his mind not to be too hard on it. (p.11)

As I have said, on a re-reading we naturally put these voices and our responses to them into wider context. Nevertheless, the memory of our reactions and interpretations of our initial reading survives, modulated rather than

subverted or discredited. It is the fact of "simultaneous double attribution" which is largely responsible for the text's thematic richness, its ambiguities, its doubts and its apparent incoherences and inconsistencies which are, *pace* Lothe, *inter alia*, its great strengths. As readers subjected to competing views of the same event, materials or whatever, we tend to hold these conflicting perspectives *simultaneously* in our heads, though the reading or absorption of them is obviously contiguous and chronological.

All this is not to deny that the pattern of *alternating* attribution of utterance related to the notion of polar structure is a valuable model for the evaluation of both Faulkner and Conrad's work. For instance, the conversation between Ike and Cass which provides the centre-piece of 'The Bear' in *Go Down, Moses* is orchestrated, in terms of statement and response, as point and counterpoint. At times, it becomes truly difficult to locate the source of an utterance. The voices of Ike and Cass become disembodied, delimited only by the barest editorial indications (indentation and single quotation marks) or the ambiguous "and he".⁸⁵

Let us look at some of more of these oppositions. Monologues thirty-nine and forty provide another example of polar structure, coming as they do in succession. Addie's subverts, modifies and clarifies what we hear in Cora's. Within its own bounds, section thirty-nine of the novel, Cora's third, is partly the report of an actual conversation with Addie, and is combed with incoherence and self-contradiction. She accuses Addie: "It is out of vanity that you would judge sin and salvation in the Lord's place" (p.167). Yet, within the space of a page, Cora *judges* her, "'There is your sin. And your punishment too. Jewel is your punishment" (p.168). There is irony, also at Cora's expense, in her ignorance of Addie's affair with Whitfield:

She had never been pure religious, not even after that summer at the camp meeting when Brother Whitfield wrestled with her spirit. (p.166)

On a re-reading, "not even" is bound to strike us as inapposite. We know from what we learn from the monologues of Addie and Whitfield which immediately follow Cora's, that it was with body *and* spirit that the Reverend Whitfield "wrestled" (a latent joke). We are even invited to conjecture as to whether the summer camp was the place of Jewel's conception.

The novel is driven by the tensions and antagonisms between conflicting voices, and it is this tension, as well as our interest in the lives/fates of the characters and their journey, which motivates our desire to continue to read. Just as the substance of the pilgrim's tales in Chaucer and the manner in which they are told *tell* us about the characteristics of the speaker, so the language of each of the monologuists is self-revelatory even if the revelation remains inaccessible to the speaker him- or herself. Unlike the tales of the pilgrims, however, which were 'intended' for public performance, the monologues are stories which the characters tell themselves in self-justification and unwitting self-obfuscation.

Of course, Faulkner organizes and structures the language of his characters. It is at times unclear to what extent any one character is aware of the humour, irony, pathos or merely descriptive or expositive material that forms a part of the section assigned to him or her. Often, however, we can look to other voices in the text for aid in our determinations. For instance, Whitfield's hypocrisy is put into sharp relief by Addie's meditations on the relationship between words and deeds which directly precede his monologue.

Whitfield's description of Jewel as "a living lie" (p.177) compares with Cora's reporting of Addie's "'He [Jewel] is my cross and he will be my salvation'" (p.168). Because of

Whitfield's inability to confront the past and beg Anse's forgiveness on the one hand, and to admit his hypocrisy and self-deception on the other, we tend to give greater weight and authority to Addie's judgement of Jewel.

As we have said, we are unable to look to the conventions alone to determine for us what we know or do not know about the story before us. As we read, however, we do begin to recognize the various limitations of different speakers in a way which helps us to make discriminations and judgements about what they tell us. Cora's third monologue and Addie's first constitute the juxtaposition of limited awareness (Cora's) with an awareness less limited (Addie's), a strategy common in both Faulkner and Conrad.

The question of Jewel's parentage is not really left unresolved; we have Addie's 'testimony' as well as Whitfield's. The convention that a character in self-colloquy does not wilfully deceive him- or herself (as with Wait) is borne out by the text and we are more likely to invest greater authority in viewpoints or reports of facts which are corroborated by other voices (cf. Cohn, *Transparent Minds* and Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience*).

As I Lay Dying abounds in examples of polar structure where the burden of one monologue is subverted or brought into serious doubt by the one that immediately succeeds it. Further, such 'subversion' is just as likely to occur within a single monologue. In a wider context, the entire doings of the Bundren family inspire uncertainty and elicit, within the novel/text, a number of contrasting if not contradictory viewpoints. Irresolution obtains over a range of issues from the question of how good a carpenter Cash is to matters of religious profundity. A 'discussion' of the issues of motherhood, sin and salvation, for example, is articulated between the bounds of Cora's monologues and Addie's single monologue. To read these monologues is to participate in a continuing if indirect debate-in-action.

Different speakers adopt various attitudes to these concepts and help to define and locate them in a wider context. In Faulkner, as in Conrad, matters of human conduct, morality and ethics are 'discussed', problematized and examined. We, as readers, engage in a process of determining the 'rights and wrongs' of the matter. These considerations obviously extend to the *facts* of the story as well as to its moral and ethical complications. As readers we search for the answers to the question 'What happens?' as well as 'Why?' and 'How?'.

II

Community, Value, Language

Basic issues

Let us remind ourselves of a number of archetypal similarities between *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and *As I Lay Dying*. Both feature a journey, with its generic suggestions of 'rites of passage', trial and tribulation (the storm in *The Nigger* and fire and flood in *As I Lay Dying*). Both journeys are forced: one for mercantile reasons, the other ostensibly, at least, to honour the wishes of the dead, both strong imperatives linked to communality and common purpose. The journeys provide a framework for a test of character and commitment for the protagonists. Addie, as Wait, prompts collective action whilst being at the same time a burden to and a retarder, in a different sense, of such action. Addie stops the family's proper labours just as Wait interferes with the duties of the crew, and they both create strife and dissension within their respective 'families'.

Further, the practical, self-serving reasons which contaminate the motive of each of the Bundren's for completing the journey to Jefferson are acknowledged, though they are submerged in *The Nigger* where, as we have observed, the mercantile inspiration for the journey is barely mentioned. There is no suggestion in *The Nigger*, however, that the journey is wrong or should not have been undertaken - in fact, quite the reverse. In *As I Lay Dying*, by contrast, the view that the trek is in some way 'unnatural' is explicitly articulated: in Cora's words it is "flouting the will of God to do it" (pp.22-23).

Many of the meditations in the Faulkner novel can be read as commentaries on issues and relations set up in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. This thesis is an exploration of the

dialogism between as well as within the novels. The 'dialogue' we 'hear' is in great part concerned with the conflict between different ideas of community and solidarity, the values that underpin these ideas and the nature of the relationship between these values and the language we use to describe them.

As I Lay Dying and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* are both remarkable innovative works. Their experimental features constitute a point of broad affinity between them. They depict communities in crisis, a crisis generated by a profound unease concerning the values of those communities and the language which gives them cohesion. Both novels give us a sense of societies, languages and values in transition. Each is in part a meditation on the conflict and instability to which this transition gives rise. They reproduce (dramatize) the *dialogue* between different voices which sponsor contrasting or opposing values and visions of community.

Various speakers within the texts clash in that they 'propose' conflicting perspectives on traditional notions of duty, conduct, Christian morality, the work ethic and the notion of the submission of the individual to the collective or to authority. These voices imply or posit antagonistic ideologies or world-views. At the heart of this 'debate' is the fierce clash between the demands of social, economic or religious imperatives on the one hand, and the pressure of the internal needs and drives of the individual on the other, e.g. the needs of the self as against the needs of the ship in *The Nigger* or, in *As I Lay Dying*, the conflict between personal desires and predilections or prejudices on the one hand, and the needs, however inconvenient, of a poor neighbour on the other. The idea of community and the possibility for shared values is explored by both books. This quest is qualified by a tension in both novels between a sense of 'natural community' at one extreme, and modern rootlessness and isolation at the other.

The crewmen of the *Narcissus* are brought and held together by the exigences and traditions of their craft in general, and the needs of the *Narcissus* in particular; they are all, literally and figuratively, in the same boat. They have not been coerced by the press although, clearly, they are at sea for reasons of economic necessity. They are there, also, for reasons of individual need or temperament. At some level, they must all want to be there - no one has physically forced the men to join the crew of the *Narcissus*. Once aboard, of course, the discipline of the Merchant Marine is underwritten both by the authority of the officers and the powerful shore-based institutions which they represent.

In contrast, Faulkner's poor whites are bound by the expectations and norms of their society. It is not the bond of a common craft but the requirements of the wider social organization of which they are part that govern their behaviour. The crewmen have in a sense chosen their craft and the boat. The Bundrens and the rest are in their 'boat' by virtue of being born into it. Also, the crewmen are brought into temporary relation whereas the Bundrens are related by blood and are part of a relatively stable community.

The crewmen are a population in motion, physically and metaphorically, like the Bundrens. The values and traditions of the society of which their community forms part are in transition (motion). The traditions and the very nature of their craft are changing, i.e. the 'movement' from sail to steam which is in turn part of greater social and economic movements. The claims made in the novel for the sense of community, common experience, common craft and, crucially, common *interest* which exists between its individual members are all made within the context of its explicitly polyglot nature.

As we have observed, the Bundrens and the wider community of poor whites would appear to be in more organic and permanent relation to one another, suiting them less, perhaps, to the portrayal of a society in crisis or

transition. They are, as it were, *set* in a landscape, social and physical, in which they appear to be rooted, appear to belong. Further, these Mississippian whites seem to possess and *think they possess* a common language and world-view. As *I Lay Dying* in part detonates these apparent truisms. The poor whites do not in fact own the land and do not belong to it; they are settlers whose ancestors took the territory by rapine from its 'rightful' owners. In a sense, the presence of the white man in Mississippi, and the *Narcissus* and its crew on the high seas, has a common basis in opportunism and despoliation or, at least, exploitation.

As we have said, both books are explorations of the possibilities for a genuine sense of community and common purpose, and for values upon which they might be based. This quest for a system of universally recognized values which would form a sound basis for such commonality is grounded, necessarily, in a preoccupation with the relationship between language and experience. In the end, the values of the community are in one way or another created by (peer) pressure and often asserted by more or less subtle force. A community in the end is an aggregate of individuals who in varying degrees consent and/or are forced to abide by a certain set of rules.

Community is only in small part a question of personal choice and has as much if not more to do with coercion within a socio-political framework. However, as we have noted, Faulkner and Conrad both recognize that human individuals do not experience themselves as nodes in which class and/or gender discourses coincide, at the mercy of social and economic forces and without free will. In this, they clearly differ from theorists who *apparently* do.

Clearly, in any society, values are transmitted *via* language or words. The willing/unwilling individuals who make up a community are divided by and through language. This conflict is reflected in the powerfully dialogic nature of both novels. As I hope to show, in the end they testify to

the proposition that all meaning is conditional, rooted as it is, ultimately, in the subtleties of individual temperaments. The best perhaps that can be hoped for in any system of communal values is that it represent a workable, *effective*, 'fiction' (verisimilitude) of community and common purpose.

The Nigger and the disciplines of the craft

Dominant voices in the Conrad novel sponsor the view that the principles of good seamanship are determinable and unproblematic. There is an obvious need on a ship for quick responses from its officers to changing conditions and for unquestioning obedience and coöperation on the part of the crew. By insisting on the importance of duty, hard work and obedience, these voices consistently seek to connect the ethical and practical dimensions of seamanship. These connections are, at least in part, perfectly legitimate: there is clearly a need for a chain of command on a ship as there is a need for a crew who will work with commitment and respond immediately and *unquestioningly* to the orders of their superiors. Powerful voices in *The Nigger* go further by sponsoring the view that the need for obedience and discipline on the part of the crew is paramount and absolute, going as it does beyond the narrow confines of the mere mechanics of seamanship.

This view encompasses the various definitions of the word 'duty'. Firstly, the seamen are being paid to discharge a "business, office, function, performance [. . .] or engagement".⁸⁶ The word is also defined as "behaviour due to a superior, deference and expression of respect". The crewmen are 'duty-bound' in both these senses, regardless of their personal feelings, constrained by (in another definition of duty) the "binding force of what is right". The practicalities and ethics of the sailor's profession then seem free of doubt, buttressed as they are by notions of 'duty' as well as the technical requirements of the craft.

This would appear to make the seaman's code an admirable basis on which to found harmoniously collective and purposive activity. In contrast to the uncertainties, both practical and ethical, which are to characterize the crew's difficulties over Donkin and Wait, the exigences of the sailor's craft seem certain and straightforward.

This is clearly not always the case, however, even in practical terms. The appropriate response, for example, to the near capsizing of the *Narcissus* becomes a contentious issue not only between crew and officers but, as we learn from Cedric Watts commentary in the Penguin edition, between different schools of seamanly thought (external to the novel). Watts observes that "the master's decision not to cut is vindicated by the outcome".⁸⁷ This may be true within the novel's *diegesis* though as we learn from a nineteenth-century manual quoted by Watts, "if she does not right [. . .] let the masts go over the side". This dialogue of conflict or indeterminacy between the maritime authorities that Watts quotes, clearly demonstrates that the mechanics, let alone the ethics, of seamanship are open to argument.

Despite this, there is still a degree of consensus and determinacy when it comes to the practicalities of sailing that do not always extend to its ethical dimensions. This consensus and the relative determinacy which underpins it relate to the idea of duty both as 'function' (physical obligation) and as "expression of deference and respect" (social/moral obligation). We may ask what point: does a readily obeyed order cease to be a functional necessity and become a piece of social deference (mere form), unconnected to any practical need? This of course depends on how we define 'duty'. Clearly, for the novel's dominant voices, these two complementary definitions are intimately connected and interdependent.

The crewmen of the *Narcissus*, like Faulkner's poor whites, are for the most part simple and uneducated. As we have seen, *The Nigger* abounds in conflicting views of these people. For

example, they are described as "banded criminals" (p.96) on the one hand, and as in some way noble, if primitive, worthy sons of the sea on the other. In *As I Lay Dying*, this ambivalence has its parallel, as we know, in the conflicting viewpoints of the Bundrens.

The obvious difference between them is that whereas the Bundrens have some claim to a common heritage of history, place, ethnic grouping and familial experience, Conrad's seamen are heteroglot, i.e. socially and culturally diverse; and they are polyglot in that they speak a variety of social as well as national languages. They are diverse in terms of nationality, colour and ethnicity as well as of temperament. What they have in common is their craft and a shared experience and sense of the perils of the sea.

The ship's 'company' or community is based on a set of albeit grudgingly acknowledged rules to do with the performance of duty: the efficient and effective practice of the sailor's craft as well as a series of social obligations to the officers and the values they embody. The acknowledgement of these rules implies an acceptance of certain codes, verbal and otherwise, to do with the Merchant Marine. It also implies an acquiescence in the value system (early capitalism, Eurocentrism, imperialism) that has made the Merchant Marine possible and necessary, and which has created conditions in which its activities can be sustained.

Of course, Donkin conforms to neither definition of duty. He is insolent to his superiors, lazy and incompetent. Furthermore, in his dishonesty and shirking, he fails in his *duty* to the rest of the crew, those whom he claims to represent; Donkin fails to pull his weight (note the pun on Wait). He is 'damned', unequivocally, on his appearance in the forecastle:

He stood repulsive and smiling in the sudden
silence. This clean white forecastle was his refuge;
the place where he could be lazy; where he could
wallow, and lie and eat - and curse the food he ate;

where he could display his talents for shirking work, for cheating, for cadging; where he could find surely some one to wheedle and some one to bully - and where he would be paid for doing all this. They all knew him [. . .] They all knew him! He was the man that cannot steer, that cannot splice, that dodges the work on dark nights; that, aloft, holds on frantically with both arms and legs, and swears at the wind, the sleet, the darkness; the man who curses the sea while others work. The man who is the last out and the first in when all hands are called. The man who can't do most things and won't do the rest. The pet of philanthropists and self-seeking land-lubbers. The sympathetic and deserving creature that knows all about his rights, but knows nothing of courage, of endurance, and of the unexpressed faith, of the unspoken loyalty that knits together a ship's company. (pp.5-6)

Here, the conservative narrator is in a sense speaking in defence of crewmen who are different from Donkin, who embody, by implication, the antithesis of what Donkin represents. The narrator, as we are told does the crew, 'knows' Donkin and recognizes him for *what he is*. Yet, as we know, this positive view of the crew to which the narrator appeals in this passage does not tally with other views which the novel offers. Clearly, the 'dialogue' about 'community' in the novel is interwoven with our sense of these conflicting views. Our vision of 'community' changes according to what reading of the crew we, at any given moment, accept or are forced to entertain.

The word "company", on one level, is merely a synonym for the ship's crew. It also suggests notions of fellowship, loyalty and companionship. This 'community' however is also a "company" of another kind: a "body of persons combined for common (esp. commercial) object"⁸⁸. The juxtaposition of these potentially conflicting definitions of "company" tends to destabilize the idealized view of the crew which the narrator is 'proposing'. The submerged pun that Conrad makes on "company" ('limited company') is a kind of acknowledgement that Donkin and the worthies or "philanthropists" who sponsor

him would see the activities and character of both the ship's "company" and the commercial "company" that 'owns' it as 'limited'.

This question of limitations is a complex one and it requires us to draw a line between Donkin, the cynical would-be manipulator of labour, and the liberal voices which would 'speak' for him. For Donkin, the crewmen are limited because of their stupidity/simplicity and their lack of awareness and aspiration. He also holds them in contempt because of their credulity. Though he rails against the 'lies' of the officers, he depends upon this gullibility for the success of his strategies. As far as the activities of the commercial organisation which owns the ship is concerned, Donkin, whilst he ostensibly loathes it, in fact replicates, in his egotism and the pursuance of his own "material interests",⁸⁹ the very values he purports to condemn adding, for good measure, an unalloyed cynicism. Donkin, in short, 'exploits' the crew in his own way just as he accuses the officers of doing.

The liberal voices, the "philanthropists", may well hold the Merchant Marine's commercial activities or at least its most extreme manifestations in disdain. They too, like Donkin and the conservative narrator, purport to 'speak' for/defend the crew. For his part, the narrator claims that these people are "self-seeking" and know nothing of the sea. If we accept what he says, it is the view of these "landlubbers", on this alternative reading, which is 'limited'.

As always, the passage sustains/grants, if it does not actually solicit, conflicting readings. The sequence also embodies a genuine appeal to a certain view of life at sea and seamanly solidarity. According to the *OED*, the term "ship's company", describes "the *entire* company of a ship (my emphasis)". The word "ship" itself suggests *fellowship*, *hardship*, brotherhood, the bond of a common craft. The ideological thrust of what this narrator is saying can be deduced by looking at the nature of the reader addressed.

The narrator's implied reader is someone who is sensitive and responsive to his conservative sentiments. The speaker 'intends' also an indirect audience of "philanthropists and self-seeking landlubbers" in his attack on Donkin who know nothing of this fellowship of the sea and prefer to promote the selfish interests of the "independent offspring of the ignoble freedom of the slums" who are "full of hate and disdain for the austere servitude of the sea" (p.6).

His words serve as admonition, panegyric and defence. In terms of the novel's narrative strategies, it also creates a standard, coming as it does early on, by which to judge the crew's behaviour. But what are we to make of this paean in the wake of the events that unfold? Much of the crew's subsequent indiscipline and mutinous behaviour is generated by the ambivalences and tensions created by Donkin and Wait who refuse to accept or abide by the codes and thereby shake "mutual confidence" (p.23). This uncertainty poses a threat and is dangerous and destructive because it tends to show up or *give the lie to* the view of the crew to which this narrator has given voice.

This conservative narrator is on one level *expressing* "faith" and *speaking* "loyalty" to a certain ideal of what a crew should be. Ironically, this same crew, as we shall see, nurture thoughts of "unexpressed" *faithlessness* and "unspoken" *disloyalty* as far as their superiors are concerned. Their "loyalty" (the *wrong* kind) to Jimmy is characterized as a form of betrayal by the novel's conservative voices. The narrator 'speaks' for the crew in his contempt for Donkin; they "all knew him" for a lazy and dishonest scoundrel. Yet, we ask ourselves, if the crew knows Donkin, how do they allow themselves to be manipulated by him? Again, we evaluate the view of the crew that the narrator sponsors, in the light of what happens. He allows his own prejudices, we suspect, to bleed into the feelings for Donkin which he *claims* for the crew. The precise extent of this 'bleeding' remains moot, however.

When Wait dies, we are told that a "common bond was gone" (p.96) and that the crew loses "the strong, effective and respectable bond of a sentimental lie." In a sense, the vision of the crew which the conservative narrator evokes is in the light of subsequent events itself "a sentimental lie", perhaps truer once than it is now, but a "lie" all the same. This passing is testified to later in the chapter by the narrator who tells us of the 'old' kind of sailor who "existed beyond the pale of life and within sight of eternity" (p.15). We remember that for this speaker "self-seeking landlubbers" have transformed into the less severe "Well-meaning people". Whether the present crew of the *Narcissus* falls into the 'good/old' category or the 'new/bad' remains undecided. This indeterminacy radically affects our reading of the conservative narrator's paean. If his version of the crew is "a sentimental lie", it was/is as "strong, effective and respectable" as the Wait "lie" (albeit illusorily) has been for the crew.

The conservative narrator's "sentimental lie[s]", if lies they be, underpin a "common bond" of another kind, a basis for solidarity which itself disappears once the "lie" is exposed. Typically, the novel both reinforces and undermines, clothes and exposes, the conservative narrator's sentiments. Even though the novel's dominant voices clearly end up 'siding' with the conservative narrator(s) against Wait and Donkin, we cannot but juxtapose (compare and bring into equivalence) the kinds of community values which the crewmen deploy in their responses to Wait and Donkin, as opposed to the reactionary values encountered elsewhere, even if we can see them as mistaken. In other words, we may agree with the rallying call of the unionist to disaffected labour, i.e. workers' solidarity, or approve of the sympathy and generosity that the men show to Donkin and Wait despite our awareness that, in these particular instances, their judgement is in error.

"Courage", "endurance", "faith" and "loyalty" are examples of the "old, old words" (p.146) that Conrad talks about in his preface. These words, the values which they describe and the prescription for the conduct of seamen which they embody, form part of a far larger ideological iceberg whose great problematic and conflictual mass, in the novel as in life, remains submerged. These "old words" appear to describe what they describe *unproblematically* and transparently.

If, however, against the 'advice' of Vernon Tull and Winnie Verloc's narrator, we 'look into the heart of things', we find anything but a linear and unproblematic relationship between words and values/experience. For instance, as far as colonialism is concerned, what constitutes a courageous or praiseworthy act on the interpersonal level may also represent an unwitting/witting complicity in a morally repellent enterprise, cf. Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* or Armstid and Samson in *As I Lay Dying*. To rephrase the opening paragraph of this section, *As I Lay Dying* is, I believe, a deep meditation on the issues which *The Nigger* throws up. Indeed, the Faulkner novel may even offer some resolutions.

Conflicting visions of community, communities in conflict

For the remainder of this thesis, we are going to look at a series of concerns central to both *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*. These include, principally, the 'search' for an adequate or valid socioverbal basis for sustainable communal values and how selfishness and personal bias are often implicated in what passes for 'sympathy' or 'solidarity' between human beings. These considerations are played against the backdrop of the immanent relationship in both books between narrative and value-structure more of which later. There is also the closely related issue of finding a basis for an integrated reading of the texts or comprehensive theory of textual 'knowing'.

What are we to make of the texts' various conflicting voices and what shared values can we propose, as readers, for a discussion and a *common understanding* of them? Further, what is the basis for the relationship between reader and author: in other words, what constitutes the foundation of *their* (our) 'solidarity'? This raises the question of how we respond to the appeals of Conrad and Faulkner and the voices of their characters and narrators, whether we are in accord with or dissent from them. Both these issues relate closely to the major and pervasive correlation in the novels between value- and narrative structure in terms of strategy and technique.

In the last section we looked at the value of the work ethic. The crewmen of the *Narcissus* are seen to go against it, neglecting their proper duties, when they indulge in idle talk, rehearse political grievances or serve and pander to James Wait. This is a view sponsored by the novel's conservative voices, and largely reflects the complementary world-views of Singleton and the officers. As far as these dominant voices are concerned, the crew acts against the interests of the ship when they heed Donkin's words or succumb to Wait's deceit. They indulge their egotism and narrow self-interest at the expense of a greater good, i.e. the ship's. At the same time, it is suggested, they are going against their own best (self-) interests.

Donkin directly opposes the values of both the professional and political order of which he is a part. Though cynical about the motives of others, Donkin takes his own secret views seriously; he does have a personal code (like Huck's pa), however repugnant. He feels justified in his selfishness, seeing it as a way of redressing past *personal* injustices.

The wider ethic implied in his attitude, though one which he ostensibly disavows, is that of Egoism, a conservative 'philosophy' (popular in the late 19th century) which proposes self-interest as the cornerstone of morality, self-

interest being (paradoxically?) in the best interest of all. Donkin is a self-serving hypocrite who avoids the kind of selfless communal activity which is essential to the sailor's craft and beyond. Yet, arguably, the voices who so roundly condemn what they lucidly recognize as his egotism, are also open to the charge that, wittingly or unwittingly, the values they espouse, despite *their* claims to the contrary, are also fundamentally self-serving.

The commercial motives of the ship's owners whose voices we do not hear in the text are primarily those of self-interest. There is a curious parallel here between the motivations of a labour agitator like Donkin and those of the owners of the *Narcissus*. One of the great apologies for Victorian (as well as contemporary) capitalism embodied explicitly or otherwise in the philosophy of Egoism is that to rigorously pursue one's own material interest is in itself to serve the greater good through wealth- and job-creation.

The implied codes surrounding money and commerce, particularly in a capitalist environment, suggests a set of community principles (agreed and/or enforced) which depend on the individual pursuing certain social and economic goals through hard work against a background of conformity/obedience. Under these circumstances, alliance and allegiance become a question, whether knowingly or unknowingly, of "material interests".

We may ask then whether loyalty such as the boatswain's (the 'new' kind of sailor) is given spontaneously, like Singleton's, or bestowed with calculation? There is room only to touch upon this major theme here though it could provide the focus for a wider Bakhtinian discussion, locating the text's 'internal' voices within the wider social and economic context of Victorian society.

For the purposes of this study, I want to look at how a range of issues to do with community implicate *The Nigger's* 'internal' speakers, the novel's narrators and characters. Various speakers in the novel, expound, represent or embody

conflicting visions of community and community values. The presentation and dramatization of this conflict lies at the heart of the novel's/author's own quest for a sound basis for workable values, for human sympathy/solidarity.

Conrad's novel shares this central preoccupation with *As I Lay Dying*. What we may variously term this *argument/quest/debate* to do with values constitutes one major aspect of the novel's dialogism. Its opposing terms are 'carried' by Singleton and the officers on the one hand, Wait and Donkin on the other. The crewmen of course are caught between these contrary positions. There are clear parallels here with *As I Lay Dying* where the Bundrens excite the same conflicts in their community as Donkin and Wait generate amongst their shipmates.

The novels' speakers and actors give voice to and/or enact certain values. They behave and respond according to conflicting principles of community. For example, there is the sense of common action and justice which accompanies the crew's feelings for Wait. Despite their serious misgivings, their responses are governed by pity and sympathy for a suffering fellow crewman. Their feelings are complicated by the question of whether Wait is shamming or not. Then there is the kind of political solidarity proposed by Donkin, based, ostensibly, on a sense of worker solidarity, class grievance, and social and economic injustice.

This finds an expression in Davis' uncompromising, "Stick together, boys" (p.79). Davis' appeal is however sincere and, in a sense, courageous in a way that Donkin's call to collective action is not. Indeed, Donkin does not in reality "Stick together" with his fellow crewmen whether as seaman or as labour activist. He is always looking to exploit the energies of discontents for his own interests rather than for theirs.

As we have seen, the novel's dominant voices seek to condition our responses to Donkin, Wait, the crew and the officers. Yet, the text also grants, indeed solicits,

readings which contradict or at least complicate our reactions to these voices just as the crew's or the poor whites' responses to Wait, Addie *et al* are complicated by conflicting testimony and divided temperament(s). The status of Wait's shamming is always equivocal; for us, as for the crew, "Doubt" 'survives' "Jimmy" (p.96).

Likewise, we see the naked egotism and ambition with which Donkin pursues his goals; yet, this does not stop us necessarily from sympathising with the energies and frustrations which he exploits. On the other hand, we recognize that the officers, Allistoun and Baker, especially, are by no means motivated solely, in the manner of a Marryat hero, by class interest and cruelty, though it may be in the interests of discipline to 'ape' cruelty. Though we know that Allistoun has told Baker to keep the men moving, partly to spare them more suffering, Baker declares, in answer to the complaint that "'The old man wouldn't have it [cutting the masts] much he cares for us'" (p.49): "'Why should he care for you?'" It is important to remember, however, that even individual officers differ subtly in their outlook as we shall see.

In *As I Lay Dying*, a major term in the ethical 'debate' is the Christian one. The idea of 'neighbourliness' and 'charity', as expressed in the parable of the Good Samaritan, is to the fore. This is complemented as well as conditioned by Cash's quietism: endurance and commitment to a secular order which sympathizes with but which ultimately excludes the voices of *ressentiment* as represented by Darl and Addie.

As I Lay Dying also 'proposes' a range of other community values, Kate's class resentment over Cora's cakes or Cora's gender loyalty/Christian charity to Dewey Dell. Cora, almost certainly ignorant of Dewey Dell's true situation, helps her (giving her the cakes to sell), basing her desire to assist on their common gender/experience. She sees in Dewey Dell a fellow sufferer perhaps. This recognition leads Cora to act with particular sympathy (and secrecy) in her dealings with

her. Cora helps her also out of a sense of Christian charity because she is now motherless and in need of maternal care.

It is an instructive paradox of the novel that the Bundrens depend on the charity of a sort of extended family, i.e. the local white community. As far as the Bundrens are concerned, Tull, Cora, the Armstids, the Samsons and others fulfil obligations and perform kindnesses which we now associate either with immediate family, the state or religious bodies rather than the community at large.

We remember that what makes the Good Samaritan's kindness so extraordinary is that it is offered to a man who is part of a tribe that reviles him and regards him as an outsider. Ironically, though a family (a 'community' created by the existence of close blood ties and a shared nurturing), the Bundrens it seems are not necessarily supportive or kind to one another and are forced to depend on the charity of outsiders (people outside the family 'community' though, in another sense, part of the same *wider* community as the Bundrens). It is as if the conduits of sympathy within the family have been 'blocked' or trammelled. Even the most elementary forms of coöperative action can be conflictual, and they depend on Anse's uneasy authority from which Darl, in the end, withdraws his consent.

Sympathy, egotism, desire and deceit

If there is "anxiety" (p.85), as we have seen, in the conservative narrators' assertions and condemnations, there is "anxiety" of another kind in the crew's feelings for Wait: "The latent egoism of tenderness to suffering appeared in the developing anxiety not to see him die". Wait's condition has supplied a comforting and necessary, if erroneous, basis for solidarity, and when he dies "his death, like the death of an old belief, shook the foundations of our society" (p.96).

The crew's sympathies, the narrator claims, are a form of refracted egotism;⁹⁰ Wait's situation (the fear of his

impending death) acts as a catalyst for a kind of *narcissism* on the part of the seamen who appropriately crew a ship called the *Narcissus*. Their sympathy for him is, it is being suggested, an expression of their own fear/dislike of work, initially, and, latterly, their fear of mortality, a mirroring of Wait's own fear of death. His demise not only dissolves the "common [. . .] bond of a sentimental lie" but reveals to the men the extent of their own folly, self-deception and conceit:

In going he took away with himself the gloomy and solemn shadow in which our folly had posed, with humane satisfaction, as a tender arbiter of fate. And now we saw it was no such thing. It was just common foolishness. (p.96)

At the root of *The Nigger's* conservatism lie the claims, implied and explicit, that its 'dominant' voices make for themselves: that they alone represent the basis for *true* solidarity (order, loyalty, work, submergence of individual needs/desires for the common good and so forth). According to these voices, the display both of sympathy for Wait and political solidarity with Donkin (whose own claims also imply a monopoly on truth) are in fact a pernicious mixture of folly and egotism.

To a great extent, this view is borne out by the novel as a whole on what we might call the primary or dominant level of meaning. For example, Singleton, by refusing to dispense sympathy and to join with the crew in their lamentations and ostensible feelings for Wait and Donkin, is paradoxically enacting 'true' solidarity, 'authentic' community. The contention, to rephrase Marlow's observation in *Chance*, that a moral action is generally a selfless one⁹¹ is also borne out by *The Nigger*. The view that sympathy or at least a certain kind of sympathy is in fact selfish and therefore wrong-headed, if not downright immoral, is a consistent aspect of the novel's contradictory and complex value-system.

What seems callous or unfeeling in Singleton's behaviour can be seen, rather, as pious, unselfish and full of wisdom. Indeed, the sentimentalism of Cora or Belfast is blinding - love can, of course, be destructive and deceiving. In his refusal to be hoodwinked by Wait, Singleton is showing, in a sense, more real compassion (i.e. untainted by egotism) than Belfast does. His refusal to 'sympathize' with the dying Wait puts his sham in what Singleton (as the conservative narrators) sees as its proper place, as, ultimately, an attempt at gross deception and self-deception born out of fear.

If Wait could have learned to rely on himself rather than others, he would have found the thought of his impending death less fearful and debilitating. Singleton in his wisdom knows that all must die alone and that the seamen's pity for their moribund shipmate is in reality a refraction of the fear of their own deaths (though he certainly does not/could not verbalize it with any degree of sophistication) and a denial or refusal to acknowledge unpalatable truths.

This is why Allistoun's act of pity towards Wait in pretending to collaborate with his (Jimmy's) own sham in order to spare his feelings is so injudicious and misconceived. Indeed, he is 'punished' for it in that it directly gives rise to the attempted revolt. The mutiny comes as a direct result of the crew's deliberate misunderstanding of an act of apparent unkindness which is in fact an act of compassion, "let him die in peace" (p.78).

Though the crewmen have spent the first part of the voyage wracked with doubt (and guilt at doubting) about the truth of Wait's illness, they now, perversely, refuse to admit his true state of health and his unfitness for work precisely at the point when it becomes clear *beyond doubt* that he *is* ill. This 'folly' is complemented by Allistoun's misplaced compassion which causes him to 'spare' Wait by indulging or engaging his pretence, now one of being well not ill.

It is an act which Allistoun, almost immediately, recognizes as mistaken:

"Did you think I had gone wrong there, Mr. Baker?
[. . .] He stuck the belaying-pin in his pocket,
seemed ashamed of himself. (p.78)

Singleton in refusing absolutely to pander to Wait behaves with sagacity and perhaps performs an act of true kindness by telling him the truth by forcing him to accept the reality that he must face his death and face it alone.

The crewmen also collaborate as we have said with Wait's shamming of ill and good health. They do so not only from compassion however. At first, they truly doubt whether he is unwell; now they know he is dying. The "developing anxiety not to see him die" (p.85) which partly explains their collaboration is accompanied by an almost cruel satisfaction in the reality of Wait's situation:

Falsehood triumphed [. . .] We set ourselves to bolster it up, from compassion, from recklessness from a sense of fun. Jimmy's steadfastness to his untruthful attitude in the face of the inevitable truth had the proportions of a colossal enigma - of a manifestation grand and incomprehensible that at times inspired a wondering awe; and there was also, to many, something exquisitely droll in fooling him thus to the top of his bent. (p.85)

There is a remarkable contradiction here between "compassion" and "something exquisitely droll". Wait's sham is a desperate attempt at self-deception; he wants to believe and wants others to believe that he will live. For the crewmen, the deceit is transparent; they in turn take pleasure in "fooling him to the top of his bent". Here, the crewman-narrator makes it clear that even at the time of witnessing, the seamen (or most of them) are themselves "fooling" (deceiving) Wait the shammer.

The extreme ambivalence of the crew's attitude is captured in the disparity between the "colossal enigma [. . .] a manifestation grand and incomprehensible" and 'exquisite drollery', born of "recklessness" and "a sense of fun" which seem to belong to different vocabularies (p.85). It is not only Wait that maintains an "untruthful attitude in the face of an inevitable truth". The crewmen also set themselves against "the inevitable truth" by allowing "Falsehood" to "triumph". The crew's attitude also embodies something of "enigma" as well as "something exquisitely droll" .

The sophisticated emotions and responses, both of compassion and detachment tinged by cruelty, that are described here seem in marked contrast to the simplistic and excessive sentimentality of the feelings that we encounter elsewhere in the novel. Belfast's, for instance, come from a genuine sense of love just as Allistoun's act of compassion stems from a genuine sense of pity. When Belfast steals for Jimmy, he endangers himself. His feelings for Wait are not merely a question of refracted self-love; there is something heroic if foolish in his commitment and self-sacrifice. Something of this is contained in the feelings of the other seamen, for example, when they work, though tormented by the suspicion that he is faking illness, to free Jimmy from his cabin.

Admittedly, Belfast is unhinged by Jimmy's death. Yet, his sympathies remain those of an extremely simple man. Though he is not an idiot like Stevie in *The Secret Agent*, there is a sense in which his sentimental attachment to Wait resembles Stevie's hysteria at the cabbie's brutal treatment of his horses. Mr Verloc works on Stevie's simplicity and his capacity for compassion, eventually bringing him to commit an act of senseless violence. There are parallels between Stevie's overwhelming sympathy for suffering and Belfast's feelings for Wait; his exaggerated concern for the fate of Jimmy's corpse, for example, as expressed in the absurd plea,

"'Don't you drag the canvas too taut over his poor face, Sails'" (p.97).

Belfast's comprehension, like Stevie's, is severely limited. Stevie does not understand why the horses are/must be whipped. Likewise, Belfast does not understand what has happened to his Jimmy and why. He lacks the capacity to *interpret* events. His "I pulled him out" (p.98) only begins to explain the extent of his overwhelming and irremediable sense of loss. Yet, Belfast's grief, his concern for Jimmy's dead body, is a particular expression of a universal and "respectable" (p.96) human emotion. Indeed, it is the same emotion which in part motivates the Bundrens to make the journey to Jefferson.

Clearly, despite this, Belfast does not evade the accusation of egotism. His love for Jimmy is a self-indulgence and a self-deception. It is egotistical insofar as detachment and truth are sacrificed to love. In contrast, though Cash loves Darl, it does not blind him to the need to lock him up. There are parallels between what Cora feels for Darl and Belfast's feelings for Wait. They are both laudable and self-absorbed/to be condemned, commendable whilst, at the same time, profoundly in error.

Despite some degree of self-knowledge, Cora's sympathies/loyalties/predilections are misled and, in part, misplaced. Her judgement of Darl is coloured by love just as her view of Addie is more than tinged with envy and fear, feelings which she either denies or of which she appears simply unaware. Her feelings blind her to what is dangerous, insane or disreputable in Darl, an error of judgement which parallels but does not quite match the feelings of Belfast for Wait.

Belfast, despite his love for Jimmy, partly hates him (at least, at the beginning) and is capable, under duress, of referring to him as a "Cursed nigger" (p.40). Cora, in contrast, has little or no discernible antagonism for Darl though, according to Tull, she does see him as "the queer

one" (p.152). In the pair of adjacent monologues belonging, respectively, to Cora and Dewey Dell (pp.21-28), the words that Dewey Dell speaks to her brother (contained in speech marks in her section) are not, as we have seen, reported by Cora though ostensibly each of the monologues deals with the same scene and verbal exchange.

The fact that the negative information which we receive from Dewey Dell about Darl's behaviour and what he says goes unreported by Cora, implies either a suppression or a distortion on her part. It may also be that, for some reason, she simply does not hear. Perhaps Dewey Dell is guilty of malicious fabrication or malevolent fantasising, although it seems from what we learn in the rest of the book that Cora *is*, to a large degree, deaf and blind to the faults of Darl Bundren or, at least, unwilling to acknowledge them.

On the other hand, she sponsors a positive view of Darl which is not entirely invalidated by what we learn elsewhere. Our reading of these monologues depends on a tacit agreement or collusion between author and reader where the reader recognizes that the various suppressions and omissions as well as the utterances of the speakers are *put* there by the author. Belfast's feelings for Wait are coloured, as Cora's for Darl, by love: in his case also by hate. The crew's feelings for Donkin arise from a mixture of contempt, self-love and gullibility; their feelings for Wait stem from self-love in the sense of self-preservation and from their own fear of death as well as a sense of seamanly solidarity.

Along with love and self-love, inexorably, comes illusion or self-deceit. When Jimmy dies, the exposure of their "sentimental lie" (p.96) shakes "the foundations of [their] society" and their sense of solidarity utterly disappears. In fact:

like a community of banded criminals disintegrated by a touch of grace, we were profoundly scandalised with each other. Men spoke unkindly

to their best chums. Others refused to speak at all. (p.96)

The use of the word "community" here is of course on one level ironic. Its juxtaposition with "banded criminals" strongly suggests that, as far as the crewman-narrator is concerned, the basis of the crew's solidarity with respect to Jimmy, its consensus, has been in grave error. There is a sharp narratorial admonition also in the implied accusation of criminality. This motif of the crew as criminals comes early on in the novel. In response to the "subtle and dismal influence" (p.21) which emanates from Wait, we are told, the seamen "resembled criminals conscious of misdeeds more than honest men distracted by doubt". We are constantly being asked to make a choice between these two alternatives.

The use of "we" in the above passage (p.96) reinforces the sense of a common guilt/responsibility which, of course, the men attempt to evade by pinning the blame on each other and on Jimmy:

All that day we mooned at our work with suspicious looks and a disabused air. In our hearts we thought that in the matter of his departure Jimmy had acted in a perverse and unfriendly manner. He didn't back us up as a shipmate should. In going he took away with himself the gloomy and solemn shadow in which our folly had posed, with humane satisfaction, as a tender arbiter of fate.
(p.96)

Despite the strong claims of the crewman-narrator, we have misunderstood the novel if we fail to appreciate that *all* of the various prescriptions for true/proper values which are offered rely to some degree on precisely collective self-deception or selective, collective forms of moral 'blindness'. Elision or self-deceit of this kind is, if not foundational, at least practically necessary in most/all forms of solidarity.

This self-deception finds a contrast/comparison in what we might call Marlow's "sentimental lie" (p.96) in *Heart of Darkness*. He lies to the Intended in order to leave her illusion of Kurtz undisturbed. He wittingly deceives to 'protect' Kurtz's betrothed, and in order to maintain what he regards as a necessary collective illusion, just as the crew does, albeit unwittingly.

In *As I Lay Dying*, Darl speaks of a moment in the history of the Bundren family when unity is destroyed by acts of cowardice and deceit. Jewel works, in secrecy, to buy his horse and in so doing, voluntarily, goes outside his family 'community', i.e. he betrays their trust. His actions have the effect of drawing attention to the family's moral inadequacies; as Darl confesses:

It was as though so long as the deceit ran along quiet and monotonous, all of us let ourselves be deceived abetting it unawares or maybe through cowardice and naturally preferring any kind of treachery because it has a bland outside. (p.134)

Darl is clear about the extent to which there is a collective guilt/responsibility for Jewel's actions and the extent to which a lack of moral/ethical courage plays a role, "a kind of telepathic agreement of admitted fear" (p.134). As with the crew, if not with Marlow, this collective decision ("unawares" or "admitted") to indulge in and propagate a collective deceit acts as a way of screening unbearable truths about the values that, at once, disunite and hold the family together.

Darl does not however explicitly acknowledge the part played by love in the equation. Addie secretly abets her son and Cash is well aware of Jewel's activities defending them and him to his father, "'I don't reckon that horse cost anybody anything except Jewel'" (p.135). Dewey Dell, for her part, does his "milking" (p.134). The family aid and indulge Jewel (express a kind of solidarity with him) through acts of

deceit or selective acts of 'blindness' (turning a 'blind eye') in order to enable him to evade his father's greed and domination by establishing his own economic dependence.

So Anse is 'tricked' (as we shall see, 'tricking', subterfuge, is a crucial aspect of Anse's and Addie's relationship). When he finds out about the horse, Anse deeply resents Jewel's having, as he puts it, "'Taken the work from your flesh and blood and bought a horse with it'" (p.136) to which Jewel replies, "'He won't never eat a mouthful of yours'".

Jewel's desire for a horse puts burdens of various kinds on other members of his family. They have to cover for his chores, for example, much as the crewmen have to cover for Wait and Donkin. There are parallels between Wait and Jewel. Addie tries to defend him by claiming that he is sick, "'I want him to stay in today'" (p.130), a claim that Jewel at least initially contradicts, "'I'm all right'". We note that Wait says almost exactly the same thing to Podmore and to Allistoun (p.73). Clearly, Jimmy is not above resisting blandishments for effect.

The Bundrens, apart from Anse, collaborate in Jewel's deception out of a sense of injustice or out of a need to support a form of resistance to Anse's rule, a 'mutiny' of sorts. Ultimately, as Darl bears witness, this leads to a breakdown of family unity. Yet, as well as disrupting and deceiving by going outside the family, Jewel has come into economic relation with the wider community, working on "that forty acres of new ground Quick laid out last spring" (p.135). By coming into ownership, as it were, of his own labour and neglecting his 'duty' to his family, he is freed from a series of constrictive obligations. He achieves this by refusing to comply with the Christian imperative to obey the will of one's father (Father).

Often, in both novels when an alliance between characters goes against the opinions of authoritative 'others' (Anse, Tull, Allistoun), *sympathy*, however egotistical, is forced

into 'hiding'. Belfast's feelings for his "Jimmy" lead him to acts of theft and deceit. Cora secretly helps Dewey Dell by giving her cakes to sell; perhaps she *is* aware that she will use the money to get an abortion.

If she does know, it is knowledge which she refuses to share with her would-be confidante, Kate. It may be that at the point where they discuss the cakes (Cora's second monologue), she does not yet know that she will give them to Dewey Dell to sell, given that the town lady has refused to buy them. There is a telling contrast here between Cora's refusal to share/express Kate's anger at the behaviour of the town lady and the role the cakes subsequently play in Cora's and Dewey Dell's 'secret' arrangement.

These matters relate profoundly to issues of conformity and the conflict between public imperatives and private needs/desires. A certain amount of self-control/denial/suppression is necessary to conform to any collective order. The need for and the enforcement of such conformity, however, often leads to individuals making informal, 'hidden' connections, *outside the system*, which short-circuit the institutional and communal imperatives (absurdities?) to which they are, publicly, subject.

Clearly, this kind of covert activity can subvert a given collective order and cause it to fall into disrepute. Subversion can also take 'public' forms, the mutiny being an example. On the other hand, the collective order can survive despite these disintegrating forces when it is seen, by the majority as, somehow, *for the best* (in the interests of the many) or, rather, that the alternative is seen as being *for the worst*.

As we shall see, it is part of the 'ritual' of the survival of a dominant order that disruptive elements be eliminated and that this elimination (purification, decontamination) is not only done but seen to be done.

Communities in disintegration: the 'locus of the lie'

It is precisely breakdown or disintegration that is implicated in Wait's death and in Jewel's working outside the family. As we have seen, within the conservative narration's frame of reference, the crewmen swallow and then collaborate with the "unmanly lie" (p.45) despite the "disgust" engendered by "Our vague and imperfect morality".

At Wait's death, the seamen snap out of their 'enchantment'. The crewman-narrator tells us in the first-person plural that "Doubt survived Jimmy" (p.96) and that the seamen felt "like a community of banded criminals disintegrated by a touch of grace" and that "we were profoundly scandalized with each other" (p.96). The "we", as we have said, irresistibly implicates the whole crew in the feelings and sensations of the crewman-narrator at the time of witness whilst not 'disrupting' the sense of guilt, regret and detached judgement which he seems to be feeling at the time of narration.

The word "community" resonates also. It is, on the face of things, a curious word to apply to a gang of brigands when 'mob' would do better. The phrase, "community of banded criminals", as we have said, is problematic in its semantic 'inconsistency' and expresses perfectly, albeit paradoxically, the conflicts and difficulties at the centre of the quest for communal values. We ask, in what way can the sailors be said to be criminals, which question is soon followed by, in what way does their criminality define a "community"?

What we are witnessing here is the disintegration, in miniature, of a community, i.e. the demise of shared "belief" (p.96). Of course, their faith in Wait, as the narrator/Conrad wittily and ironically puts it, is "disintegrated by a touch of grace". When they lose their "Jimmy", the very thing which *appears* to unite them, the seamen lose the "strong, effective and respectable bond of a

sentimental lie". The force of "lie" here is tempered by the three adjectives, particularly "respectable", which testify to both the efficacy and power (necessity?) of such lies.

It may be, as the novel's conservative voices continually assert, that the crew is fundamentally, perhaps *criminally* (mutiny was a hanging offence) mistaken in their allegiances; the term "respectable" does have ironic overtones, here. Yet, the reader who does not necessarily share all the values and assumptions of the crewman-narrator reads with a sense of "pity" as well as a sense of "scorn".⁹²

Though we see the seamen's shortcomings and self-deceptions, their suppressions and denials, we also see the flaws and mendacities of the 'truths' which the book's conservative voices sponsor. The telling of "sentimental lie[s]" is not an activity restricted to the crew of the *Narcissus*, officers or subordinates. The conservative narrators, we could argue, tell both the reader and themselves plenty throughout the novel.

The fact is that "A common bond" has disappeared, however that bond is viewed. Though dominant voices in the text, including the crewman-narrator's, support the view that the basis of this "bond" is "lie[s]" and "Falsehood" (p.85), the strength of the novel's dialogism, leads us to compare as well as to contrast the various models for "solidarity" that we are being offered.

As long as the seamen act as if they all feel the same things about Jimmy and that they, however conflictually, commit themselves to common words and deeds, then the "bond", however false its basis, is indeed "effective" and "respectable". Conrad talks in the novel's preface of

that solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity - the dead to the living, and the living to the unborn. (p.146)

It is not that "solidarity" consists, solely, of either "dreams", "joy", "sorrow" and so on. It is rather that whatever defines "solidarity" is created out of a blend of all of them. That is why Conrad elsewhere observes that there is no argument too absurd not to be taken seriously.⁹³ The test of values must lie, at least in part, in their "effective[ness]" as well as their 'respectability', whatever that may be.

In *The Nigger*, the claim that the officers or rather the order they represent, offers better, 'truer' values upon which to build a community would be more difficult to substantiate were it not for the insistent presentation of Donkin and Wait as liars. They are, it would seem, the *locus of the lie*; that is, the source of discord, falsehood, doubt and semantic instability/indeterminacy in *The Nigger*. Addie Bundren, as we shall see, serves a similar function in *As I Lay Dying* though it is Jewel who is described by Whitfield, the arch-liar (the Tempter, the Serpent) as a "living lie" (p.177). Surely, he is more the *offspring* of lies/liars (Whitfield's and Addie's).

This is not to say that any one character in either novel (even Donkin or Wait) is the sole deceiver or embodier of untruth; the word 'locus' roughly parallels the seismological term 'epicentre', the point from which shockwaves of doubt emanate. All the novels' major speakers are certainly if problematically guilty of, albeit unwitting, deceit or self-deceit. It is rather that a range of issues to do with truth cluster themselves particularly tightly around certain figures, principally Donkin/Wait and Addie/Whitfield.

It is true however that in Faulkner's novel, unlike Conrad's, there is no voice really that seeks to present itself as unproblematically authoritative (*pace* the apparent assurance of Cora's utterances) though many claim to represent some aspect of the truth. In *The Nigger*, there are many speakers who unproblematically claim authority, both in terms of the literary and cultural conventions which govern

their expression and our reading, as well as our *initial* sense of their authoritativeness within the novel's narrative structure. In *As I Lay Dying*, by contrast, there is no ostensible 'locus of truth' as there is in *The Nigger*. The deranged (authorial if not authoritative) voice of Darl Bundren is really all that remains of the would-be authoritative omniscient narrator-observer.

In *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger*, we see communities in disintegration, a *crisis* of values as well as of narrative authority. This breakdown can be seen as a metaphor for a range of historical/mythical processes to do with religion, politics and morality: political revolt, the Fall, the onset of democracy and humanism, the progressive and reforming effects of liberalism and related notions of individual liberty on life in the Merchant Marine. What is common to the voices that clamour against this 'breakdown' or *change* (as the etymology of the word 'crisis' implies) is that the time of true community and togetherness in both novels pre-dates both the time of witnessing as well as the time of narration, i.e. the past as well as the present.

This mythical moment, which is posited by politicians as well as prophets, is not a historical moment (America, before the white man, or the colonial glories of an imperial past). It is a moment outside chronology (a state [of grace] rather than a period of or point in time), one of harmony characterized by the absence of socioeconomic conflict and dissension. In a philosophical sense, this mythical moment 'precedes' discussion and dialogue; it is, in essence, defined as before/other than language and speech.

However, to complicate matters, the novels do locate this time of unity and solidarity, historically (within the context of a process of change), though it remains chronologically imprecise; the evocation of the great days of the Merchant Marine plays an iconic role rather than analytic structural one. Notwithstanding, the main characteristic of these idealized or 'better' times is that they are 'before'

or 'past' or 'other', not 'now'. Though the historicity of the idealized past is proposed, its nature is, precisely, ahistorical; a sense of a past 'Golden Age' becomes a metaphor for a collective 'state of mind' with metaphysical and Edenic overtones.

For the Bundrens, the time of family unity is in the past and the time of disunity in the present, just as the death of Damuddy brings to a close the time of Compson 'happiness'. The moment of disintegration (or one of them) occurs, as we have already observed, when Jewel 'breaks ranks' by secretly working nights in order to buy a horse. Darl tells us, "all of us let ourselves be deceived" and that "we let something happen to him" (p.134).

The first person is used here to create a sense of a collective consciousness, the family as point of view. It also explicitly posits the existence of some kind of collective duty or responsibility. In positing the breakdown of unity, Darl is implicitly suggesting at least the possibility of the existence of harmony even if we refuse to accept the existence of such a period in the family history of the Bundrens. Of course, what they 'let happen' was to allow Jewel to abandon his collective responsibilities, to embark on a secret life outside the family. In so doing, Jewel reaches for self-hood and economic independence. That is his 'heresy' and one which, to its detriment, the collective allows him.

In the light particularly of Addie's testimony, we can be forgiven for remaining cautious about the status of this 'time' before family disunity. These doubts apply also to Conrad's idealized maritime past: as a critic has observed, it is the common characteristic (perhaps, the defining requirement) of any 'Golden Age' that it exists either in the past or, we may add, in an indefinitely deferred future, never in the present. What is clear is that the worlds that actually end up being portrayed in the novels have little of

the Golden Age about them; they are 'fallen', essentially post-Lapsarian.

The quest for solidarity

The notion of 'duty' is as central to the treatment and exploration of 'solidarity' in *As I Lay Dying* as it is in *The Nigger*, though, as we have said, the matter of 'work' is less to the fore. *As I Lay Dying* is concerned with the social and ethical (my main concern, here) as well as religious dimensions of 'duty'. It is worth remembering that, on the whole, the community, despite its repugnance for, and doubt and suspicion of Anse, recognizes the propriety of the journey to Jefferson.

In a sense, the Bundrens' true motivations are immaterial. Whether Anse undertakes the journey out of a sense of duty or obligation, or out of selfish motives is perhaps less important than the fact that the journey, ostensibly in honour of the wishes of the dead, is *seen* to be undertaken. Lula's, Rachel's and Cora's sense of "outrage" (p.117) does not stop them, determinedly, aiding and abetting Anse and his family. This is despite or perhaps because of the fact that Anse publicly and repeatedly evokes ethical obligation, the honouring of his wife's last wish in order to justify the journey, though his utterances rarely transcend cliché.

Conrad's reflections on solidarity in *The Nigger's* preface are pivotal to this discussion and, I think, to the terms of what might be called the 'solidarity debate' in both novels. This concern with solidarity and workable communal values is a major shared preoccupation of both the novels and, clearly, of the authors themselves (as historical personalities and as writers). The attempt in *The Nigger* and in *As I Lay Dying*, as we shall see, is to explore issues of community by way of the relationships between the novels' characters.

Significantly, this exploration impinges on the relationship between reader and author. What Conrad evokes in

the following passage is as much an observation on how his art 'addresses' both his 'subject[s]' and his reader, as well as expressing a general truth about the human condition. The principles which govern the relations of human beings, those who sail in the *Narcissus* as well as those who read its narrative, are/should be born of

the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity - the dead to the living and the living to the unborn. (pp.145-146)

Conrad's grand phrases posit a noble ideal of human solidarity in the preface, and, momentarily, obscures the fact that 'solidarity' resolves itself, in life, into a series of mundane compromises, failures, partial successes: a series of *imperfect* arrangements, in other words. Few dispute the need for solidarity in human affairs. Indeed, according to Conrad, the "conviction", at least, if not the reality "of solidarity", is a given thing. However, in practical terms, it poses a range of problems. If solidarity depends on "conviction" then it must rest, to some degree, on consensus.

The difficulty of achieving agreement between individuals, is linked, not only to differences in temperament or in social and economic identity and the physical and biological isolation of the individual, but also, as we shall see, to the radical indeterminacy of words, an indeterminacy reflected in narrative techniques of both *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*. The 'solidarity debate' in *As I Lay Dying* is shaped by the reveries on language and values and the relation between them which especially characterizes the bitter meditations of Addie Bundren on love, marriage, sex, and rearing and bearing children. Her reflections will be discussed in due course.

In *The Nigger*, there is an ethical equation sponsored by strong voices that private wish must be subjugated to public good. In practice, this involves a subjection of the individual to the collective will. This piece of morality is expressed by Cash in the closing pages of *As I Lay Dying*:

I don't reckon nothing excuses setting fire to a man's barn and endangering his stock and destroying his property. That's how I reckon a man is crazy. That's how he cant see eye to eye with other folks. And I reckon they ain't nothin else to do with him but what the most folks says is right. (pp.233-234)

This subjugation of the individual to the community resolves itself into one of the great ideological imperatives of *The Nigger*, i.e. the sponsoring of values to do with uniformity, unanimity and collective order. The novel explicitly and implicitly creates the sense of the existence of an unspoken, non-verbal set of unifying principles or 'spiritual' imperatives. The ending of *As I Lay Dying* implies a more democratic outlook of individual liberties within a framework of shared codes and values.

Ultimately, I think, *The Nigger* recognizes that the basis of workable community values cannot simply be an extrapolation of the class predilections/interests of certain groups of powerful individuals whatever they may be. Yet, though different voices in the text sponsor conflicting models of community and communal values, none of them proposes a modern democratic idea of community/society based on consensus and a system founded on rights and on individual liberties within a context of collective responsibilities/obligations.

The values that Cash expresses in the passage quoted above, however, are in a sense democratic in that they posit the authority of the majority, "what the most folks say is right", and suggest the notion of a community of individuals each with equal rights and whose relationships are based on

the idea of reciprocity, seeing "eye to eye with other folks". The importance of reciprocity and its vital role in 'charitable' communal activity ('neighbourliness') is explicitly acknowledged even by Cora who is a Christian.

Referring to her own 'altruism' towards Addie, after telling of the good she has done, she observes, "Not that I deserve credit for it: I will expect the same myself" (p.22). Though coercion may ultimately provide the basis of any community arrangement, in *As I Lay Dying*, it is used on Darl only as an expression of the will of the majority. This is why Cash approves, albeit with regret, of his incarceration.

In *The Nigger*, the novel's conservative voices seem divided and confused over whether collectivity and discipline have to be enforced or whether the 'right' kind of seaman, *the 'old' kind of seaman*, can be relied upon, *voluntarily*, to make the right decisions and behave in the right way. In the end of course, one of the paradoxes of *The Nigger* is that unanimity, and the process of self-willed, cogitative decision-making which it implies, must be, at least partly, enforced. On one level, the question of whether conformity is voluntary or otherwise is immaterial as long as unanimity of action/behaviour is maintained.

Even in a society in which an individual is permitted to exercise some degree of choice, the choices s/he makes, are not, in fact, free but contingent, involving consequences and repercussions. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? Certain 'constraints' will always inhibit or condition personal choice. Yet, constraint and coercion are not the same. Not only is coercion ultimately ineffective but, for the humanist at least, it is unacceptable. We can read *As I Lay Dying* in part as a 'commentary' on the coercion/consensus and rights/obligations dichotomy posed by *The Nigger*.

The Nigger is caught between consensus and choice on one hand, and coercion on the other. It is true that Donkin *chooses* not to work and to agitate, and Wait, possibly, to sham illness. It is also true that, in a conventional sense,

the crewmen choose to tend Wait and listen to Donkin's talk. Likewise, in *As I Lay Dying*, the community of poor whites choose to help Anse. We have to remember, however, that concepts like freedom and choice, in their social sense, are relative.

Claims are made throughout both books that, far from being free, the various decisions/responses of the crew and the poor whites are forced or more specifically comes as the result of non-physical pressure. This pressure does not just come from above; remember, that Wait and Anse exercise a mysterious influence over those around them. It is worth remembering that the officers are not really sensitive to the nature of Wait's and Donkin's influence on the crew though they do sense that 'something is up'. We may conclude that the poor whites and the seamen are involuntarily 'conjured'. This it seems does not exonerate them. In this sense, each man is responsible for his own work and behaviour and for its consequences.

There is little to support a social explanation of the power of Anse, Wait and Donkin over those around them. It is interesting to note that whereas Armstid, Samson *et al* are, in view of the novel's closure, working with the wider community in helping Anse, the crewmen are working against the community, at least, in the terms of the dominant narrators, when they succumb to Jimmy's mysterious influence (for a useful discussion of these matters see Fogel's *Coercion to Speak*).

In the end, language is the building block, if not the tool, of a workable basis for solidarity (a system of more or less agreed values to guide thought and action), though in a further paradox, it can be both a threat to the stability and tenability of any such system as well as the agent of its survival since it is also the key to adaptation and change. Words like 'freedom', 'justice' and 'sacrifice' can after all be made to cut many ways.

Addie and Anse

A crucial aspect of *As I Lay Dying* is the battle of wills between Anse and Addie Bundren. This battle centres around the promise that Addie has extracted from Anse to transport her remains to Jefferson to be buried with her kin. As well as being a dark and, at the same time, absurdly comic power struggle between man and wife, it is also a struggle, on Addie's part, for "revenge" (p.173): for Addie, it also provokes a profound meditation on the nature of language, its relation to human experience and values and the words/actions dichotomy.

Anse's behaviour and values act as a counter-term to this meditation in a kind of implied dialogue/debate. A distinctive feature of *As I Lay Dying* is the troping of this 'debate' through a succession of geometric and spatial images and metaphors. In due course, we will look at this geometric troping and examine, in detail, the section of narrative attributed to Addie Bundren and the nature of the conflict with her husband.

Let's start by looking at a passage from Conrad's short story 'An Outpost of Progress' which bears a direct relation to the issues to do with language raised in *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger*. The omniscient narrator reflects on a paradoxical 'unknowing hypocrisy' on the part of Carlier and Kayerts, using "one another by words" (p.172), as Addie puts it:

'Slavery is an awful thing,' stammered out Kayerts in an unsteady voice.

'Frightful - the sufferings,' grunted Carlier, with conviction.

They believed their words. Everybody shows a respectful deference to certain sounds that he and his fellows can make. But about feelings people really know nothing. We talk with indignation and enthusiasm; we talk about oppression, cruelty, crime devotion, self-sacrifice, virtue, and we know nothing real beyond words. Nobody knows what suffering and

sacrifice mean - except, perhaps, the victims of the mysterious purpose of these illusions.⁹⁴

The narrator here is making an observation, in the gnostic present or infinite mood, on the evils of colonialism. The passage also looks forward to the eventual deterioration of the relationship between the tale's protagonists and the breakdown of the consensus based on language (or "illusions") which has hitherto sustained it and the enterprise in which they are both engaged (i.e. manning an ivory trading post). Further, it also contains a profound indictment of language and its unstable relationship to values and human conduct.

The passage has a real sting in its tail. The "perhaps" is almost coquettish in its irony, proposing with *polite* ferocity as a possibility what it is, in fact, asserting, unequivocally, as fact, i.e. that the "victims" who are not "We" do, in fact, "know" "what suffering and sacrifice mean". The word "illusions" refers to "words", in this case, specifically, "suffering and sacrifice" (great Christian words) which are, in fact, "nothing real". It is what lies "beyond words" that is real.

Addie's section, I believe, possesses marked similarities in tone and substance to the perspective on language and the 'reality' of experience offered in this short sequence. In a letter to Cunninghame Graham (15th June 1898), Conrad observes that

There are none converted to ideas of honor, justice, compassion, liberty. There are only those who without knowing, understanding or feeling, exist on words, repeat them, shout them - without believing in anything but gain, personal advantage, satisfied vanity. And words vanish and nothing remains.

Generally, Addie's reveries are steeped in Conrad. In the following passage, she describes her response to the birth of

Cash, stating that she was aware ("I knew") at the time of this slippage between language and reality:

That was when I learned that words are no good; that words don't 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. I knew that fear was invented by someone that had never had the fear; pride, who never had the pride. (pp.171-172)

These "ones that had the children" correspond to the "victims" in the passage from 'An Outpost of Progress'. The "someone" who invents the word is a 'personification' of the ideologemic nature of words and the process of ideologizing which accompanies all social expression. By implication, the "ones", the "victims" do not, cannot care either for the "sounds" or for the ideology. As far as her marriage is concerned, the great ideologizer, for Addie, is Anse:

He had a word, too. Love he called it. [. . .]
I knew that that word was like the others: just a shape to fill a lack: that when the right time came, you wouldn't need a word for that any more than for pride and fear. (p.172)

Again, Addie claims knowledge, "I knew". Addie is simple yet, within her own terms, aware. In the face of her own experience is it any wonder that "the high dead words [. . .] lose even the significance of their dead sound" (p.175):

then I realized that I had been tricked by words older than Anse or love, and that the same word had tricked Anse too, and that revenge would be that he would never know I was taking my revenge. (pp.172-173)

The whole matter of Addie's "revenge" is essential to an appreciation of the novel's strategies. It is a curious

revenge whose object (Anse) is unaware of its existence. Further, it is a paradox that it consists only (and precisely) of this. What is the word that has tricked Anse? 'Word' here is perhaps being used, generically, to describe words of value or obligation.

We may speculate that the 'word' is 'duty', perhaps, 'love' or, ironically, Anse's own 'word', his "promised [. . .] word" (p.19) to bury Addie with her kin in Jefferson. Anse has been 'tricked' by Addie with what she sees as the sham of social and moral obligation just as she when young was tricked by the words 'love', 'motherhood' and 'duty'. Addie has freed herself from the moral consensus of her community. In so doing, she finds liberty, in contrast to Joe Christmas who being free (without ties or family) embarks on a quest for 'belonging' that culminates in bondage and death.

One of the most important 'contentions' contained in Addie's meditation on language is the suggestion that language itself (the assignation of grand words to mundane, perhaps painful realities) is a form of illegitimate idealization, cf. Synge's *Playboy* where another 'simple' female speaker, Pegeen, asserts, "there's a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed".⁹⁵

What could be described as the revolutionary element in Addie's discourse is her uncompromising abandonment (demystification) of the idealization of both hardship and the quality of endurance (refusal to idealize does not imply, necessarily, abandonment of the value itself) as well as a rejection of the interpretation of suffering as wholesome chastisement and token of reward or possible reward, a view sponsored by the Anse/Cora axis.

The 'trick' which Addie plays on her husband works for shared amusement on the part of reader and author as Anse for once in his life is made to struggle in order to match word and deed. Yet, in the end, on one level he wins both the struggle and our respect in ways Addie in her 'inhuman', paradoxical revenge does not foresee.

The language 'debate'

One of the most distinctive *leitmotifs* of the novel is the troping, in terms of a set of images and recurrent spatial metaphors, of the novel's complex value system. This troping has as its dramatic context the seriocomic struggle or implied dialogue/debate between Anse and Addie which has to do with Addie's "revenge" (p.173) for having been "tricked" (p.172) by her husband. It is also a diagrammatic representation of the slippage between words and actions, 'saying' and 'doing' encapsulated in Addie's meditations on the unreliability of language and the nature of the human condition. Addie's reflections address the issue of what constitutes proper values/conduct and the whole question of their problematic relationship to language. These concerns open out into the wider theme of communal/community values. This is the context of our analysis of the troping of what may be called the language 'debate'.

The terms of this 'imaging' or 'troping' are set out in the following passage (which we will look at in more detail presently) from Addie's monologue:

And so when Cora Tull would tell me I was not a true mother, I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart, for the same person to straddle from one to the other; [. . .]
(pp.173-174)

Words or 'saying' are 'represented' by the vertical ("up in a thin line") and "doing", the horizontal ("along the earth"). The slippage or divergence between 'words/abstractions' and 'deeds/reality' which Addie levels at humanity is captured in this image of a vertical and horizontal line ('x' and 'y' axes) which start from the same point but can never meet. Before we analyze this geometrical troping and the form it

takes in Anse's opening monologue, however, let us look at some aspects of his character and relationship to language which is essentially comic/ironic.

Anse is capable of the tritest sentiments, hackneyed verbal formulations, deceptions and self-deceptions. Anse's pathos lies in the fact that, to a degree, he believes his own lies; he is as Addie recognizes "tricked" by language. Even so, he is capable of *genuine* deception, i.e. being *knowingly* deceptive. He is at once cynical and childlike. He is lazy and self-serving, unwilling to undergo hardship for others, even his family.

He prefers words to actions which involve work, activity and the expenditure of energy. Like Donkin, Anse prefers talking to doing. His seriocomic reveries on roads and movement reinforces our sense of these qualities. Yet, it may be that, for all his short-comings, Anse speaks for his society's needs, impulses and *mores* in a way that Addie does not. In the end, he does undertake the journey, he does *act*.

The passage below opens Anse's first section (the novel's ninth). Anse is anxious to begin the journey to Jefferson for private reasons (a desire not to neglect his farm, to find a new wife and a new set of teeth, a vague superstition to do with the presence of a corpse on his land) though ostensibly and genuinely out of respect for the dead. Note that Darl and Jewel who have taken the family cart to "get a load on" (p.17) will not return before their mother dies:

Durn that road. And it fixing to rain, too. I can stand here and same as see it with second-sight, a-shutting down behind them like a wall, shutting down betwixt them and my given promise. I do the best I can, much as I can get my mind on anything, but durn them boys.

A-laying there, right up to my door, where every bad luck that comes and goes is bound to find it. I told Addie it want any luck living on a road when it come by here, and she said, for the world like a woman, "Get up and move, then." But I told her it want no luck in it, because the Lord put roads for travelling: why

He laid them down flat on the earth. When He aims for something to be always a-moving, He makes it long ways, like a road or a horse or a wagon, but when He aims for something to stay put, He makes it up and down ways, like a tree or a man. And so He never aimed for folks to live on a road, because which gets there first, I says, the road or the house? Did you ever know Him to set a road down by a house? I says. No you never, I says, because it's always men cant rest till they gets the house set where everybody that passes in a wagon can spit in the doorway, keeping the folks restless and wanting to get up and go somewheres else when He aimed for them to stay put like a tree or a stand of corn. Because if He'd a aimed for man to be always a-moving and going somewheres else, wouldn't He a put him longways on his belly, like a snake? It stands to reason He would.

Putting it where every bad luck prowling can find it and come straight to my door, charging me taxes on top it. Making me pay for Cash having to get them carpenter's notions when if it hadn't been no road come there, he wouldn't a got them; falling off of churches and lifting no hand for six months and me and Addie slaving and a-slaving [. . .] And Darl too. talking me out of him, durn them. It ain't that I am afraid or work [. . .] it wasn't till that ere road come and switched around longways and his eyes still full of the land, that they begun to threaten me out of him, trying to short-hand me with the law.

Making me pay for it. She was well and hale as ere a woman ever were, except for that road [. . .]

"Are you sick, Addie?" I said.

"I am not sick," she said.

"You lay down and rest you," I said. "I knowed you are not sick. You're just tired. You lay down and rest."

"I am not sick," she said. "I will get up." [. . .] And she was laying there, well and hale as ere a woman ever were, except for that road.

"I never sent for you," I said [. . .]

"I know you didn't," Peabody said [. . .] "Where is she?"

"She's a-laying down," I said. "She's just a little tired, but she'll - "

"Get outen here, Anse", he said [. . .]

And now I got to pay for it [. . .] and her as hale and well as ere a woman in the land until that day. Got to pay for being put to the need of three dollars Got to pay for the way for them boys to have to go away to earn it. (pp.35-37)

I quote at length here because the extract encapsulates Anse's character, his sense of injustice, his lack of compassion for others and his general egotism. Further, the passage contains, in essence, the basis of the struggle between man and wife which is the novel's *donnée*. Anse resists Addie's 'command' to "'Get up and move then'" and seeks to justify his response with a series of comic assertions within a specious argument. The trick which Addie plays on Anse (making him give his word to take her to Jefferson) is intended, as we learn later, precisely to 'get him to move'.

We can now look at how the horizontal-actions/vertical-words imaging is, unknowingly, expressed by Anse Bundren. The road which 'flouts' Anse (brings bad luck: Cash's accident, those who would take Darl away from him, Addie's death even) and which he damns is horizontal, "A-laying there, right up to my door". As he tells Addie, "it want any luck living on a road". Anse gives us Addie's retort, "'Get up and move, then'". As we have said, Anse does not want to move. He is forced/tricked into doing so by Addie's desire to be buried with her 'other' family:

my revenge would be that he would never know I was taking revenge. And when Darl was born I asked Anse to promise to take me back to Jefferson when I died. (pp.172-173)

As we have observed, Addie's "revenge" is to make Anse, for once, match word and deed. Anse's justifications for not moving are, as we have seen, comic and absurd. The "Lord put roads for travelling" so "laid them down flat on the earth":

When He aims for something to be always a-moving, He makes it long ways, like a road or a horse or a wagon, but when He aims for something to stay put, He makes it up-and-down ways, like a tree or a man. (p.36)

and

if He'd a aimed for man to be always a-moving and going somewheres else, wouldn't He a put him longways on his belly like a snake? It stands to reason He would. (p.36)

Anse ignores the fact that "roads" have been made by men and not God, and that they have been built precisely for "travelling". He confuses realms and categories: "trees" are rooted unlike men, and "horses", "wagons" and "roads" are quite different from one another. The notion that the Lord would have "put" Man "longways on his belly like a snake" is both absurd and suggestive since we know that Man is 'fallen' (i.e. 'on his "belly"') though still 'upright', made "up-and-down ways", i.e. *redeemable*. After these confused musings, there is much comic resonance in "It *stands* to reason He would" (my emphasis).

Addie's "revenge" consists in making Anse "straddle" the diverging "lines" of "words" ("up-and-down ways") and deeds ("longways") which are, usually, "too far apart, for the same person to straddle from one to the other". Anse is made to use the road for the purpose (movement, travel) for which it was built, i.e. the journey to Jefferson. By getting Anse to move, Addie brings together 'man' and 'road', 'word' and 'deed'. Anse is unaware both of the comedy of what he says and the speciousness of his reasoning just as he remains ignorant of his wife's "revenge".

His self-justifications are in part prompted by his sense of being the object of criticism and disapproval on the part of his family and the wider community. Here as elsewhere he voices his 'defence'. We conclude that his sense of injustice is heartfelt and sincere if, at least partly, misplaced. Yet, it is clear that, in some degree, like Kayerts and Carrier, Anse 'believes' his own "words".

Anse's meditations are self-revelatory (as are all the monologues). Crucially, what his monologue makes plain is the divergence (of which he is unaware) of the two lines of 'doing' and 'saying' which, as Addie claims, are "too far

apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other" (p.173). Though, to the reader, Anse's monologue appears to reveal a self-seeking, hypocritical character (more concerned with money than his wife's well-being, for example), clearly, Anse does not see himself in these terms, though some observers such as Peabody obviously do. He, like the reader, can see through Anse's remonstrations and self-justifications.

It is easy to regard Anse as merely a villain until we remember that his 'hypocrisy', in terms of Addie's reflections on 'doing' and 'saying', is only a specific example of a universal condition; as Addie acknowledges, Anse is as much a victim as anything else ("the same word had tricked Anse too"):

Then I found that I had Darl. At first
I would not believe it. Then I believed that
I would kill Anse. It was as though he had trick-
ed me [. . .] But then I realised that I had
been tricked by words older than Anse or love,
and that the same word had tricked Anse too, and
that my revenge would be that he would never know
that I was taking revenge. (pp.172-173)

The logical confusion of Anse's reflections highlights his simplicity and the fact that he is neither self-aware nor in full control of his own language (who is?). The juxtaposition of the comedy of his language/reasoning and the sincerity of his own sense of suffering and injustice creates a pathos which allows us to sympathise with him or at least to respond with sensitivity to his point of view. What distances us from him is our sense of irony at the discrepancy between our knowledge and perception of who and what he is, and his own. We remember that Anse is not an idiot like Benjy; he is astute enough to use his predicament to elicit the sympathy and charity of those around him. Our sense of Anse as a manipulator of others causes us to leaven our sympathy with judgement.

The comedy is double-edged: we respond positively to Anse's simplicity and child-like use of words but negatively to the black humour of his encounter with Peabody ("I never sent for you [. . .]' [. . .] And now I got to pay for it") and the blindness/hypocrisy (shamming) of "and her hale and well as any woman in the land". Addie's self-abnegation in insisting on rising and working, likewise, tends to increase sympathy for her and to darken our perceptions of Anse. At the same time, Anse is not a complete monster; he does not necessarily wish to deny Addie rest, he simply wants to avoid the expense of a doctor (understandable in one so poor).

Anse's relationship to the pledge he has made Addie remains ambivalent throughout the book. He blames the road as well as the weather for not 'returning' Jewel and Darl, who have the cart, to the farm so that the trip to Jefferson can begin. The road, Anse tells us, is "like a wall, shutting down betwixt them and my given promise" (p.35). Yet, by the end of the opening paragraph, "Durn that road" has turned into "durn them boys".

Note that, ostensibly, Anse is blaming his sons for the fact that he cannot get on with the business of fulfilling his promise to Addie even though he, subtly, has encouraged (or done little to discourage) them to undertake the journey (cf. Darl's monologue, section 5). He objects purely for the sake of good form to start with and then acquiesces. "'By sundown, now,'" Pa says" (p.19). The trip is, after all, in his "material interests". The tantalizing probability remains that Anse believes his own 'good form' and is deceived by it as much as or more than anyone.

Anse's words 'betray' self-pity, simple faith, a habit of blaming others for his own sins, incompetence and low cunning. Yet, to a degree, he *is* aware of his own limitations: "I do the best I can, as much as I can get my mind on anything" (p.35). However, he consistently locates the reasons for his failings outside himself, "I do the best

I can, much as I can get my mind on anything, *but durn them boys* (my emphasis)".

As we have said, we cannot help but respond with sympathy to the pathos of aspects of his predicament:

Vardaman comes around the house [. . .] "Pa, "he says, "is ma sick some more?"
"Go wash them hands," I say. But I just cant seem to get no heart into it. (p.38)

Anse is after all a man who has, himself, been 'tricked' by words (and 'tricked' again, ironically, when he gives his word to Addie). He sincerely believes his own words when he tells himself that he has been repeatedly "flouted", in this case "by a road".

Ultimately, Anse does make the trip to Jefferson, I believe, out of a sense of duty to his dead wife as well as from other, less virtuous, motives. Though on one level he is quite justified in regarding the journey as dangerous and unnecessary, his dislike of movement and his laziness are mainly responsible for his desire to stay where he is. Yet, as Tull observes, once Anse has decided to move there is no stopping him. In spite of his better judgement and his predilections, Anse does move and, for once, as I say, matches 'word' and 'deed'. This of course is the ultimate object of Addie's "revenge" along with the added refinement "that he would never know I was taking my revenge".

'Words' and 'deeds': the Anse/Addie opposition

This central metaphor, the shaping vertical/horizontal image, becomes the 'carrier' of embedded discourses, implied positions and perspectives. Conflicting sets of qualities and values cluster around the vertical and horizontal axes of the geometric conceit that dominates Anse's reflections. The man/vertical/*good* and road/horizontal/*bad* opposition is one specific example. Anse and Addie can be seen as 'carrying' or

representing a range of opposing positions (not necessarily personal characteristics of which they are aware) within the terms of this conflict: Anse, the male, is vertical (he stands upright) and is alive, whereas Addie, the female, is horizontal (on her back, bed-ridden) and dying/dead.

Let us look again at the following image from Addie's monologue which reflects in profound ways on the nature of the relationship between words, deeds and values:

I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it. (p173)

If words go up (vertical motion), they are, by implication, *weightless*, with all the resonances that that word possesses. The idea of the weightlessness of words challenges the convention that words, particularly those such as 'duty', 'responsibility' or 'motherhood' (Conrad calls them "the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by years of careless usage" [p.146]) are consequential and possess unproblematic, unarguable and *weighty* meanings. The idea of weight (Wait), itself, when attached to words implies ideas of duty, *gravity and moral responsibility*.

What Addie says, in general, profoundly, if implicitly, questions the validity of forms of social obligation and the language in which they are framed or cast. This is one of the novel's major themes. We note the recurrence of the word "beholden" which means under obligation, required to act in a certain way under verbal or written contract. The central idea behind Addie's monologue is that "words" do not compare with the 'reality' and 'truth' of human suffering.

This goes further than a mere acknowledgement that they mean different things to different people. What is being foregrounded here is the fragility of meaning itself. "Words", Addie is saying in sentiments which echo the narrator of 'An Outpost of Progress', do not compare with the

'reality' and 'truth' of the experience of suffering ("doing"), the direct experience of what these words purport to signify. "Words" for Addie are empty and without weight, bereft of *real* significance.

There is also a gender discourse going on here which is crucial to the words/deeds issue. Anse, as the male, the vertical element (implying erection) has penetrated the horizontal female (Addie, now horizontal for good) and made her pregnant, so foisting *motherhood* upon her. A radical feature of Addie's testimony/meditation is the attempted reversal of the power relation implied here between male and female. Addie seeks to discredit "words" (language) in general as well as the Word, in particular, as we shall see.

In some feminist theory, language is often characterized as a male-centred phenomenon. Radical feminism incorporates a major feature of post-Lacanian psychoanalysis: the link between physical gender, discourse and the status of the phallus as prime signifier (Logos). The female genitals have often been characterized as constituting a lack or absence. In these terms, Addie subverts the male order by reversing the image of the female-as-absence with this coital image: "words" are "just [. . .] shape[s] to fill a lack" (p.172).

In another negating formulation, she describes "words" as "being just the gaps in other people's lacks" (p.174). Yet, Addie is aware that although women are in some sense the victims of male oppression, those same "words" have also tricked Anse. Within her own terms, she also realizes that women (Cora, for example) are equally capable of using language oppressively *and* to collaborate themselves both in their own oppression and in the oppression of others. For her part, Addie, after a lifetime of doing and suffering, gets her own back on Anse (tricks him) by making him give and keep his 'word'.

She also realizes how in general "words" "use" both those *to and by whom* they are addressed - in short, she bears testimony to the way in which language 'tricks' us all: "we

had had to use one another by words" (p.172). In her own language, Addie remarkably preëmpts the more adventurous claims of Deconstruction when she advances the notion that language speaks or constructs the subject rather than the reverse:

So I took Anse. And when I knew that I had Cash, I knew that living was terrible and that this was the answer to it. That was when I learned that words are no 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. I knew that fear was invented by someone that had never had the fear; pride, who never had the pride. I knew that it had been, not that they had dirty noses, but that we had had to use one another by words like spiders dangling by their mouths from a beam, swinging and twisting and never touching [. . .] (pp.171-172)

This passage appears to express some sympathy or understanding for human frailty in the face of the dilemmæ created by language. Addie's recollection of the words of her father which, when young, she failed to understand come as a shock and a negation of any of the hopeful patterns we may be encouraged to discern in what she says, "the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time" (p.169). It becomes clear that Addie has neither forgiven nor forgotten; she judges and condemns. She dismisses Cora, for example:

because people to whom sin is just a matter
of words, to them salvation is just words too. (p.140)

Once again, this sentiment echoes those of the narrator in 'An Outpost of Progress'. Addie distrusts language absolutely. There is a duality here whose opposing terms Anse and Addie represent. Anse talks in and believes in (structures his experience according to) platitudes and

clichés. Yet, we realize, hackneyed as they are, society would be unimaginable without the 'truths' they express. Between these clichés and Addie's profound disillusion what is there?

Is it really a failure of language or a lack of strength (capacity), endurance and resolve in the human character that generates the abyss between "word" and deed, making failures if not hypocrites of us all? Is it that there is no option but, to echo Conrad, to wear the words thin "by careless usage". A possible answer is that *As I Lay Dying*, itself, as well as *The Nigger* struggle to bring word and deed, ideal and practice into some kind of stable correlation.

As we have already noted, implicit in Addie's words is the idea that language, in its very nature, is unreliable at best and deeply corrupt[ing] at worst. Language *per se* represents an inevitable betrayal. When Jehovah spoke the words "Let there be Light" in 'Genesis', the Word was also a Deed. Yet it was the speaking/performance of the Word/Deed that heralded the entry into consciousness (self-awareness) and the Fall from Grace.

For men, alas, words can *never* be deeds. But it is not language alone that creates Man's condition for him, it is also ignorance, hypocrisy, fear and malevolence which leads people to misuse words for their own selfish ends. It is our fate, the very basis of our 'Original Sin', that we are 'condemned' to use language to communicate, though this is no excuse, necessarily, for succumbing, for our own ends, to its worse excesses.

Whitfield for instance uses language to deceive himself when he rehearses (to himself) what he will say to Anse. He takes his deliverance from the flood, conveniently if understandably, as a sign of divine forgiveness:

I knew then that forgiveness was mine. The flood, the danger, behind, and as I rode on across the firm earth again and the scene of my Gethsemane drew closer and closer, I framed the

words which I should use. I would enter the house; I would stop her before she had spoken; I would say to her husband: Anse, I have sinned. Do with me as you will." (p.178)

This is not straightforward hypocrisy; it is more complicated than that. The trick is that Whitfield, like the others (even Addie, though alive to the trickery of words, deceives herself), does not even know that he does not know he is self-deceived. He reports that God accuses him, "you have outraged my Word" (p.177).

Yet, Whitfield 'outrages' not only in his sin, as he acknowledges, but in his self-deception. He cannot reconcile his words with his deeds and in the end falls shy of confessing his adultery to Anse. There is a comedy in the false pride of comparing his own situation to that of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Yet, this lends Whitfield a certain dignity even in the depths of ignominy.

Addie's world-view is deeply pessimistic and fundamentally post-Edenic. It is our fate/tragedy that we *need* to believe in "words" despite the fact that they 'trick' us; we need so to do in order to give shape, meaning and purpose to our lives. Even if we *know* that "words don't ever fit what they're trying to say at" (p.171), human life is, paradoxically, impossible without a belief in the possibility that "words" can/may/will fit. Bluntly, it is not humanity's fault that its condition makes it simultaneously divorced from and utterly dependent on "words", cf. Cora's "'It is our mortal lot to suffer and raise our *voices* in praise of Him who judges [. . .]'" (p.167, my emphasis).

A key Conradian parallel here is Kurtz's "gift of [. . .] expression".⁹⁶ His fine words, like Donkin's "eloquence", deceive and shield us from a reality too painful to bear, clothing hideous actualities in noble sentiments just as Marlow's lie to the Intended 'protects' her and the 'myth' of Kurtz. Donkin cynically exploits his facility with language and the gullibility of the crew. Kurtz's tragedy is

that he seems/seemed genuinely to want to believe in his own words but unable so to do. The difference between the lies of Marlow and Kurtz, and those of Donkin are to do with the egotism of Donkin's mendacity and the fact that his "idea",⁹⁷ his "illusion"⁹⁸ is neither "saving" nor "great" and does not "redeem"⁹⁹ the reality.

Our perception of who or what Addie is or represents is intimately connected with the up/down metaphor. She is aware of the deceptiveness of language yet calmly uses it to wreak her revenge on Anse. Her association with the horizontal coordinate rather than the vertical implies a connection with "doing" and "the earth". By extension, this gives Addie certain Satanic associations. The Serpent, Satan, the Arch Tempter crawled along on his belly to tempt (trick) Eve, going "along the earth, clinging to it" (p.173). This recalls and is reinforced by Anse's confused reflection that if the Lord "aimed for man to be always a-moving and going somewheres else, wouldn't he a put him longways on his belly, like a snake?" (p.36).

If Addie has been deceived, she is also a deceiver in her own right. Though she claims that "I hid nothing. I tried to deceive no one" (p.175), she, like Whitfield, deceives herself, refusing to acknowledge her guilt, i.e. the reality of what she has done. She also deceives her family. Darl tells us that

She [Addie] would fix him [Jewel] special things to eat and hide them for him. And that may have been when I first found out, that Addie Bundren could be hiding anything she did, who tried to teach us that deceit was such that, in a world where it was, nothing else could be very bad or very important, not even poverty . . . And I knew that she was hating herself for that deceit and hating Jewel because she had to love him so that she had to act deceit. (pp.130-131)

Darl is of course hated by both Addie and Dewey Dell for knowing the truth about them. Our sense of Addie's deceit is

tempered by Darl's reflection that she "tried to teach us that deceit was such that, in a world where it was, nothing else could be very bad". Our sense of the sincerity of these lines is impressive and increases our sympathy for Addie as we realize the complex confusion of loyalties and moral difficulties to which her 'sin', according to Darl, has led her.

Yet, sincerity does not indicate reliability. In the light of Cora's and Addie's own testimony (which this quotation precedes), Darl's belief that she hates Jewel (assuming that her feelings have never changed) is mistaken:

And I knew that she was hating herself for that deceit and hating Jewel because she had to love him so that she had to act deceit.

These lines are confusing in the light of those that directly precede them. Why, we may ask, does Addie go to the trouble of performing clandestine acts of love (preferment) for a child whom she hates? Clearly, Addie does not 'act' love for Jewel; she is Jewel's mother and loves him (must love him) according to the old word, 'motherhood', even though he is the fruit of sin, "a living lie" as God, himself, would express it according to Whitfield's report (p.177).

Addie is multifaceted. It is a quality she shares with Anse, Wait, Donkin, Darl, Cora and with the narrators of *The Nigger*. These speakers, as we have established, are not only in conflict with others but in conflict within themselves. If Addie is the Serpent, then she is also Eve. Our view depends very much on the answer to the questions, who tricked/wronged/seduced whom and why/how?

Anse, as well as Whitfield, tempts Addie. If Whitfield tempts her with "doing", the 'horizontal' pleasures of sex, then Anse, and the world-view that sustains him, tempts and tricks her through the vertical sham/necessary evil of language, going "up in a thin line" (p.173). On another

level, she is also Eve/Lilith, the betrayer of her Adam, Anse; by tricking him into giving his word to go to Jefferson, she brings her family to the brink of annihilation. In her guise as Addie/'Adder', she, like Hester Prynne, tempts and ensnares a man of God.

Another possible reading of Addie is as an affirmer of Christianity. Christ of course is the Word made Flesh, a word which is, for once, also a deed, a material reality. Her view is primitivist in that she believes something has been lost, that true religion has been betrayed by the sorry state of the contemporary, synthetic structures which sustain the Church. Yet, these same synthetic structures which Addie impugns are themselves sustained by the "gift" of language which enables us to conceive of/create systems of beliefs, religions that speak to and for our deepest desires, needs and ideals. At the same time, we can rarely 'know' anything of the 'realities' these belief systems (linguistic constructs) purport to describe and, in the end, we cannot live up to them or be fully sustained by them.

Conflicting readings of Addie (and others) play a central part in the novel's dialogism. They can be reconciled by the Bakhtinian model of the speaking subject. Addie's responses are consistent in as much as they are articulated in the face of a radically ambivalent socioethical and linguistic universe rather than being merely contradictions located within Addie herself. In other words, the contradictions inscribed within the speaking subject only reflect contradictions that lie in the world outside.

Language, humanity's "gift", is a mixed blessing (cf. Cora's "'He gave us the gift to raise our voices in His praise'" [pp.166-167], quoted from the monologue preceding Addie's where she entreats her to repent]). Humanity has no choice but to receive and use this "gift" for better or worse. It is that which separates it from the natural world but that does not, necessarily, help it either to live or to understand itself. By undertaking the journey to Jefferson,

Anse, for once, is made to/seek to match word and deed and, in so doing, effects a kind of redemption from this apparently hopeless 'fallen' state. Of course, ironically, it is Addie's 'trick', her "revenge" (p.173) for having been "tricked" (p.172) in the first place that leads Anse to do just that.

Addie is sensitive to "the dark land talking of God's love and His beauty and His sin; hearing the dark voicelessness in which the words are the deeds" (p.174). She seems to be identifying here with a kind of authentic 'voiceless' Christianity "in which the words are the deeds". The phrase, "His sin", complicates matters however, since the Christian God is, by definition, sinless. Maybe Addie's God is *not* the same as Cora's. Addie's God is talked of by "the dark land" (p.174) and is, by implication, attached to the earth. Perhaps, Addie is making an audacious reference to the making of the Word into Flesh (the *mortalizing* of Christ). Did this incarnation of the Godhead constitute a divine sin, a divine Fall, eternally damning God rather than redeeming humanity? Addie's theology is intriguing but obscure.

What is clear is that Addie is *attuned* to and finds redemption of a kind in her relationship with "the dark voicelessness in which the words are the deeds" (p.174) and, as we shall see, through Jewel as opposed to the Christian God. As she tells the scandalized Cora, "'He [Jewel] is my cross and he will be my salvation'" (p.168). For Addie, this 'region of authenticity' *beyond* or *before* language is related to the intimate connection provided, for her, by the fall of the switch, the union of the blood. Such connection, for Addie, short-circuits the limitations of human egotism, subjectivity and the shortcomings of language itself:

I would look forward to the times when they [the Bundren children] faulted, so I could whip them. When the switch fell I could feel it upon my flesh; when it welted and ridged it was my blood that ran, and I would think with each blow of the switch: now you are aware of me! *Now I am*

*something in your secret and selfish life, who
marked your blood with my own for ever and ever.
(pp.169-170) [my emphasis]*

This brings to mind the organicizing role of punishment in the relationship between Simon McEachern and Joe Christmas. It is a form of 'communication' or, rather, communion (bonding) beyond language and therefore incorruptible. Yet, her solution to the human quandary of language is to invoke a blood knowledge which is deeply questionable, a cruel if not sadistic form of *bondage* rather than 'bonding'.

We note, with some amusement, parallels between Cora's conception of humanity's relationship to God and Addie's view of her own relationship to her children. Remember, Addie regards the chastisement of her children as proof that she loves them (cf. Cora's "'just because your life is hard is no sign that the Lord's grace is absolving you'" [p.167]). Insofar as what she says points to a 'region' beyond language, an experience of authenticity and organic connection, it could be defined as fundamentally religious (from the Latin *religare* meaning to bind or unite, particularly, by means of force)

Addie because of her distrust of language (articulated, inevitably, through language) identifies with "doing", with the earth and, by extension, aligns herself with the Godless, if not the Satanic. "Doing" is earthbound, a sublunary activity. It is Godless, if not godless in the sense that it is Satan, the Serpent that is associated with the material, the physical, earth (the fallen state). Words, by contrast, go *up*, heavenwards, Godwards.

There is an irony in the fact that her speech is composed of words that are supposed to go up and not along (the page). Faulkner's narrative, of course, in a further layer of irony, itself, goes along (the thread of the narrative) rather than up. In a further irony, author and reader collude/collaborate with one another in that they 'share' the novel's language

(Faulkner's narrative) and a set of meanings of which Addie remains unaware. Her ignorance in fact positively works in favour of this collaboration/collusion. In all of this, there are clearly a number of complex implications for the relationship of value to language.

Addie's attack on language is in part an attack on what has come to be known, following Derrida, as *logocentrism*:

that tradition which assigns the origins of truth to the *logos* - whether the spoken self-present word, or the voice of rationality, or God - as reflective of an internal and originary truth. Logocentrism assumes the existence of an ontological ground or stabilizing matrix out of which meaning is generated. It presumes the possibility of an unmediated access to truth or knowledge.¹⁰⁰

The river crossing and the Bundren trek as a whole become a kind of assault upon or testing of logocentrism (which it survives?), more of which later. One reading of Addie suggests that she, in fact, misunderstands the relationship of words and deeds when she describes words as going "up in a thin line, quick and harmless" (p.173). By extracting Anse's 'word' and tricking him into going to Jefferson, Addie's own words prove far from "harmless" in their consequences, particularly for Darl, Cash and Dewey Dell. But, maybe, this is precisely her point: Addie *does* at the moment of her death bring her word and deed into correlation.

Addie, like Don Juan, the very type of the libertine, can be seen as either a free spirit, superior to and able to see through the petty morals and conventions of her day, or as a corrupt influence whose cynicism poses a threat to the very fabric of a society ordered along traditional lines. Addie is the locus of the lie, or truth, and of liberty, or moral degeneracy depending on your point of view. Unlike Don Juan, however, her life has not been a series of sinful deeds but more a sequence of sinful thoughts featuring only a single

actual fall from grace (i.e. her adultery). Further, Addie *has* suffered through hard work and poverty.

Addie, like Donkin and Wait, can be seen as a great figure of denial, of *ressentiment*; that denial, in essence, is a denial of God. Arguably, it is also a denial of humanity, certainly of humanism. The 'battle' over "words" between Addie and Anse is in the end a struggle for reality, truth and *righteousness*. Depending on one's perspective, "doing" and "words" can be seen as either/both good or/and evil.

Is Addie's insistence on *feeling* and *intuition* as the only realities supported by the novel as a whole? Or do the novel's other voices ultimately 'side' against her? The constituent elements of the thought/feeling, reason/instinct dualities plainly correspond, respectively, to the axes of the up/down metaphor. In the light of these reflections, I think, we can approach the important question of who wins the epic if comic struggle between husband and wife.

The log

The comedy of Anse's loose reasoning articulates, in a veiled way, a quite profound meditation on language when taken in the context of the river crossing in particular, as well as the novel as a whole. In this and the next few sections, we will concentrate on the crossing which both structurally and thematically provides the hub of the novel.

"Trees", Anse tells us, are rooted and immobile. When the Bundrens cross the river they encounter a log, a *moving*, 'dead' tree which threatens Anse's attempt to fulfill his promise to Addie. There is a pun between the word "log" and the term Logos which refers both to the Word of God and the Second Person of the Trinity, i.e. the Son of God, Jesus Christ. I hope to show that the log and the threat it poses possess many and sometimes contradictory symbolic resonances, Christian and non-Christian overtones.

On one level, the image of the log, as its punning associations *via* Logos suggest, contains a semantic threat of which the reader, if not the characters, is aware. In addition to the 'reality' of the physical threat it poses for Tull and the Bundrens, on another level, as Cora suggests, it is the instrument of divine retribution/intervention. The two 'threats', semantic and metaphysical, as we shall see, are potentially but not necessarily in conflict with one another. The suggestiveness of the image of the log is created through a series of resonant metaphors, puns and other associations.

To begin with, the log is explicitly associated with the Son of God (God made Flesh) by Darl. It is described as being "*upright like Christ*" (p.148 [The meaning of "upright" as a description of position is played against its meaning of moral rectitude [upstanding], incidentally. This pun also feeds into the geometrical troping of the value battle/'debate' between Anse and Addie]). This association is strengthened further when Darl refers to "*the bearded head of the rearing log*" (p.149, my emphasis). Similarly, Cora links the log with the Lord (the hand of/*instrument of*/Son of God) in this exchange with her husband:

"They was going about it right if it hadn't a been for that log."

'Log fiddlesticks,' Cora said. 'It was the hand of God.'" (p.153)

So the association is explicitly made between the Logos, Christ, the instrument of God, and the log which is in this case, at least according to Cora, an ordinary, everyday manifestation of the Logos. The novel links the issues of language and values by establishing an explicit connection between the word as a synecdoche for language and the Word as *the* transcendental moral/metaphysical signifier.

The log is seen by all in the novel as a physical impediment to the Bundrens' progress. This is where consensus ends. For Cora, Anse is "flouting the will of God to do it"

(pp.21-22). According to her, the log is being used by the Lord to prevent a journey which is an affront both to Him and to the memory of Addie Bundren although as Tull points out to her, it is a journey that Addie has deliberately sought, "'It was her own wish,' Mr Tull said" (p.23). Cora either wilfully misunderstands or refuses to acknowledge the consequences of Tull's remark that "'A woman's place is with her children, alive or dead'".

On one side, there is imagery to connect the log with Christ which supports the idea of it being the instrument of His Father. On the other, there exists another set of associations which radically conflict with this view. The ambivalence of what the log represents is captured in this observation of Darl's, "Upon the end of it a long gout of foam hangs like the beard of an old man or a goat" (p.148).

As well as expressing Darl's own ambivalence about what the log *means*, the image of an old man with a beard suggests the face of Christ or God, whereas "goat" suggests that of the Devil. The indeterminacy of what the log represents metaphysically is inextricably tied, as I will show, to the language debate. What is a matter of consensus, at least, for Tull, Cora and Darl, as well as, in a different but related sense, for the reader is that the log *is* significant and that it represents something other than itself; as Tull remarks, "It was like it had been sent there to do a job and done it and went on" (p.153). The nature of the job it performs or is intended to perform is what is in dispute.

The log itself is implicitly connected with the cross, Christ's burden on the road to Golgotha, just as Addie is Anse's burden. Tull refers to it as moving "crossways" (p.125, my emphasis). And, of course, Darl's image "upright like Christ" as well as invoking moral rectitude (goodness) or spiritual authority constitutes a submerged reference to the figure of Jesus nailed to the cross. Further, crosses and coffins are made out of dead trees or logs, as are wagons of course. Note that the wagon carrying the corpse of Addie

Bundren, according to Darl, "sheers *crosswise* [. . .] as the log strikes it" (p.117, my emphasis). If the log is a cross who then is being crucified/sacrificed? Addie?

It is true that many voices, particularly those of the women, sponsor the view of Addie as having been made to suffer by Anse over the years and to endure many wrongs and injustices at his hands. This view is tempered, however; as Tull observes, with some irony:

'Poor Anse,' I say. 'She kept him at work for thirty-odd years. I reckon she is tired.'
'And I reckon she'll be behind him for thirty years more,' Kate says. 'Or if it ain't her, he'll get another one before cotton-picking' (pp.33-34)

is Kate's wry, if possibly cynical, rejoinder.

The associations and possible interpretations of what the log represents are many and address Christian ideas in significant ways. Many of the log's resonances imply heretical theologies or notions incompatible with conventional Christianity. These matters centre largely on the fact that the log (as threat on one hand, divine judgement on the other) can be seen as good, bad or both.

In a sense, though Christ is crucified on a cross, a fact which tends to imbue the cross with negative associations, that same cross is an instrument of God in that it serves His, presumably beneficent, purpose in redeeming humanity through the sacrifice of his only Son. If the log is "the hand of God", raised against the outrageous trek to Jefferson, as Cora believes, why is it allowed, almost (metaphorically and metaphysically), to 'wash away' (a resonant Christian phrase) Addie's wagon and, by extension, Addie? The answer is perhaps that, as Cora, Kate, Lula Armstid and Rachel Samson are *not* aware, and *we are*, the supposed outrage has been perpetrated ultimately by Addie not Anse.

The river crossing

Many of the "irreconcilable antagonisms" of *As I Lay Dying* align themselves with the Euclidean arms of the axes that form the ruling geometric image of the novel. The image is of relevance to the crossing of a river. A 'crossing' implies the shape of a cross, a set of axes, straight lines intersecting at right angles.

The vertical coordinate represents or is associated with a stable, ordered universe, verbal and semantic determinacy, with the intellect and with language. The horizontal is to do with the physical and material, the irrational, Chaos and disorder, verbal and semantic indeterminacy, suffering/experience and death. The association of women with experience rather than intellect ("doing" rather than 'thinking' or 'saying'), practical rather than received or theoretical wisdom, goes back at least as far as Chaucer's Wife of Bath who values experience rather than "auctoritee".

In *As I Lay Dying*, Addie is associated with carnal knowledge, sin, the Fall. These oppositions relate profoundly to the question of Christian values to do with damnation and salvation, more of which later. They also clearly map onto issues to do with language and values. These various dualisms lie along divergent lines which the *text itself* attempts to "straddle" (p.173).

As I Lay Dying does not seek merely to present "irreconcilable antagonisms", it strives, as does mankind, to reconcile them. The 'vertical world' depends on a stable rooted Logos to sustain it. Yet, the Logos/language as represented in the river crossing by the uprooted log is a dangerous shifter. So the process of reconciliation, in more than one sense of the word, depends on a never-ending balancing act in the face of the instability of language (the log) and the chaos/trial of life/experience (represented by water in movement).

The river crossing has further obvious resonances. Apart from its traditional biblical associations (the Red Sea crossing, St. Christopher), we are alerted to these resonances by witting and unwitting observations and remarks on the crossing by characters outside the Bundren circle, notably Tull and Cora.

This is a key strategy of *As I Lay Dying* where, often, simple characters unknowingly make significant, profound or suggestive comments on the Bundren journey. For example, Peabody as he converses with Uncle Billy says more than he knows:

'Ay,' Uncle Billy says. 'It's like a man that's let everything slide in his life to get set on something that will make the most trouble for everybody he knows.'

'Well, it'll take the Lord to get over that river now,' Peabody says. 'Anse can't do it'.
(p.89)

Though in the end, of course, Anse does.

The river crossing is, in a figurative sense, a *crossroads* for the Bundren family, and for their journey as well as for the novel. The river is Lethe, Styx and Rubicon in one. 1) Like the Rubicon, it is a point of no return on a journey, in this case to Jefferson, from the hills to the valley. Jefferson is a City of the Plain. The Bundrens, spiritually, cannot go back though, in fact, they do physically. 2) For Addie, it is the Styx. She crosses, ferried into the regions of the dead, into the Underworld. 3) For the family, the river is the Lethe, the river of forgetfulness where an amnesic draught is taken in preparation for a new life: a sloughing off of the old, a taking on of the new. 4) It is also, of course, an episode in an 'actual' journey.

Apart from sharing in the qualities of these mythical and real rivers, the river in *As I Lay Dying* represents a field of uncertainty. The river is a 'moving road', combining threats which Anse finds intolerable, i.e. motion and the

quality of "longways" (p.36). That uncertainty is to do with language and value. The pun on log/Logos is of particular relevance here.

A number of parallels, as we have seen, have been drawn between the log and the Logos and Christ ('Logos', if we remember, meaning "the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity".¹⁰¹ The image of the shifting log can be seen as a reification of the attack (challenge) that Addie Bundren makes on "words" and the values (in this case Christian values) that they uphold.

The crossing is a nodal point in the text where many of its antagonisms collide. The crossing and the trial/challenge it represents for the Bundrens is a troping of the trial/challenge represented by Addie's attack on Christian words and Christian values. The shifting log/Logos is an image of semantic indeterminacy, an indeterminacy or, rather, multiplicity of meaning reflected in the many possible symbolic interpretations of the log itself.

Remember, that the swollen river is, as we hear from Whitfield, a place of "uprooted trees" (p.178), i.e. unstable meanings or threats to stable meanings. The image of the shifting word (log) also captures, metaphorically, precisely the limitations and unreliability which, for Addie, characterize "words".

The unpredictability of the moving log suggests the unpredictability of "words" and how they act on their hearers. Addie tricks Anse with her 'word' by eliciting his, but Addie's verbal 'trick' has consequences which, as we have observed, she does not foresee. In overcoming the physical danger of the river crossing, the Bundrens 'defeat' the log and the challenge to their values which it symbolizes.

There is a difficulty however. The log can be seen, through its associations with the cross and Christ, not as a challenge to Christian values and semantic order and stability, but as representing the Christian values themselves. On this reading, the Bundrens overcome Christ,

himself, to cross the river. This reading supports the idea of the crossing and the journey of which it is part as being something essentially wrong, "'A outrage'" (p.117), as Rachel Samson puts it. Cora and Darl certainly sponsor this view and even Cash is prepared to entertain it:

But I thought more than once before we crossed the river and after, how it would be God's blessing if He did take her outen our hands and get shut of her in some clean way, and it seemed to me that when Jewel worked so to get her outen the river, he was going against God in a way [. . .]
(p.233)

The question of whether the journey is right or wrong lies at the heart of the novel and divides the opinions of the novel's speakers. If Jewel is going against God in saving his mother's corpse, it is at least consistent with Addie's sacrilegious (at least as far as Cora is concerned) identification of him as *her* 'Saviour' as well as her "cross" (in the sense of 'burden', 'fruits of sin'):

'He is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save me from the water and the fire [. . .]'
(p.168)

What Jewel represents and the status of his actions is once more complicated by 'cross' imagery. Jewel is described in one of the sections ascribed to Anse that precedes the crossing of the river as sitting "*upright, wooden-faced* in the saddle" (p.108, my emphasis). The association of Jewel with the cross and the quality of 'upright-ness', suggests that his actions (his desire to see the journey to Jefferson successfully completed) may be in accord with Christian principle despite the "'outrage'" it engenders in the community.

For the women and for Darl the journey is wrong. The Bundrens are carrying *their* cross (Addie) to their own

Golgotha. Or, in terms of another buried parallel, the Bundrens descend (spiritually as well as physically?) from the hills (with their suggestion of the moral or spiritual *high ground*, the City on the Hill) and descend (Dante-like) to Jefferson, a City of the Plain (Sodom, Gomorrah). By drawing parallels between the Bundren trek and Christ's final journey on the one hand, and between the Cities of the Plain and Jefferson on the other, the text suggests startling affinities between crucifixion or sacrifice, and damnation. In the end, it is Darl, saint, madman and Scapegoat, not Anse or Jewel, that is 'crucified' - or should we say 'damned'?¹⁰² For him, perhaps the descent (from Jefferson) has been one into Hell.

This dizzying cascade of competing meanings, involved 'cross' references, and conflicting perspectives and symbolisms drives the novel's dialogism. There is a further dimension to what the log represents. If it is a complex symbol with many possible meanings which poses an interpretative challenge for both reader and, on a different level, characters, then so is our *log*: 'log' in the sense of "book with permanent record made of all events occurring during [. . .] voyage"¹⁰³ of the Bundren journey, i.e. *As I Lay Dying*, itself.

There are affinities between the physical danger of the *Narcissus*' crew during the storm and that of the Bundrens' river crossing. The storm episode in *The Nigger* serves to emphasize the need for unarguable values, unambiguous linguistic structures, verbal and value codes which are held in common. We may compare the organized manner in which the crew responds to its situation under the guidance of a strong Captain with the haphazard reactions of the Bundrens under the less than sturdy '(non-)leadership' of Anse.

The undisciplined boy Jewel is given free rein (literally) and loses control of the mules. The river crossing is the nexus of the battle between Anse and Addie and Darl and Jewel, the x and y axes, the "irreconcilable antagonisms".

The resonances of the *crossing* are significant. The cross is obviously an icon of the Christian tradition. Also the necessity to perform the crossing becomes a metaphorical burden or necessity just as Addie is an actual one. In a sense, the journey to Jefferson is the cross that the Bundren's have to bear. Note that the wagon, their actual burden, is described by Darl as "sheer[ing] crosswise" (p.148).

To recap, the cross is also shaped like a set of *x, y* axes which suggests the crossing itself; the crossing is also a crossroads for the family. Further, the log represents both the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life. It is the Tree of Life in as much as the Bundrens survive the onslaught of the river and are 'born again'; it is the Tree of Knowledge in as much as it defines a point of no return on the journey to Jefferson and Anse's/the Bundrens' new wife/life.

In the word 'cross', there is a submerged pun on *Christopher*, the saint who bore Christ across water (criss-cross). Ultimately, Addie is both Christ figure and symbol of sin. She is the Bundren's burden (note the near-homophony of the words). She is also Christ to their St. Christopher, the patron saint of travellers (and presumably, by that token, neither favouring nor favoured by Anse); she is borne across the river just as another 'weight', Wait, in *The Nigger*, is borne across the sea. Is it not apt that a book about the ferrying of a corpse to its interment should contain so many 'buried' and 'submerged' puns/associations?

The relationship between narrative and value-structure in *The Nigger*

As we have noted more than once, one of the informing principles of this thesis is that in both *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger*, there is a major and pervasive correlation between narrative and value-structure which in turn has major

implications for the role of the reader which we will examine in due course.

At this point, I must once again acknowledge a debt to Bruce Henricksen's essay, 'The Construction of the Narrator in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* of which I make liberal use in what follows. Henricksen identifies the apparent narratorial inconsistency of *The Nigger* as "readable as a troping of the ideological tensions in the social life of discourse surrounding and informing the novel", what Bakhtin, as Henricksen tells us, defines in *The Dialogic Imagination* as a "diversity of social speech types", a variety of "points of view on the world".¹⁰⁴

Rather than pursue or directly develop Henricksen's thesis, the deconstruction of the unitary self and the rest, I want to *apply* rather than expound some of the *results* and implications of his investigations and to concentrate on the relationship between value- and narrative structure in *The Nigger* and subsequently *As I Lay Dying*.

First, I want to show how the novels' value-structures are reflected/troped in a variety of narratorial, narrative, structural and rhetorical techniques. Whereas *The Nigger's* voices or rather the shifts between them are, as it were, hidden, those in *As I Lay Dying* are actually *announced* to the extent that each monologue, as we have noted, is labelled with the name of a character. Our sense of who is speaking is complex, e.g. when Darl refers to himself in the third person and so on. Nevertheless, insofar as the speaker of the monologues is indicated, the Faulkner novel constitutes a kind of 'exploded' (schematic, diagrammatic) polyvocality.

In *The Nigger*, the transition from voice to voice is often submerged or disguised. Of course, as we have observed, there are many vocal transitions within Faulkner's labelled monologues, sometimes in quotation marks, sometimes *unannounced*; and in *The Nigger* too, the transition from voice to voice is often highlighted or 'sign-posted' by quotation marks for example. Each character (and his or her language)

is trapped, so to speak, between a series of devils and deep-blue seas.

This linguistic and perspectival isolation is emphasized in *As I Lay Dying* in that vocal transition is indicated by each monologue being given a separate heading. The 'language' of each speaker is 'isolated' editorially and typographically as well as structurally. This is so even when a given monologue quotes the speech of others with or without quotation marks. In *The Nigger*, the process of vocal transition is frequently less foregrounded, but dramatically present none the less.

The relationship between narrative and value-structure is intimately related to the polyphony and dialogism of the novel. This is why the transition between voices is so crucial. Each shift in speaker is a shift in point of view and as Wayne Booth observes, "manipulation of point of view can reveal the meaning of the work".¹⁰⁵ Indeed, it could be said, that in *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger*, "manipulation of point of view" is "the meaning of the work". We have looked at this "manipulation" in detail. We should still keep it very much in mind as we look at specific examples of this relationship between narrative and value-structure.

When the conservative/paternalist narrator in *The Nigger* is in 'panegyric mode', emphatically asserting the ideal of the loyal sailor, he is also implicitly sponsoring the values of Empire, the Old Order, the glories of a quiescent, subdued population, men who are subjects (subjected) not citizens. Again, certain notions of solidarity and community (conservative conformism) are embodied in the very act and in the very nature of his mode of narration, the literary and technical conventions which govern its expression as well as its class identity.

The assured tone of what he says, his assumption of a "gnomic" past or present tense (see Cohn¹⁰⁶), his use of "the old, old words" (p.146) which describe traditional values, and the general way in which all doubt and conflict is, on one level, 'censored' from what he says is intended to

communicate an impression of a world free of moral ambivalence and characterized by unproblematic, unquestionable, ordered relations. Paradoxically, the guardians of this indubitable order are assertively and emphatically on the lookout for those who would threaten or subvert it.

However, these "old, old words" characterized by unproblematic relations, perhaps because they have been "worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage", fail to end doubt and conflict. This communicates itself largely through the fact that the novel's conservative formulations themselves are surprising and paradoxical if not self-contradictory, even at their most uncompromisingly conservative (e.g. at the beginning of the fourth chapter).

A startling example of this which we have already examined in a different context comes in the concluding pages of the novel where the narrator shifts suddenly from praise of the land and of Great Britain, to a black 'indictment' of London's industrial and, by implication, moral squalor. The laudatory and triumphalist piece which follows combines the figurative power of poetic language (encomium) with the rhetorical flourishes and rhythms of eloquently overblown political oratory:

The dark land lay alone in the midst of the waters,
like a mighty ship bestarred with vigilant lights -
[. . .] a ship freighted with dross and with jewels,
with gold and with steel. She towered up immense and
strong, guarding priceless traditions and untold suffering,
sheltering glorious memories and base forgetfulness,
ignoble virtues and splendid transgressions.
A great ship! For ages had the oceans battered in
vain her enduring sides; she was there when the world
was vaster and darker, when the sea was great and
mysterious, and ready to surrender the prize of fame
to audacious men. A ship mother of fleets and nations!
The great flagship of the race, stronger than the
storms! and anchored in the open sea. (p.101)

This yields immediately to:

The *Narcissus*, heeling over to off-shore gusts, rounded the South Foreland, passed through the Downs, and, in tow, entered the river. Shorn of the glory of her white wings, she wound obediently after the tug through the maze of invisible channels [. . .] Farther, the tall factory chimneys appeared in insolent bands and watched her go by, like a straggling crowd of slim giants, swaggering and upright under the black plummets of smoke, cavalierly aslant [. . .] an impure breeze shrieked a welcome between her striped spars; and the land, closing in, stepped between the ship and the sea.

A low cloud hung before her [. . .] it throbbed to the beat of millions of hearts, and from it came an immense and lamentable murmur [. . .] the undying murmur of folly [. . .] exhaled by the crowds of the anxious earth [. . .] there was the clang of iron, the sound of mighty blows, shrieks, yells [. . .] A mad jumble of begrimed walls loomed up [. . .] like a vision of disaster [. . .] two lines went through the air whistling, and struck at the land, like a pair of snakes. A bridge broke in two before her, as if by enchantment; big hydraulic capstans began to turn all by themselves, as though animated by a mysterious and unholy spell. (pp.101-102)

The shift in tone and viewpoint between these two passages is quite extraordinary; they almost read like passages from different novels. The last quoted is an evocation of *Inferno*, a Hell on earth. We have already seen how the rhetorical and other features of this sequence contrast with/oppose those of the preceding passage. It provides an entirely different perspective on the "dross" and the "jewels", "the glorious memories and base forgetfulness", "the ignoble virtues" and so forth eulogized in the first piece. It also implicitly critiques the "audacious men" who sought "the prize of fame". The second passage darkly evokes a sense of the bitter fruits of their 'quest' and conquest.

Another important metaphorical shift is that for the first speaker land and sea are not opposed, in fact, the island/nation-as-ship metaphor makes an explicit identification between them; this is not the case for the second speaker who presents the land and the ship/sea as

being in deep opposition, "the land, closing in, stepped between the ship and the sea".

The Thames absorbs the *Narcissus*, neutralizing its 'magic' and the 'magic' of the sea. Even a cursory comparison of the passages reveals a profound contrast in the world-view mediated by each. The crucial point is that this narratorial shift, in tone, in viewpoint, *in voice*, so often described by critics as inconsistency or structural flaw, both mirrors *and* generates the profound conflicts which characterize the novel's value-structure.

Another example of this fusion of narrative and value-structure occurs in Belfast's bout of "facetious fury" (p.4). Again, we have already looked at this passage in a different context; on this occasion, I want to make a series of specific points about the relationship between narrative and value-structure. Belfast, who is, early on, described as having "abused the ship violently" and of "romancing on principle" (p.2),

seemed, in the heavy heat of the fore-castle, to boil with facetious fury. His eyes danced; in the crimson of his face, comical as a mask, the mouth yawned black, with strange grimaces. Facing him, a half-undressed man held his sides, and, throwing his head back, laughed with wet eyelashes. Others stared with amazed eyes. Men sitting doubled up in the upper bunks [. . .] listened smiling stupidly or scornfully [. . .] Voices buzzed louder [. . .] Belfast shrieked like an inspired Dervish: ". . . So I seez to him, boys, seez I, "Beggin' your pardon, sorr," seez I to that second mate of that steamer - "beggin' your-r-r pardon, sorr, the Board of Trade must 'ave been drunk when they granted your certificate!" "What do you say, you - !" seez he, comin' at me, like a mad bull . . . all in his white clothes; and I up with my tar-pot and capsizes it all over his blamed lovely face and lovely jacket . . . "Take that!" seez I. "I am a sailor, anyhow, you nosing, skipper-licking, useless, sooperfloods bridge-stanchion, you! That's the kind of man I am!" shouts I . . . You should have seed him skip boys! Drowned, blind with tar, he was! So . . . "

"Don't 'ee believe him! He never upset no

tar; I was there!" shouted somebody [. . .]
"I wonder any of the mates here are alive with such a chap as you on board! I concludo they ain't that bad now, if you had the taming of them, sonny."

"Not bad! Not bad!" screamed Belfast. "If it wasn't for us sticking together . . . Not bad! They ain't never bad when they ain't got a chawnce, blast their black 'arts . . ." He foamed, whirling his arms, then suddenly grinned and, taking a tablet of black tobacco out of his pocket, bit a piece off with a funny show of ferocity. (pp.4-5)

The obvious parallel between Belfast's charade and the actual mutiny, in particular, bears on the argument for the correspondence of narrative and value-structure. This particular passage itself offers a number of other parallels. In analyzing this passage, I intend to look at a series of aesthetic structures and technical features which obey the principle of what Genette calls 'syllepsis', "A grouping of situations and events governed by a non-chronological principle".¹⁰⁷

Belfast's playful telling/acting out of the 'heroic' insurrection on his last billet, on an American ship as opposed to a British, as well as foreshadowing the attempted mutiny on board the *Narcissus* and acting as a kind of commentary on it (a minor narrative in relation to which we are invited to read a greater), also proposes one basis for legitimate collective action on the part of a ship's company. The conservative narrator posits another, and in so doing gives voice to a 'denigration' of that 'proposed' by Belfast. Even Belfast's own shipmates (literally *dialogically*) question and scorn his albeit half-serious claims.

The novel, *as a whole*, seeks to sabotage the alternative communal values implied in Belfast's story: Belfast is intemperate, lacking in intelligence and is, in part, a ridiculous figure owing to the elements of stock presentation in the delineation of his character. He is also a

criminal/Satan in that he steals the fruit pie from the officer's table for Wait.

There is a very strong suggestion that he is either inventing his 'heroic' tale or at least exaggerating and self-aggrandising. What the text it seems is seeking to do is to discredit the kind of *collective* action of which Belfast speaks and to bring to light the underlying egotism (and absurdity?) of its motivations. Yet, Belfast's authority is not completely undermined. What he says is questioned, but by 'authorities' (the conservative narrator, sceptical seamen) which we, ourselves, particularly after an initial reading, have learned to question. It is difficult, surely, to challenge, within the terms of Belfast's story, the justice of his "'If it wasn't for us sticking together'" *vis á vis* consequences for the crew of which he was a part on that previous billet.

Syllepsis occurs in a series of associations which juxtapose Belfast's 'act' or 'performance' (resonant words in *The Nigger*, re. Wait's sham) with the relationships between Donkin, Wait and the crew and also the situations which these relationships throw up. Further, these syllepses, associations and juxtapositions 'address' the novel's dominant narratorial discourses as well as 'mapping on to' themes to do with values, ethics and morality.

For example, the fact that he last served on an American ship tends to ally him, in the reader's mind, early on, and, clearly to his detriment, with Donkin who, as the 'omniscient' narrator tells us, has just escaped after the threat of "violent destruction" (p.5) from an American ship (American ships were noted for harsh conditions). This association with Donkin tends to undermine Belfast and what he says, and is one specific aspect of the general parallel between the two: their equivocal status as champions of seamen's rights, their involvement with Wait and so forth.

There are a good number of associations in the passage which connect Belfast with Wait, as well as with Donkin. His

"face" is described as being as "comical as a mask"; we recall that Wait's face betrays "the tragic, the mysterious, the repulsive mask of a nigger's soul" (p.11). Here, we juxtapose like with unlike. Just as Donkin is a serious, if bogus, revolutionary whereas Belfast is a spurious one, so Belfast is "comic" whereas Wait is "tragic".

Yet, we are invited to compare them because of the recurrence of "mask", and with good reason (note the homophone 'masque', a kind of performance, originally mummary). Just as Belfast's 'masque' confuses the seamen, some believing it, some not, some "amazed", others "smiling [. . .] scornfully", so Wait's 'masque', his sham, confuses and divides the crew albeit on a far grander and more troubling scale.

We are again invited to compare Belfast with Wait when he is likened to a "Dervish", a Muslim/Moorish mystic. By pouring tar over an officer, he 'blackens' (another association with Wait) his superior's "white clothes". The string of connections continues when Belfast refers to the officers' "'black 'arts'". Although, 'black hearts' is primarily intended as a description of the general cruelty of officers as a class, we also read 'black arts' which, inevitably, brings to mind Wait, the 'black' who is both 'artist' ('actor', 'shammer') and magician (holding sway through the practice of 'black arts'). The chain of associations is completed by Belfast "taking out a tablet of *black tobacco*" (my emphasis).

What these connections force us to do is to engage with a range of matters to do with the themes of values and conduct, ethics and morality in the novel as well as with broader issues of characterization. These associations and juxtapositions create aesthetic structures which, far from being arbitrary, draw us into the text in specific ways. These technical features, e.g. syllepses, both reflect and create the novel's value structure and have the effect of structuring the reader's response to the text. They force us

to compare and to bring warring moralities as they are represented by different speakers (to yield to jargon for a moment) into 'dialogic connection'.

One of the major dialogic aspects of *The Nigger* lies, as we have seen, in the relationship between the narrating voice (e.g. the conservative narrator, the crewman-narrator) and the crew. The narrator's distancing of himself from the seamen is simultaneous and congruent with the positing of Singleton's own distance from them, "The men who could understand his silence were gone" (p.15) though this does not necessarily mean that the narrator identifies with Singleton. He may 'side' or align with him but their relation is still a paternalist one. Notwithstanding, Singleton remains detached, "as usual held aloof" (p.87) from the talk of mutinous resentment.

Early on, as we have seen, the conservative narrator has expressed approval for Singleton's taciturnity and his uncomplaining compliance with the requirements of his masters. Singleton's detachment from his shipmates mirrors the conservative narrator's own sense of detachment from the crew. The discriminations and individuations made by the text relate profoundly to our perceptions of the values it embodies or sponsors.

The sequence described by Henricksen where Podmore heroically fetches coffee for the crewmen as they stare eternity in the face is another example of how narratorial techniques are deployed to make value statements. As Henricksen notes, Podmore's praiseworthy action comes after an episode which has incurred the narrator's 'displeasure' as reflected in the use of "they" which implies detachment and, at times, a degree of contempt for the crew. We move from

Huddled close to one another, they fancied themselves utterly alone (p.50)

and "They belaboured one another with fists" to, after Podmore's act of courage/community/solidarity,

For many days we wondered [. . .] We inquired
[. . .] We asked the cook, in fine weather [. . .]
(p.51)

Podmore's action promotes, in fact restores, a sense of community to the crew. His heroism is accompanied by a transition in moral and narratorial tone from the faithlessness and despair of "Many did not understand, others did not care, the majority did not believe", to Archie's exclamation "that the thing was 'meeraculous'" which is accompanied by the re-appearance of the "we" or crewman-narrator. We note however that this sense of community holds sway "in fine weather".

As Henricksen observes:

Individualism and special interests assert themselves when Belfast steals from the officer's table, when tools necessary for the maintenance of the ship are lost during the search for Wait, and when the helmsman leaves the wheel during the incipient mutiny. Such interests are suggested by the more individualistic tone of the "they" narrator [. . .]

But older, communal claims assert themselves when the cook braves the storm to make the coffee, when the crew fights the gale and forgets about Wait, and when Singleton stays at the wheel for thirty hours. The "we" voice suggests such community.¹⁰⁸

Podmore's act of communal courage as Henricksen observes prompts a shift in the narrating voice from the third-person, distant and antagonistic to the crew, to a "we" speaker who confers approval on Podmore and, by implication, those he serves with coffee. And who could not be pleased at the cook's endeavour and not be grateful for the coffee - even Donkin and the officers? The crewmen are united with each other and with the crewman-narrator (witness and teller), for

once, in their approbation for Podmore's action, hence the use of the first person plural (they speak as one). Podmore's self-sacrifice, endangering his own life for the good of others, is an example of an all-important devotion to duty.

Henricksen's gloss as expressed above is slightly off-beam however. The "search for Wait" is told in the first-person plural which appears to contradict the thrust of what Henricksen is saying. Admittedly, it begins in the third-person, "They went swinging from belaying-pin to cleat" (p.40) though the actual rescue scenes are in the first-person plural. Henricksen clearly misreads the "search for Wait" episode. This error however does not invalidate what he is saying.

The use of the "we" narrator is more complex than Henricksen proposes. Its use can suggest many things including right action on the part of the crew or indeed the reverse by dramatizing and emphasizing the distance of the "we" narrator at the narrating moment from his own actions and those of his shipmates at the witnessing moment aboard the *Narcissus*.

The following passage is poignant in that it gives us at once a sense of the immediacy and desperation of the rescuers' predicament whilst also providing us through our perceptions of the contrast between the emotional state of 'witness' and 'narrator' (the same speaker whose modes, retrospective and present, are separated by time) with a sense of the narrator's distance from and disapproval for the crew's activities:

We went to work [. . .] We attacked with desperation [. . .] The agony of his fear wrung our hearts so terribly that we longed to abandon him [. . .] we dug our fingers in, and very much hurt, shook our hands, scattering nails and drops of blood [. . .] They were the stoutest planks ever put into a ship's bulkhead - we thought - and then we perceived that, in our hurry, we had sent all the tools overboard [. . .] We flew at him with brutal impatience [. . .]

We stuck to him blindly in our fear [. . .] We pressed around him, bothered and dismayed [. . .] and on the very brink of eternity we tottered all together with concealing and absurd gestures, like a lot of drunken men embarrassed with a stolen corpse. (pp.41-44)

As I have suggested, the status of the "we" narrator here is problematic. Despite the disapproving if at times sympathetic narratorial tone, it is impossible on the level of the "we" narrator (belonging to the narrating moment, long after the event) to respond to the rescue of Wait as an example of communal action. This is not true on the level of the "we" narrator, crewman and participant. So the "we" becomes in itself 'split' or dialogized.

It is worth noting that Henricksen in an account which foregrounds a sense of the deconstruction of the unitary self and of the reliable narrator fails directly to acknowledge that the "we" narrator is himself divided or that the narratorial "we" is used in a variety of ways to do with community, right conduct and so on, which are in dialogical conflict with one another. This may lead us to the conclusion that there is more than one "we" narrator in the sense of distinct voices if not distinct characters.

So, we have a narratorial structure (the first-person plural narrator[s]) which appears monologic, and is certainly so in its traditional and conventional associations, but which is nevertheless used to trope at least two contrasting value-positions. In the rescue of Wait, the dialogue/conflict is between the crewman-narrator as witness (at the time), and

the "we" narrator who tells us the story, seated at his desk, probably in a cottage by the sea, possibly, like Conrad himself, somewhere in Kent.

The "we" narrator is unitary neither in the values he endorses nor in his identity (through and, indeed, at the time), a point which relates to Henricksen's critique of the illusion of the unitary self. It is no accident that throughout the novel the retrospective crewman-narrator testifies to the ambivalence of the crew's feelings and obliquely to the mixed feelings of his own before-and-after divided self. That is to say that the crewman-narrator was divided at the time of witness (though by no means all of the time) as his testimony makes plain, as well as being 'divided' temporally.

The fields of perception of crewman-narrator and crew interact in a number of interesting ways. For example, as far as Wait and Donkin are concerned, the crewman-narrator gives voice to the negative pole of the crew's ambivalent feelings for them with the benefit of hindsight, feelings which at the moment of witness remain unexpressed. The tone and tense of the crewman-narrator's report makes it clear that the crewmen also harbour negative feelings for Donkin and Wait *at the time*. For instance, they express their contempt for Donkin through outward physical and verbal abuse whilst being influenced by him inwardly:

His care for our rights [. . . was] not discouraged by the invariable contumely of our

words [. . .] Our contempt for him was unbound-
ed - and we could not but listen with interest to
that consummate artist. (p.61)

We note that though their abuse is expressive it does not give voice to the unease which they all feel at Donkin's (unacknowledged) influence. However, as far as Wait is concerned, though he does not entirely escape albeit veiled verbal abuse, the seamen's doubts are not outwardly expressed: quite the reverse in fact. They curse him inwardly, silently, whilst loyally supporting him in word and deed. This ambivalence/division, of course, is not limited to the "we" narrator or to the crew. Each of the voices (narratorial and figural) sponsors (implies) a different version/vision of community and values generally. These many voices are naturally in conflict with one another; they are also divided within themselves, in ways that anticipate the narratorial patterning of *As I Lay Dying*, more of which later.

I have spoken at length about narratorial division/ambivalence. What follows is an attempt to give diagrammatic form to these divisions as they apply to the novel's figural voices, a division in whose mediation obviously the novel's narratorial speakers are very much involved. The following schematization (an 'exploded' diagram) should be subject to the same provisos as I applied earlier to Henricksen's narratorial classifications or to the various narrating personae that I have 'imported' (crewman-narrator, officer-narrator) from the work of Lothe and Watts, albeit with significant modifications:

Allistoun: Stiff upper lip, paternalist, father figure,
leader of men, independent, ideal/
Ruthless, intent on making a quick passage,
unconcerned for men's welfare, tool of his
masters albeit with some contempt for them.

Creighton: Commitment to gentlemanly duty, a sense of obligation to one's class, country etc. Concern with doing 'the right thing', sense of honour, not showing pain or fear/
Absolute gentlemanly contempt for the crew, arrogance, haughty disdain, a clear sense of the superiority of his own social position, cruelty.

Baker: Authoritative, no-nonsense, loyal, unswerving/
kindly, apt to sympathize with the men,
excuse/elide their defects.

Boatswain: Worthy, almost blindly loyal, unquestioning, uncomplaining, acceptance of an ideology (albeit tacit) of which he is both victim and upholder/
working purely for money, apt to grumble (more or less silently), motivated, purely, by self-interest, keeps his superiors happy insofar as it coincides with his own interests, desire to get home to his wife. To an extent his compliance is bought with material reward and a concomitant differential in status rather than due to an intrinsic faith in the order of things: a crucial issue.

Singleton: Silent almost elemental force, oracular, pre-Lapsarian, noble savage, ineffably wise, superlative sailor, in harmony with a universal, *natural* order as well as the sea/ships, sage re. the ships and in general?, infinitely old, patriarchal, infinitely wise/
stupid, uncomprehending middle-aged salt, grubby uncouth, feeble-minded (witness his shallow superstition), which turns out to be right and wrong about Jim. As we have seen wrong about what Wait consciously desires, physically dissipated,

at least, in his late fifties, on his last legs
(as we learn from the passage that begins,
"Singleton, who had sailed to the southward since
the age of twelve" (p.3)

Donkin: Hideous, demonic, shirker, liar, egotist,
eloquently evil/
friendless, deserving of sympathy, more sinned
against than sinning, the articulator of the
crew's justified and justifiable grievances,
defending his (and the crew's rights) a ship-
mate, 'one of the boys'.

Wait: Lazy, devil, shammer, black (with all its
negative connotations), coward, alien/
Dying man, victim of injustice, denied a common
humanity ostensibly by officers and crew but in
the end by Donkin and Singleton? "I
belong to the ship" (p.10).

Crew: Adult, able to bear responsibility, hard-working,
loyal enough, know their stuff, capable, put-
upon, bravely suppressing their grievances,
enduring, evincing *proper* qualities of
community/solidarity, unswervingly loyal/
Naïve, "grown-up children" (p.15), shirkers,
prone to illegitimate self-congratulation, apt to
exaggerate their own powers and abilities,
disloyal, whiners.

In part, these conflicting possibilities of character are
subsumed by the shore/land opposition; for example, the
negative view of Singleton is a 'shore' view as expressed by
the clerk in the Pay Office. This for the moment is a
distraction. The dualities outlined above are the contrasting

'lights' which play across the narrative of *The Nigger*, lights which dazzle as well as illuminate.

The great feature of the conservative vision of community it seems is the imperative need for the exclusion of Wait as 'embodiment of doubt'. Wait's death signals metaphorical as well as physical 'casting out'. In this respect, plot structure mirrors one aspect of the novel's value-structure (the scapegoat reading, etc.). This is matched by a need for his exclusion as sailor and a denial of his *common* humanity as expressed by his "'I belong to the ship'"(p.10).

Henricksen's essay ends with a discussion of how the "I" narrator with which *The Nigger* concludes performs a unifying narrative and ideological function. It is however a unification which depends on the exclusion of not only Wait but, in one sense, the entire crew. According to Henricksen, the conflicting voices we have heard merge and blend into the bourgeois "I", the first and last time incidentally that the first-person pronoun appears, apart from figural utterances.

This "I" narrator draws away from the conflicts encountered on the *Narcissus* and from his 'brothers of the sea' just as Conrad could be said to have done when he became a writer. Henricksen draws a number of ingenious parallels between the way the "I" narrator 're-writes' the novel we have just read in the space of a few paragraphs and Conrad's own development as author. I reproduce Henricksen's observations because they are relevant though they need not detain us: he talks of

the dramatized first-person narrator, who at the end of the novel replaces the plural narrative voice undercuts the triumph [of "communal values"]. He does so not only because of his literal separation from the crew but because his language reveals him to be inhabited by interests hostile to the welfare of the crew, the interests of a divisive individualism.¹⁰⁹

It is also worth mentioning what Henricksen refers to using Frederic Jameson's formulation in *The Political Unconscious* as

"the construction of the bourgeois subject in emergent capitalism". Since *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, moving as it does, from multiple and fragmentary voices to the singular, individualized narrator, analyzes this construction, the novel may be read as an anatomy of the notion of the unitary subject.¹¹⁰

This is undoubtedly of interest as is the discussion of the conflict between what he calls *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*, another important aspect of the novel's dialogism to do with community.

One of Henricksen's concluding observations goes to the very heart of the matters we have been discussing. Referring to the novel's alleged narratorial 'inconsistencies' he writes

This shift in point of view, then, is not an arbitrary technical wavering but rather a troping of the drift toward individualism and fragmentation.¹¹¹

Here, I think, though Henricksen is pointing to a legitimate example of the relationship between narrative and value-structure, he is guilty of special pleading in that he seems to be emphasizing or privileging one of many interpretative possibilities and not taking the nature of the novel's closure into account. The concluding "I" narrator is a construct (as are all the narrators) and though his view is unavoidably biased, we cannot help but perceive it as, in some degree, affirming and unifying.

In 'deconstructing' this "I", Henricksen does not necessarily disempower it. That is to say, that despite Henricksen's powerful and demonstrable criticisms of the bourgeois "I", this is the voice we 'hear' at the novel's end. We may be aware of its shortcomings but we cannot deny that the structure of the novel 'privileges' it in narrative terms by allowing it to narrate the novel's ending.

It is consistent with what I have been saying that if it be 'privileged' within the narrative structure then it is 'privileged' also within the novel's value-structure. Yet, the spirit of Henricksen's critique is I believe essentially *true*. As we have said, elsewhere, for the reader as well as the crew, "Doubt survive[s] Jimmy" (p.96). In all this, we should bear in mind Bakhtin's observation which Henricksen quotes that "the flowering of the novel is always connected with a disintegration of stable verbal-ideological systems".¹¹²

The relationship between narrative and value-structure in *As I Lay Dying*

Faulkner's novel lends itself to precisely the same strategies that we have employed in examining the relationship between value- and narrative structure in *The Nigger*. The responses that the protagonists of *As I Lay Dying* and the Bundren journey in general engender are profoundly ambivalent both for the reader and for the novel's character-observers. The book's narrative structure could be described as a fractured mirror, reflecting and refracting the conflicting values and perspectives of various speakers and the world-views in which their voices are rooted/embedded.

The novel's fragmented/fragmenting narrative structure reflects the breakdown of a shared set of *coherent* values with which to view the moral problems posed by the novel. The narrators/narratives simply cannot decide what or whom to *believe*. There is a breakdown in consensus and therefore community though, as we shall see later in the chapter, this breakdown is arguably and problematically remedied or resolved by the book's closure.

There is another 'troping' aspect to the novel's sequential monologic structure which on the surface contradicts the notion of a fragmentary narrative in that each monologue bears the name of a character, i.e. the identity of the

speaker is apparently unproblematically assigned. This emphasizes the separateness of the speakers. At the same time, the kind of 'leakage' that occurs between voices where one speaker's language is 'inhabited' by other figural voices (as well as the authorial voice) undermines this apparent coherence.

Nevertheless, the separation implied by the labelling of the monologues posits the idea of the speakers' isolation. Most of the protagonists, with the exception of Anse, Cora and Cash, seem aware only of isolation, and experience themselves, through their language, as being utterly alone. Cash, Cora and Anse (along with Tull and other minor characters such as Samson and Armstid) most consistently invoke the power of a common order whether Christian or secular which mitigates (perhaps masks) this sense of isolation.

Dewey Dell, Darl, Addie and Vardaman experience great difficulties, for different reasons, in recognizing and identifying with a collective order/community which by definition exists outside them. Addie's position is perhaps different from those of the other three in that she claims to have *once* recognized and identified with such an order though now to be disillusioned.

Much of each monologue is 'spoken', or thought, rather, silently if not in private. The status of the communal impulse behind the trip to Jefferson is highly questionable. The journey unites the Bundrens but only in the sense that their coöperation is based on common coercion as well as consensus. Further, each has his or her own 'unofficial', secret motivation for making the journey to Jefferson.

Cash, for example, wants to use the trip as an opportunity to pass by Tull's to work on his barn. Dewey Dell goes in search of an abortion, Anse wants a new wife and a fresh set of teeth, as Kate hints, and Jewel pursues the journey, ferociously, as an expression of his antagonism for Darl and love for his mother. Darl, Hamlet-like, is forced to go along

before madness born of disgust brings him to commit an act of arson.

There is on one level no commonality of purpose in the journey apart from a surface compliance with the rule that the wishes of the dead should be honoured and Addie given a 'decent' Christian burial (*pace* Darl). This compares with the common motivations of the crew of the *Narcissus* where the seamen, apart from any particular commitment to or love of craft that we might attribute to them, sail for money.

There is equivocation and radical ambivalence in the values which the book as a whole 'transmits'. In order to judge, the reader must 'wait' and suspend judgement. This idea finds its figurative concomitant in a series of metaphors and images of balance and suspension that permeate both *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger*. One of the great images for this suspension (physical and moral) is that of the *Narcissus* on her side after the storm accompanied as it is by a debate amongst the crewmen about what should be done, particularly the conflict between Donkin and Allistoun over how she should be 'righted'.

Moral ambivalence and suspension of judgement lies at the heart of both novels. This is suggested by and contained within the idea of 'waiting' in *The Nigger* and in images of suspension which occur in both books. The choices and discriminations which are thrust on character and reader alike involve not only a moral 'burden' but also a need to *balance* the claims of one voice/position against others, to evaluate the relative merits or to assess the relative 'weight' of different speakers at various points on a moral scale. Indeed, the idea of a scale of moral judgement implies a moral continuum where there is little that is wholly good or wholly evil, one reason why moral dilemmas are so intractable.

The following darkly funny passage from *As I Lay Dying* expresses ideas both of suspension and ambivalence. As Jewel and Darl carry their mother's coffin, Darl 'narrates':

We move balancing it *as though* it were something infinitely precious, our faces averted, breathing through our teeth to keep our nostrils closed. (p.99, [my emphasis])

We share a sense of "intolerable suspense" (p.76). We, like Darl and Jewel (according to Darl's testimony), also share a sense of sympathy *and* aversion for the novel's protagonists and their activities.

Let us look now at some other ways in which narrative/aesthetic structure 'shadows' value-structure. Cora's feelings about Anse, Addie and Darl are essentially ambivalent. One of the ways in which this division is mirrored or 'troped' is in the split between public and private speech in Cora's language. When she describes the Bundrens as "caring for nothing except how to get something with the least amount of work" (p.22), for example, it remains an unspoken sentiment. She would not publicize it or, if she did, she would do so selectively or in an 'encoded' way.

It is a question of what she allows herself to say or what she is permitted, by circumstance, to express. Utterance, expression or non-expression, is conditioned by the power relations which govern the subject at the instant of utterance, the moment of expression. As with the crew's negative *and* positive feelings for Wait and Donkin on one hand, and for their masters on the other, the struggle for expression is a struggle beneath the surface, born of internal conflict and external exigence.

Similarly, Samson's private feelings, which he does not express even to his wife, are contained in his unspoken response to Anse's honest/dishonest offer of payment for feed:

'I rather pay you for it.'

And if I had my rathers, you wouldn't be here a-tall, I wanted to say. But I just says, '. . . You can't buy no feed from me.' (p.116)

Rachel and her husband are clearly divided within and between themselves as far as their public and private feelings for the Bundrens are concerned. The question is begged: what is the true nature/basis of their neighbourliness? Is it, in fact, a kind of communal heroism, the frontier solidarity that kept the early settlers together? Or is it, in truth, an example of refracted egoism, a concern with being seen to do the right thing and a 'projection' of how they would wish to be treated by their neighbours?

In a sense, the question is irrelevant as long as the appropriate/communal form of behaviour is adopted. In any case, these neighbours, albeit unwillingly, put public/civic duty before personal feelings and desires whether as a result of a considered moral choice or 'conjured' by Anse as Tull and Armstid equivocally claim.

Against their better judgement, Samson and Armstid, doggedly, if weakly and half-apologetically, excuse Anse and defend him against the disgust of Rachel Samson and Lula Armstid. Both women describe Anse in the same words, "'It's a outrage'" (pp.104, 187) though they like their husbands give aid and succour. As Samson puts it, "'What could he a done?' I says. 'He give her his promised word'" (p.117). Samson keeps his own distaste and misgivings to himself. Rachel frames the matter in terms of gender, i.e. how men typically treat their women. Clearly, she refers to more than Bundren callousness or impropriety:

'It's a outrage,' she says. 'A outrage.'
'What could he a done? I says. 'He give her his promised word.'
'Who's talking about him?' she says. 'Who cares about him?' she says, crying. 'I just wish that you and him and all the men in the world that torture us alive and flout us dead, dragging us up and down the country - '
'Now, now,' I says. You're upset.' (p.117)

Yet Rachel despite (perhaps, because of) her "'outrage'" is keen, in fact bent, on offering neighbourliness and hospitality. As Samson says to Anse when he refuses to eat with them:

'And when folks stop with us at meal-time and won't come to the table, my wife takes it as an insult'.
(p.116)

And she probably does.

The play between spoken and unspoken discourse is as important a part of the novels' dialogism as the inter-figural play or the conflict between opposing/contrasting voices in *The Nigger*. These clashes depend not only on the instability of individual consciousnesses or values but also on an instability in the relationship of these speakers' reality to language itself.

The idea that reality changes along with the perspective from which it is viewed is articulated in Cora's second section. It is, as we have noted, 'mirrored' or 'doubled' by Dewey Dell's first monologue which directly follows. The two sections deal with the same 'events': note Dewey Dell's "'What you want Darl?' I say" (p.25). We again note how this phrase also occurs at the end of Cora's second section, i.e. it belongs both to Cora and Dewey Dell.

Naturally, Cora is excluded from Dewey Dell's inner life. This removal is emphasized by her love/approbation for Darl and her antagonism for Jewel (a mirror image of Dewey Dell's stance). Just as the alternation between inner and outer speech reflects internal divisions, the divergent perspectives on Darl amongst other things held by Cora and Dewey Dell delineate the fault-line between their divergent (as well as diverging) consciousnesses.

Cora describes Darl as having a "heart too full of words" (p.25). What she sees as an excess of emotion/love, Dewey

Dell identifies as a sign of coldness or inhumaneness bordering on madness. Because Dewey Dell's monologue succeeds Cora's, the irony (unwitting) of Cora's sentimental testimony is (particularly, on a second reading) largely at her expense rather than Dewey Dell's. It is impossible to unravel this knot without cutting it, i.e. 'deciding' exactly what happens. This of course is an aspect of authorial play; there is no 'exactly' in a fictional work. We are reduced to the paradoxical procedure of seeking corroboration from other speakers within the novel or indeed to the impossible task of finding resolution outside the novel's diegesis, i.e. 'asking' Faulkner or making personal determinations.

The procedure of seeking corroboration within the terms of the text is of course futile. Since there is no possibility of unequivocal attribution of utterance, there can be no point of absolute reference, not even (especially not?) the authority of a traditionally omniscient and authoritative narrator. The language of every monologue in the novel when 'sifted' in this way yields the same kinds of problems: irresolution and uncertainty within the terms of the novel's fictional world over the truth of what is being said.

These divisions (figural and lectoral) are inter- *and* intra-personal, lying within as well as outside the text, i.e. 'inhabiting' the reader's relationship with the text. Our sense of the book's thematic concerns grows out of an appreciation of its narrative strategies (cf. the significance of the novel's closure). Likewise, we, as

readers, have an ambivalent relationship with the text and are divided within ourselves as to our own judgements and discriminations. Our role does not lie grandly outside the text; it is not simply a question of an objective evaluation of the novel's value-structure and narrative/aesthetic structure. We too are drawn irresistibly and inevitably into the debate. The notion of dialogism logically extends to the reader as well.

A 'choice of masters' and further observations on the nature of the *isolato*

The voyage of the *Narcissus* is a stern test of the self-discipline of the sailors, of their capacity not only to endure terrible physical conditions but also to master/reconcile conflicting loyalties. Likewise, the trip to Jefferson involves privations and suffering for the Bundren family itself as well as presenting the poor whites (including individual family members) with a series of difficult ethical choices. Both the crew and the poor whites are further involved in a range of unresolved dilemmas: whether Wait is shamming, what is Anse's true attitude to the trip to Jefferson and so on.

The context of these choices is one of conflict. Anse, in one opposition, is set against his children whilst Allistoun and his officers are set against the crew. Both novels are characterized by strife, tension and antagonism of which

these are merely two leading examples. The choices which the characters are called upon to make relate to notions of good and evil, right and wrong.

The family, like the crew, are there, on one level, to look after the coffin/ship. The image of the coffin in *As I Lay Dying* can be thought of as a conflation of the ship and Wait's cabin which is at once part of *and* inimicable to the *Narcissus*. Addie's coffin is both ship and mausoleum just as the *Narcissus* is Wait's mausoleum as well as a potential mausoleum for the entire crew. The coffin and the wagon, the ship and Wait's cabin (which the ship contains) hold/carry good and evil and the potential for good and evil. As such, they become potent images for this, the most persistent of human dualities.

The ethical and epistemological difficulties of the crew and of the poor whites resolve themselves in a number of distinct problems to do with appropriate behaviour, speech and conduct: what to say, what to do and what to believe. In a sense, all the characters have a constrained 'choice of masters': Allistoun or God, Anse or Donkin, Addie or Wait. The need to make this 'choice' is not itself voluntary; it is in fact required by the community and the order which sustains it, and as such more a matter of obligation and constraint and of keeping up appearances.

In practice, the selections of the speakers and of the crew of the *Narcissus* are limited to choosing between different pieties and outrages, each of which has something of both the

pious and the outrageous about it. The conflicts and ambivalences of *As I Lay Dying*, for example, lead the various speakers to consider a range of different forms of behaviour and personalities, principally, as 'outrageous' or otherwise. However, though Lula Armstid, along with others, views Anse's actions as an "'a outrage'" (p.187), is not the journey, in fact, primarily, an act of reverence, as Armstid and Jewel would assert, to honour the wishes of the dead?

The crew and the poor whites aid Anse and Donkin/Wait despite themselves. Armstid, Samson, Lula, Rachel, Peabody and the Tulls harbour a set of more or less unspoken reservations/antagonisms about Anse and the Bundrens yet continue to help them, some out of humanity, others from a desire to take what they regard as an abomination out of the public gaze. Likewise, the crewmen have severe doubts about whether Wait is truly ill. Even so, they treat him throughout as if he is telling the truth and strenuously resist (at least, on the surface) any suggestion to the contrary.

Anse divides his family yet receives and requires (though ostensibly disinviting) a favourable community response. So, is Anse one of those *isolatos* who, like Donkin and Wait, divide and spread dissension and doubt? Certainly, like Wait, he is a shirker and, like Donkin, a complainer. Yet, Anse is by no means a dissenter. There is a sense here in which the novels' value-structures though so very similar in many ways possess a different trajectory.

The ending of *As I Lay Dying* gives the actual 'last word' to Cash and the metaphorical 'last word' to Anse. Though Cash is aware of Anse's shortcomings, he ultimately sides with the 'new' family (order) that his father has created. If we regard the ending of *As I Lay Dying* as giving a dominant if not victorious perspective on things then we must conclude that, in the end, helping Anse has been 'good' just as helping Wait/Donkin, according to the closure as well as the dominant voices of *The Nigger*, has been 'bad'. Yet, we are left with the contradiction that Anse Bundren, had he been a crewman on the *Narcissus*, would have received short shrift (Singleton doubtless would have left him to sink or swim), lacking as he does even Donkin's eloquence though, arguably, in possession of some of the dignity and/or pathos of a Belfast or a Wait.

One unresolved problem, that of choice, which we briefly touched on, remains. What are we to make of the insistence in both texts that the choices made are in some way 'conjured' or coerced? It is, as we have said, the necessity of choice that is forced rather than the choice itself. This is precisely what is perceived as so troublesome and perplexing by the crew of the *Narcissus*.

It is true that Wait, Donkin, Anse and the officers deploy a whole range of strategies and powerful appeals to influence those around them. Certain choices are not 'forced' *directly*. It is rather that those who are 'in the know', the community's *insiders* (unlike a Hightower for example) are

aware of the consequences that follow in the wake of exercising freedom of choice in order to make the *wrong* choice.

Does the decision of the majority of the crewmen ultimately to deny Wait and Donkin constitute self-mastery, or is it simply a 'surrender' to the mastery of the officers? The answer of course, as so often, is both. We could read the novels as a meditation on how the victims of oppression internalize the value-system(s) which oppress them, and in so doing uphold them as a way of 'defending' themselves in the face of overwhelming odds, i.e. 'defusing' "irreconcilable antagonisms".

Whatever the dynamics of the process, the constraints which a given order puts in place always work to encourage or enforce a certain kind of behaviour. Armstid and Samson for instance each report a feeling of being mastered or 'conjured' by Anse when in fact their neighbourliness, which they claim to give in spite of themselves, is in line with the community values necessitated by the extreme harshness of the 'frontier' conditions of the entire community's existence.

On one level, their sense of conflict between what they want to do and what they *should* do is perhaps false insofar as it fails to recognize the possibility that to be part of a community in which people act with charity is *in fact* in their own best interests. They are, conjured or not, acting in a way that promotes solidarity and the overall interests

of the community, in apparent contravention of the philosophy of Egoism, and, incontrovertibly, in contravention of their own immediate "material interests" as they are aware.

They help Anse despite their personal repugnance for him though, whether they realize it or not, their behaviour follows the logic of reciprocity. Neighbourliness, even though as a principle it might be scorned or eschewed by a given individual, in the end, as a mode of living, is to the mutual benefit of the whole community. The crewmen of the *Narcissus* are, in contrast, selfish when they heed Donkin or sympathize with Wait because the order by which they are expected to abide has, as its central and guiding principle, the exigences of the seaman's craft, the safety and security of the ship and the commercial success of its venture.

What is not permitted or barely tolerated in either case is the taking of a decision or the adoption of a position *outside* the community's needs/expectations. The discipline of abiding by community values often, if paradoxically, consists in a kind of 'hypocrisy' (an uncharitable term, perhaps, for which we could substitute 'tact' or 'necessary suppression of one's personal feelings') This is the chief butt of Addie's sense of *ressentiment*: "the other words that are not deeds, that are just the gaps in people's lacks" (p.174).

In the end, what is in a sense noble about Samson's words (whose "words are [. . .] deeds" [my emphasis]) is that he subordinates his own desires, despite inwardly-expressed reservations, in the pursuance of a greater good:

'He [Anse] ain't never been beholden to no man,'
he [Jewel] says. 'I rather pay you for it.'

And if I had my rathers you wouldn't be here
a-tall I wanted to say. But I just says, 'Then
it's high time he commenced. You cant buy no feed
from me.' (p.116)

It is true that Samson and Anse/Jewel are both 'guilty'
here of *arrière-pensée*, Samson in the sense of having
unspoken reservations and Anse/Jewel of having, arguably,
ulterior motives. Ironically, this is exactly what good
citizenship is all about; this is the "deceit" (p.134) which,
for Darl, runs "along quiet and monotonous" and is preferable
"because it has a bland outside." What Darl and Addie fail to
acknowledge is that without the subtle 'diplomacy' of
arrière-pensée life/community would become impossible. Civic
duty/virtue relies on diplomacy, tact, mendacity, call it
what you will.

Yet, this flies in the face of a set of romantic and
Christian notions to do with 'sincerity' and 'honesty'. This
is the 'rock-and-a-hard-place' dilemma implicit in the very
nature of human values/community/social congress. This is
precisely the discipline, deference to a set of codes to do
with appropriate silence and appropriate omission which
adherence to community values imposes. To do otherwise is to
avoid making a choice of masters and, instead, like Wait or
Donkin, to choose self-mastery.

For those who opt/make the attempt for true self-mastery,
for those characters who are laws unto themselves and follow
the dictates and logic of their own temperaments/consciences
(Victor Haldin, Lord Jim, Joe Christmas, Darl, Donkin, Wait,
Hightower, Razumov, the artist), the result is first
exclusion, then disaster. Exclusion is 'enacted' by the
community, whilst disaster comes when the *isolato* realizes
that existence becomes impossible unless one binds oneself
back into, finds a place in the community, however
insupportable, unjust or hypocritical that community's values

might be. At this moment the *isolato* is also confronted with the unbearable knowledge of his own isolation. This is perhaps why Joe Christmas, in the end, welcomes and accepts his own castration and murder.

Razumov, it must be said, is a special case since he is caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of Russian autocracy on the one hand, and Haldin's anarchic romanticism on the other, neither of whose codes he fully understands. By confessing, he binds himself back into the community (community) of Christian or humanist values though at the expense of his freedom and his hearing.

The 'heresy' of the outsider (Darl, Hightower) is that he fails to recognize (or, if he recognizes, cannot/refuses to accept) the rules of social engagement in a given society. In *Coercion to Speak*, Aaron Fogel convincingly argues that the story of Razumov impinges on Conrad's own guilt/predicament as a Pole writing in England. The drawing of parallels between the madman, the literary artist and the outsider (tolerated or otherwise) is not a new one and goes back to Lear's Fool and beyond. Darl Bundren fits very much into this tradition. Seer, lunatic, poet, figure of *ressentiment*, he absolutely fails to understand/accept the 'vocabulary' (discourses) of the community of which he ostensibly is part.

The expulsion of the *isolato* and the 'restoration' of community

Those who refuse/are unable to conform to standards of community behaviour and expectations must be seen to be ejected or cast out. The *isolato* must be 'excommunicated'; he must be expelled and, in a sense, dehumanized, brought below the status of those around him. Faulkner and Conrad give us access to the internal worlds of these isolated characters and in so doing elicit our interest as well as our sympathy/understanding or condemnation. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Benjy's own narration as well as the testimony of the

narrator of the novel's concluding section reinforce our sense of Benjy's dignity and humanity. Likewise, our inner knowledge of the world of Darl Bundren mitigates or rather qualifies the external view of him as 'queer' and as a lunatic arsonist.

Even Allistoun, through an act of ill-advised compassion, movingly recognizes Wait's humanity; the master has clearly been touched and *disturbed* himself by Wait's predicament:

'Sorry for him - as you would be for a sick brute.
If ever creature was in a mortal funk to die! . . .
I thought I would let him go his own way [. . .]
I shan't turn in tonight [. . .] just call out if
. . . Did you see the eyes of that sick nigger, Mr
Baker? I fancied he begged me for something. What?
Past all help. One lone black beggar amongst the
lot of us [. . .] Well, let him die in peace [. . .]
He might have been half a man once. (p.78)

His mates are "more impressed" by Allistoun's 'uncharacteristic' display "than if they had seen a stone image shed a miraculous tear of compassion". Allistoun, as they say, is visibly shaken. The line "as you would be for a sick brute" has its emphasis on "would be" not on "sick brute". He is stating an obvious or natural reaction, "Sorry for him - as you would be [. . .]". "What? Past all help" may be a response to an unreported remark of Baker's to the effect that Wait is past all help. Indeed, the words may be rhetorically addressed to Wait.

Unlike Singleton, what Allistoun misunderstands is precisely that Wait is beyond "all help". This gives rise to an act of mistaken compassion which he intends, with kindness, to "help" Wait. Notwithstanding, Allistoun's humanity comes across; the concluding comment that "He might have been half a man once" is not dismissive on the grounds of Wait's colour but on those of other shortcomings as man, shipmate and sailor.

Allistoun's genuine recognition of Wait's humanity and his membership of the ship's company chimes with Wait's announcement/challenge, "'I belong to the ship'" (p.10). This challenge/assertion is made early on and is a claim both to membership of the crew and, for us at least, to a common humanity. Allistoun's real sympathy with Wait contrasts with Donkin's specious "'Soon show'm we ain't boys . . .'" - "'The man's a man if he is black'" (p.74). The anonymous "'That man is a shipmate'", in contrast, contains an element of authenticity absent from Donkin's words. Donkin's avowed feeling for Jimmy is simply a question of self-interest; ultimately he robs him and isn't even present at Wait's funeral.

At the end of the book, Donkin's invitation to the crew to join him for a drink (a form of communal, social activity) is, to Donkin's apparent surprise, uncompromisingly and categorically refused. In a sense, Donkin fails to understand what truly binds the crewmen together. A good example of his basic failure to understand the men and the codes which sustain them occurs when the *Narcissus* is on her side.

Baker sharply admonishes Knowles for securing himself with a long piece of rigging. Knowles and those who hear the exchange are comforted by the familiarity of this rebuke, "It was like the whiff of hope, like a reminder of safer days" (p.47). Donkin immediately reacts by trying to exploit what he sees as a further example of the cruelty and inhumanity of the officers, "'Ear him; that's the way they tawlck to us'". The rest of the crewmen refuse to side with him and he is quickly slapped down:

'You'll get one across the mug from me directly,'
said an invisible seaman, in a weary tone, 'I
won't let the mate have the trouble.'

Even Donkin has, on one level, been admitted to the ship's company, if only in having received its charity and

indulgence. It becomes clear however that his voice must be silenced if the community is to endure and to thrive.

The overwhelming thrust of *The Nigger's* dominant voices is for the exclusion and expulsion of Donkin and Wait. To concentrate on the humanizing or humane voices in *The Nigger*, be it Allistoun's, Belfast's or even that expressed in Podmore's proselytizing fervour, is to distort the impression we carry away with us after reading the novel. Even Allistoun's comment that Wait "might have been half a man once" has the effect of placing him beyond the pale, i.e. *now* he is no longer a man. On this alternative reading the remark merely acknowledges the possibility of Wait's half-humanity. Given what happens to Wait, we can only view with some scepticism the sentimentality of the narrator who ends the novel for whom the seamen are "brothers" (p.107).

Are Donkin and Wait numbered amongst this fraternity, are the novel's anti-heroes/*isolatos* admitted to the ship's *company*, its community? The question remains unresolved. What is true of Wait and Donkin is true also of Darl and Addie; they become, through both metaphor and plot structure, representatives of certain qualities which are found, ultimately, to be inimicable to the maintenance of a stable community and stable community values. However we view these characters, their despatch whether to lunatic asylum, grave or, indeed as in the case of Donkin, an irredeemable life ashore, is seen as a requisite for the continuation of an ordered existence.

Forgiveness and forgetting

As we have observed, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and *As I Lay Dying* both feature journeys between which there are a number of parallels of which we may remind ourselves here. Firstly, the *Narcissus* sails from Bombay, a 'savage' or 'primitive' city, to London, capital of the Empire and one of the great industrialized and 'civilized' cities of the world.

Likewise, the Bundrens travel from their 'primitive' hill dwellings to the relative sophistication of Jefferson, a city of the plain. Further, both the crew and the Bundrens journey through privation to states of relative ease, through poverty/material distress and conflict to a degree of comfort and stability (a new house/wife, wages/the Black Horse).

The seamen (minus Donkin and the 'I' narrator, an intriguing juxtaposition) end up relaxing in the pub with money in their pockets whilst the Bundrens enjoy the ease and prosperity offered by the new money of the new Mrs Bundren as exemplified by the gramophone and mail-order records. In the end, community and stability, of a kind, if not the *status quo ante*, has been restored. The disruptive elements (Darl, Wait, Addie, Donkin) have been eliminated and order reestablished. So, the values which the novels have done so much to overturn are ultimately reasserted.

Wait and Addie can be seen as sacrificial lambs or scapegoats whose banishment (as well as physical death) symbolizes an expiation of the sin, guilt and shame of the past (the community?), i.e. the obliteration of painful memories/realities. They must be lost in order that something (endurance, continuation, however 'illusory') be gained. Their burial represents a kind of repression or control, after all. Certain mythical patterns can be read into the deaths of Addie and Wait (e.g. Christ the sacrificial lamb, the Fisher King, the Scapegoat), myths which embody ideas of suffering, death, new life, redemption, continuation, endurance, *forgetting*.

The river crossing is not only a trial or test. It can also be read as part of a process of disposal and renewal, *remembering* before expunging. What is being suggested, here, is the 'wisdom' that, in the end, allowing bygones to remain bygones is essential if things are to 'carry on'. Forgetting is at the heart of the Faulknerian idea of reconciliation. The capacity to perform or to recognize an act of disposal and then of reconciliation is absent from Faulkner's

intellectuals who are sensitives/madmen, individuals who can only *remember* (Hightower, Darl, Quentin).

The novels' moralize in an oblique way. The message is that there should be a day of remembrance and that then there must be reconciliation, perhaps resignation, depending on our view of the basis of this 'reconciliation'. This does not imply total oblivion as the parallel I have drawn with the Lethe would suggest. Darl, Hightower, Jim, Quentin, Christmas and Belfast, just as the reader, cannot dispose of their experiences.

The process of actually and metaphorically burying the dead (a form of physical 'disposal') is the way society maintains a sense of order, community, stability, 'burying' disruptive spiritual and cultural forces. The funeral ritual itself is a form of ceremonial 'remembrance', prelude to eternal banishment which is our common fate, i.e. death.

The river crossing, as we have said, suggests various rivers from history and mythology including the Lethe. In so far as forgetting of a sort represents an aspect of this necessary process of 'disposal', the crossing represents a collective 'drinking' from the Lethe. There are parallels between this myth and the Christian Eucharist which features communal drinking from the same cup, a ritual which is both an enactment of solidarity and an expression of common faith (note the meaning of 'communion' which can refer both to the celebration of the Eucharist as well as to religious *and* social faith¹¹³ as well as a thanksgiving for deliverance from past trials and a highly formalized articulation of hope for the future.

The notion of disposal and reconciliation is intimately connected with the idea of solidarity. Even after Wait's death and the end of the journey, Belfast cannot forget. In the end, the 'I' narrator leaves him behind as do the others. There is a time and a place for remembrance for a wife and mother, or a dead companion, a moment's silence, a moment's grief. After a brief period of time, perhaps decent, perhaps

not, life goes/must go on; Cash listens to his new records, Anse enjoys his new teeth and his new wife, and the crewmen 'drown' the past/their sorrows and 'create' a world of temporary/illusory joy in *The Black Horse*.

In the end, those who endure, those who dance to the rhythms of a secular beat follow the 'commandments' of a social deity, i.e. Routine. Even Dilsey, who has seen "de first en de last"¹¹⁴ obeys the exigences of the quotidian world, chronology and social duty (of which *moral* duty, according to Addie, is, through language, a function). As Darl says, perhaps rightly perhaps not, treachery is "preferable" to any kind of honesty because it possesses a "bland outside" (p.134).

Darl, like the terrorist and the idealist, cannot forget. His personal act of terrorism is one of folly. He too is "tricked" by words. He mistakes them for deeds and for reality when he says

the safe things are just the things that folks
have been doing for so long they have worn the
edges off [. . .] (p.132)

This calls to mind, as Faulkner must have been aware, Conrad's formulation from the preface to *The Nigger*, "the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage" (p.146). Darl fails to recognize what Synge's Pegeen, another 'simple' character, says in *The Playboy* when she sees through Christy Mahon's *braggodocio*: "there's a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed".¹¹⁵

Both *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying* close equivocally even though they end with a restoration, a reäffirmation of faith, the reëstablishment of the dominant/conventional order of things. The following passages from *The Nigger* and *As I Lay*

Dying each in their own way disposes of or detaches itself from painful experiences. Cash and the 'I' narrator in a kind of smoothing over banish the anxiety and turmoil of what has happened. Cash observes,

And then I see that the grip she was carrying was one of them little graphophones. It was for a fact, all shut up as pretty as a picture, and every time a new record would come from the mail order and us setting in the house in the winter, listening to it, I would think what a shame Darl couldn't be here to enjoy it too [*sic*]. But it is better so for him. This world is not his world; this life his life.

'It's Cash and Jewel and Vardaman and Dewey Dell,' pa says, kind of hangdog and proud, with his teeth and all, even if he wouldn't look at us.

'Meet Mrs. Bundren,' he says. (p.261)

A gone shipmate, like any other man, is gone for ever; and I never met one of them again. But at times the spring-flood of memory sets with force up the dark River of the Nine Bends. Then on the waters of the forlorn stream drifts a ship - a shadowy ship manned by a crew of Shades. They pass and make a sign in the shadowy hail. Haven't we, together and upon the immortal sea wrung out a meaning from our sinful lives? Goodbye, brothers! You were a good crowd. As good a crowd as ever fisted with wild cries the beating canvas of a heavy foresail; or tossing aloft, invisible in the night, gave back yell for yell to a westerly gale. (p.107)

Both these endings are in part sentimental affirmations of certain values or visions (though the Faulkner is, in addition, highly parodic). Yet, paradoxically, they contain the seed or kernel of their own deconstruction. Cash's paraleptic "setting in the house in the winter" suggests a harmonious family scene, the reestablishment of a stable family unit. The passage itself as well as the "graphophone"

conveys a "pretty [. . .] picture" in stark contrast to many of the 'pictures' offered us in the rest of the book.

Likewise, Conrad's narrator is conjuring an image of the crew which we can barely recognize from what has gone before. The crewmen, as we have seen them variously presented in the novel are, indeed, "gone for ever". It is as if a process of forgetting, denial and suppression is taking place. To effect this reordering (distortion?), the narrator indulges in a necessary mythologizing and sentimentalizing of what has gone before. The 'I' narrator has had to detach himself from both Wait and the moral, epistemological and spiritual abyss which he and his story represent. Confronted by Belfast's "inconsolable sorrow" (p.106) the "brunt of" which he isn't "anxious to stand", he writes "I disengaged myself gently . . . 'So long!' I said, and went on my way". Like a tug disengaging from some monstrous vessel, he unburdens and unshackles himself and continues on his "way" hindered only by the occasional "spring-flood of memory".

As Henricksen implies, the emergence of the 'I' is a sign that the narrator, in order to forget the trauma which he has experienced, has had to retreat into a world of private motivation and individualism. In short, though he has told the crewmen's story, he has found it impossible to find a set of workable communal values that will accommodate the conflicts to which the text has given expression, so he abandons the seamen in all but sentiment.

Again, as Henricksen suggests, this mirrors Conrad's own passage from the communal environment of the Merchant Marine to the pursuance of a deeply individual and individualistic career in literature. Yet, as Conrad announces in the preface to *The Nigger*, his career as a writer of fictions is also an attempt to create a *new* kind of community/solidarity achieved/worked for between author and reader.

The question "Haven't we, together [. . .] wrung out meaning [. . .] from our sinful lives?" (p.107) echoes the tone of the *Nigger's* preface ("that glimpse of truth", "that

feeling of unavoidable solidarity" [p.146]). The very fact that this is expressed as a question undermines the sense of affirmation which is intended, on one level, to lie behind it. Its suggestion that "meaning" is "wrung out" seems odd appearing as it does in a novel whose dominant voices see meaning as clear, unequivocal and in no need of being "wrung out".

For these speakers, meaning is linear, transparent, self-evident and, emphatically, *there*. The 'I' narrator has made a voyage, a *passage* across his own Lethe to a state of necessary, near-total amnesia. Yet, he also wishes to 'communicate' the journey, to record or 'log' it. Notwithstanding, the word "together" unmistakably suggests an appeal to community and solidarity. Clearly, the "we" refers to the seamen as does "my brothers". Perhaps, it also refers to the reader and the author who are, now, figuratively, parting company after a collaborative attempt to create "meaning".

According to the Norton edition of *The Nigger*, "the dark river of the Nine Bends" (p.107) is "Conrad's private mythologizing of a merged Thames and Styx, the river of the dead".¹¹⁶ The 'new birth' which the emergence of the 'I' narrator represents has arguably been conceived by a "sentimental lie" (p.96). No wonder Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* so acutely and painfully makes the direct connection between mortality and mendacity. The 'rebirth' represented both by the ending of *The Nigger* and the reconstruction of the Bundren family are at once comforting and deeply suspect.

The semi-parodic familial scene with which *As I Lay Dying* ends is itself a "sentimental lie". Vardaman and Dewey Dell have got their bananas, Anse his new wife and Cash his "graphophone". Cash accepts his situation, buries the dead and reconciles himself to what has happened in a way that it is impossible for Darl to do. Cash is not insensitive to brutality yet he sees the good sense, the necessity, indeed, of ultimately dismissing it. We cannot help but respond to

the comic *and* uncomfortable introduction of "Mrs. Bundren" to those who have just transported the other "Mrs. Bundren" many miles to her burial.

Cash notes that Anse is partly ashamed, "hangdog" (p.261) yet "proud" all the same, "even if he wouldn't look at us": even Anse feels some remorse. Nevertheless, Cash seems content to accept the relative ease and material comfort which the new arrangement offers as he himself emerges, like the 'I' narrator of *The Nigger*, into a kind of materialistic individualism. That is to say, Cash, like the 'I' narrator, puts himself first and concentrates on his own interests and pursuits.

The burying of the dead, the abandonment of Darl and Belfast are a metaphorical 'taking out the trash'. Once dead, a body, literally, becomes detritus. New corpses quickly start to smell. Darl, Hightower *et al* embody in their very natures a kind of 'bad odour' which their communities would prefer to neutralize/ignore. Indeed, though they are not to blame for who they are, they must, like Billy Budd or Camus's stranger, bear responsibility for themselves.

Yet, before we find ourselves being too hard on Cash and the 'I' narrator, we should remember that Cash's judgement on Darl, unlike Jewel's and Dewey Dell's, is dispensed with compassion. He condemns yet understands: in other words, he *forgives*. The 'I' narrator detaches himself from the crew but leaves no harsh judgements in the air. He may be sentimentalizing but he is also, like Allistoun and Baker, humane. Whether his lack of condemnation simply reflects his disinterest, detachment and desire to escape or whether it can be regarded as a species of 'forgiveness' is moot, however.

Choosing the lesser of two evils: the 'victory' and 'defeat' of Anse Bundren

As I Lay Dying does not seek merely to present "irreconcilable antagonisms". It, as we, seeks to reconcile them. Yet, the antagonistic positions which Anse and Addie represent are ambivalent even within their own terms. In Anse's case, this ambivalence rests with the reader, taking the form of irony at the character's expense. The reader shares with the author, a sense of Anse's hypocrisy or lack of self-knowledge (his self-deception). Anse possesses a capacity for the self-serving and self-justifying (an affliction which, admittedly, he shares with all humanity). He, like most of us, has a propensity to make excuses to and for himself.

Addie's position, on the other hand, is radically ambivalent in terms of the ideas, the 'philosophical' worldview(s) it espouses. Addie's perspective is a double perspective: it is janiform, i.e. it looks both ways. In crude terms, Addie is the spokesperson of values, concepts and qualities to do with 'horizontalities'; it is she who wins the battle of words (words go *along*), wit and action. If death and doing are horizontal qualities, then horizontality (mortality, the coffin) is our ultimate and inescapable fate. Addie remembers "how my father used to say that the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time" (p.169).

Words, language, according to Addie, are somehow inherently corrupt. At the same time, paradoxically, it is the users of language who are responsible for the lies, the deception perpetrated through language. In a further twist, the deceiver is the deceived. Addie and Anse both trick and are tricked. The idea that it is the woman (Eve) who was deceived in the first place is both sponsored and subverted since Addie, also, in the beginning was deceived and now goes on, through deceit, to wreak her revenge on her husband.

In the Beginning also the Serpent (Addie-Adder?) deceived Eve, yet we note that Satan himself was tricked by words (the Word) older than himself. Addie shows both "scorn" and "pity"¹¹⁷ for Lucifer, sympathy for the devil, just as she holds in both contempt and sympathy the victims of this verbal/ideological trickery, Cora Tull for example.

The question of who wins the argument between Anse and Addie is not a frivolous one. It is in fact crucial to an understanding of the novel. Does Addie wreak her revenge by making Anse move against his will and by indirectly heaping on his (and her family's) head the humiliation and suffering engendered by the journey? Cash finishes a cripple and Dewey Dell is traumatized by her own encounter with motherhood. Darl is betrayed by his own family and ends up in a lunatic asylum. Anse, in receipt of what seems like disproportionate good fortune, gets a new wife and a new set of teeth. Jewel survives intact it seems.

Maybe, it has been Addie's intention to wreak revenge not only on Anse but on *his* progeny as well. She is not entirely successful however; Cash receives the compensation of music and Darl the gift of laughter. We remember that the basis of Addie's revenge, by her own testimony, lies in the fact that Anse "would never know" (p.173).

Nevertheless, Anse is aware of the implications of the journey; he tells himself "It's bad that a fellow must earn the rewards of his right-doing by floutin hisself and his dead" (p.111). He remains, however, ignorant of the true measure of his own involvement, preferring to blame his "durn passel of boys" (p.106). He expresses out loud the sentiment that "'The Lord will pardon me and excuse the conduct of them He sent me'" (p.106). And of course he is compensated by the promise of a set of dentures, "But now I can get them teeth. That will be a comfort. It will" (p.111).

Looking beyond Addie and Anse for a moment, Darl's reflections on the nature of his family's self-deception employs the same metaphorical coördinates as the language

'debate' between Addie and Anse but reverses the 'polarity' of the values that Addie ascribes to them, i.e. up/language/bad/sham vs. along/doing/good/authentic. The Bundrens refuse to face the fact of Jewel's deceit, Darl tells us. It (the deceit) was allowed to run "*along quiet* [. . .] all of us let ourselves be deceived" (p.134, my emphasis). Here, horizontal motion is equated with deceit, not with the authenticity or 'reality' with which it is associated in Addie's discourse. Communication, the honest use of language, would have destroyed deception. Darl's perspective on the 'up/along' imagery matches Anse's (cf. his ruminations which begin, "Durn that road [. . .] longways, like a road [. . .] up-and-down ways, like a tree or a man" {pp.35-36}).

Darl's commitment to language is consistent with his quasi-authorial status and with aesthetic sensibilities in a lyrical and romantic tradition which characterize much of his discourse. Ultimately however, he proves to misunderstand the relationship between words and deeds; he does what Cash only thinks of doing but *crucially* does not do, "And me being the oldest, and thinking already the very thing that he done" (p.234) as Cash observes.

Further, he shows either a disregard or unawareness of what Anse expresses as "regard for what folks says about my flesh and blood" (p.105; note the literal as well as the metaphorical meaning of "my flesh and blood" which foregrounds Anse's egotism). Darl, like Camus's stranger, either does not know the effect his behaviour will have upon the opinion of others or does not care, "Darl begun to laugh" (p.105) Anse tells us, "[. . .] with his dead ma laying in her coffin at his feet, laughing". Anse, of course, has a sharp sense of the power and nature of community judgement, "How many times I told him it's doing such things as that that makes folks talk about him, I don't know".

As Tull powerfully observes, it is Darl's excessive sensitivity which makes him unable to 'endure' (in the sense of 'put up with' as well as 'survive'),

Now and then a fellow gets to thinking about it. Not often, though. Which is a good thing. For the Lord aimed for him to do and not to spend too much time thinking, because his brain it's like a piece of machinery: it won't stand a whole lot of racking. It's best when it all runs along the same, doing the day's work and not no one part used no more than needful [. . .] that's ever the living thing the matter with Darl. (p.71)

Anse, repellent as he is, understands the need for and the nature of human community. In fact, he shows himself extremely adept at exploiting it. Anse knows, as Armstid reports him saying, "'A man'll always help a fellow in a tight, if he's got ere a drop of Christian blood in him'" (p.185). Darl and Addie, idealist and cynic respectively, are unable to identify with their community, so the need for their eradication/expulsion.

Addie resists Cora's plea, "I begged her to kneel" (p.168), a scene, as we have said, reminiscent of Podmore's appeal to Wait to repent. The childless Cora is ignorant of Addie's adultery and is chided by Addie (silently) for knowing nothing of sin or motherhood. Yet, it is Cora, not Addie, that endures. Though a doubter and a questioner like his brother, Cash sees the essential need for eventual acquiescence/quiet acceptance, i.e. to ensure continuity. Those who are able to affirm, with whatever reservations or anxieties, endure in the end. So Cora, Cash and Anse 'outlive' Darl and Addie.

The choice implied in the title of this section, becomes the text's (the author's) and the reader's. Our choice however remains equivocal since the closure of a novel (the act of having read it) does not close or silence interpretation debate. This is why there is 'victory' and

'defeat'. Even if, structurally, the novels 'give the game' (i.e. 'victory') to Anse/Cash or the 'I' narrator, the novels as a whole, or rather possible readings of them, contain the seeds of 'defeat'; in other words, in the light of what we have read, we challenge their closures. This is what I mean when I describe Anse's 'victory' and that of *The Nigger's* 'I' narrator, also, as 'defeat'. In modification of Faulkner's own sentiments in the Nobel Prize address, to "endure" is not necessarily to "prevail".¹¹⁸

Making choices

Notwithstanding, in the end I believe, the novels, however equivocally, do make their choices. That choice is for the need for the reestablishment of a stable view of the world, of *Terra Firma* (in the case of the river crossing and the ocean voyage, literally). The novels' subversive voices, though they radically challenge that view, are subdued if not silenced in the end. The values that are 'supported' or 'privileged', ultimately, are those of Cash and Anse, and those of *The Nigger's* conservative voices. The parodic yet real familial harmony which Cash invokes at the end of *As I Lay Dying* has come about through the reemergence of a normative and dominant world-view. The threat of the indeterminacy and uncertainty of what Darl and Addie represent, the dangers of the shifting *Logos*, doubt, *ressentiment* have been overcome.

Likewise, the sentimental concluding 'I' narrator of *The Nigger* gives valedictory voice to a parodic yet real/necessary sense of his experience of the crew and the events we and he have witnessed. His representations are distorted as Henricksen suggests, yet we are driven to accept that for the speaker's continued psychological good health 'distortion' becomes a *necessary* sham. Can we truly condemn his desire to keep anxiety, "the brunt" (p.106) of Belfast's "inconsolable sorrow" at bay, and to distance himself from

what has given him pain/fear as well as pleasure/diversion. As Cash says goodbye to his brother, Darl, so the 'I' narrator bids a fond farewell to *his* "brothers" (p.107).

Anse endures, like Cash, by asserting the *fixity* of the Word and of words. There is a 'restoration' at the end of *As I Lay Dying* which is analogous to Marlow's lie to the Intended at the end of *Heart of Darkness*. Marlow, albeit self-consciously, reasserts the prevalence of an order which is essential if the illusions of the Intended are to be sustained. Despite the fact that Marlow has 'chosen' Kurtz, his lie, in a wider sense, becomes a metonym for his own involvement in the continued existence and success of the order of which he is part.

Though for the purposes of interpretation the voices of the novel exist simultaneously for the reader, Cash and Anse, by reasserting conservative or traditional values, manage to subdue the novel's subversive voices in as much as theirs are the last voices we hear. The novels' closures 'privilege' the voices which are speaking, as it were, 'at the final whistle'.

Inevitably, the reader is forced into redefining the rights and wrongs of what has gone before according to the dominant values which are offered us at the end. Like the subjugated voices in the book, we are coerced into adopting values which, though clearly oppressive and destructive, are seen to be necessary, inevitable and, by those tokens, 'victorious', albeit equivocally. This is clearly the case though with the caveat that, as we have already said, persuasive and powerful as the endings are, they do not, for the reader, silence debate.

The point is that this 'privileging' is as much as anything else a product of the novels' plot structures. Yet, it is quite possible to read the novels selectively as morality tales. The characters that 'win out', that are left standing, as well as speaking at the end, are curious heroes however. Jewel rescues Addie only to have her buried and it is

important that she be finally 'rooted' in the ground. Jewel's act is not only one of love and loyalty, it is also an unwitting expression, a dramatisation, of the need to capture and fix Addie who, on one level, represents, as we have seen, a threat to stable meaning.

Wait, like Addie, is the locus of indeterminacy in *The Nigger*. This is why he (and she) can be seen, according to the dominant perspectives of the novels, as the loci not merely of indeterminacy but of the lie. Likewise, Darl also has to be 'fixed' or 'pinned down'. As Jewel observes:

"You want to fix him now?"

"Fix him?" pa said.

"Catch him and tie him up," Jewel said. (p.233)

The questions of the 'rightness' of the rescues of both Addie and Wait vexes both books. In *The Nigger* however, to rescue Wait is to permit the continued existence of the originator of imbalance, instability and indeterminacy, a form of disturbance or "unrest" (p.55) which is anything but "desired" either by the dominant voices or arguably by the men. In *As I Lay Dying*, in contrast, Addie's 'rescue' simply brings her closer to her final resting place.

Wait's rescue is a deeply suspect if not foolish act (not in the interests of the ship) as well as representing genuine charity and concern on the part of the crewmen. Likewise, Addie's 'rescue' from the flood is both a sacrilegious act *and* one which abides by established community values: facilitating the honouring of the wishes and the Christian burial of the dead, observing conventional custom and ritual and so on.

Though the journey of the stinking corpse (and family) is found loathsome by some, for example Darl, the wives of Armstid and Samson, Cora (though all for different reasons), they (apart from Darl) still recognize or reluctantly accept the necessity for and the rightness of her burial. Addie and

Wait are the scapegoats or the Christ figures who bear away the sin of the communities of which they form part; they are also demons who must be exorcised or banished. That is why their final departure is, if not necessarily sought, at least met with relief by those around them.

Let us look again at Cash's observation in the fifty-third monologue of the novel, his fourth: he says,

I thought more than once before we crossed the river and after, how it would be God's blessing if He did take her outen our hands and get shut of her in some clean way, and it seemed to me that when Jewel worked so to get her outen the river, he was going against God in a way, and when Darl seen that it looked like one of us would have to do something, I can almost believe he done right in a way. But I don't reckon nothing excuses setting fire to a man's barn and endangering his stock and destroying his property. (p.233)

The most important words here are "seemed" and "almost". *Almost* "going against God" is tantamount to not going against him at all. In the light of Cash's final judgement on Darl, the "almost" possesses the power of an outright negative statement. Marlovian in his sensitivity to the complexity of the moral question and his capacity to sympathize with his mad brother, Cash is prepared, intellectually, to contemplate an inversion of the established order; he "can almost believe".

Yet, also like Marlow, he is capable of a detachment of feeling; the "get shut of her [his mother!]" (p.233) is, if not contemptuous, tired and almost uninterested. This streak of indifference/fatigue is conveyed in the clichéd and vague "in a clean way"; indeed, some would call this cynical. Cash is spiritually as well as physically exhausted, metaphorically and actually wounded, though he sympathizes with Darl.

In the novel's penultimate paragraph, talking of the gramophone and the Bundren's new life he says, "I would think what a shame Darl couldn't be [there] to enjoy it too" (p.261). Cash is nevertheless resigned to what has happened. It is the wisdom of silence that limits his bold reflections to the realm of thought rather than speech; he thinks it, rather than voicing it to his family, "I would think [. . .]" (p.261).

Cash knows that there is no "clean" (p.233) way (other than an act of God) to dispose of the coffin, apart from a decent Christian burial. He knows, also like Marlow, that a degree of inurement, if not insensitivity, is necessary for continued constructive existence and the maintenance of stable emotions/social relations. Marlow's lie to the Intended is a self-conscious sham on his part. He, like his author and the reader, and unlike the Intended, *knows* that words are bewildering, confusing and deceptive. Yet, they are necessary, perhaps even illuminating at times.

Though the representatives of 'the lie' (which may, of course, be 'a truth') must be expunged, it remains, the argument goes, a 'necessary' sleight of hand. It is *essential* to continuity, community and 'civilisation', however limited the realities of these ideals may be. Though aware of and sensitive to moral contradiction and ambivalence and the play of antagonisms, Cash recognizes the necessity of making choices, coming to judgements and acting upon them. We note the uncompromising conclusion to Cash's sympathetic reflections:

But I don't reckon nothing excuses setting
fire to a man's barn and endangering his stock
and destroying his property.

Even if we accept a reading which suggests that Cash feels that Jewel *has* gone against God, it is a question of sin rather than crime, left to the Lord to sort out and punish as

he pleases. Darl, on the other hand, has committed a *crime* which is a social, human thing, rather than merely a sin. Jewel may be a sinner (a liar, a deceiver) but he is not a criminal; Darl may be a saint (to Kate and to Cora, especially) but he is also an arsonist. So it is that Darl is not of "This world" (p.261), not of this "life" and like the Grand Inquisitor's Christ in *Brothers Karamazov*, he must be banished for the 'common' good. Darl, as we have said, misunderstands (or perhaps understands too well?) the relationship between words and deeds.

Cash clearly bases his last judgement of Darl on his brother's incapacity to coëxist with and to see the world as does his fellow man:

That's how I reckon a man is crazy. That's how he can't see eye to eye with folks. And I reckon they aint nothing else to do with him but what the most folks say is right. (pp.233-234)

Cash's conservative sentiment is *perhaps* a gloss on the notion that, in the end, values are constructs and do not exist in essence (though it could easily be read in the opposite way). In any case, they are created by the operation of disparate and warring individual temperaments. Right thinking and right conduct lie in the suppression of those individual characteristics which are incompatible with dominant social values. Truth, it may be, is determined not by the Word (ontological, essential) but by "words" (ontic, conditional, contingent).

Whatever the philosophical facts of the matter, truth is a construct, a social consensus/belief. As Cash reflects, "It's like it aint so much what a fellow does, but it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him when he does it" (p.233). Even from a purely solipsistic standpoint, right conduct must lie in an abnegation of self, self-restraint, self-inhibition, self-control.

We remember that Cash tells us that "me and him was born close together" (p.234). The statement is a resonant one. It is clear that Cash sympathizes with and feels close to Darl; he says of the others "I feel kin to them, all right, but I don't know". This increases our sympathy for the difficulty of Cash's decision to turn his back on his brother (because he feels close to him) as well as intensifying our sense of the enormity of his betrayal.

Cash does, of course, have a choice, "It was either send him to Jackson, or have Gillespie sue us" (p.232). In the end, Cash concurs with Anse that there "wasn't nothing else to do" (p.233) though he does win out against Jewel in granting Darl the small mercy of allowing him to attend his mother's funeral. In the end, Darl's fault lies in his failure to be 'recognizant' of certain standards of behaviour, *social* 'rights and wrongs'. It consists in a failure of observances, and of 'recognizance' of social obligation. In short, he betrays himself not so much by the way he speaks as by the way he "acted" (p.232).

As we have said, each of the main characters in both novels has a weight (Wait) of responsibility thrust upon him. It is this responsibility which Samson, for example, finds most difficult, most pressing about the Bundrens' presence. Wait and Donkin in *The Nigger* and the Bundrens in *As I Lay Dying* create situations which demand a moral response from those around.

For Jewel, the matter of proper conduct appears unproblematic. He unhesitatingly rescues Addie from fire and water and spontaneously condemns his brother for barn-burning. In the immediacy and implacability of his will and his certainty as to his righteousness, he brings to mind Doc Hines or Percy Grimm in *Light in August*.

The mutiny in *The Nigger*, which features the spectacle of brother of the sea against brother of the sea as well as crew against officers, represents a breakdown of community and consensus. The antagonists lose a concrete sense of the

values on which their assigned 'place' in the 'order of things' is based. In *As I Lay Dying*, the disintegration of the family, the death of Addie and the threat of disorder that this death and disintegration represent, is assuaged by a ritual burial which paves the way for the restoration of order/'normality' and the creation of the conditions for Anse's remarriage and domiciliary coexistence if not harmony.

As I Lay Dying closes with the achievement of a degree of social and economic satisfaction, however partial - enough to maintain a cohesive if uneasy truce. In this respect, the trajectories of both *The Nigger* and the Faulkner novel are the same; both seek to restore order or a situation as close as possible to the *status quo ante* and to 'deal' with its disruptive elements (discursive interference as represented by the novels' dissenting voices). The order has absorbed/neutralized its antagonists more than adapted to them.

This is an aspect of the function of the novels' closures which only partially succeed in silencing the antagonistic play of competing discourses. Though we may realize that ultimately discourse can only be the subject/object of other discourses (i.e. discourse can only be its own object), we also accept the insufficiency of this knowledge in the face of the problem of existence/experience. In other words, that which we may assert to be 'objectively' true, i.e. that all discourses are in the end *interchangeable* and not capable of being hierarchized, is, in the end, impossible to reconcile with any notion of sane, ordered *meaningful* subjective being.

Writing down philosophy: the position of the authors in relation to their work: public and 'private' voices

In this section, I want to look at some of Faulkner's and Conrad's own remarks, opinions and observations and to see how they might increase our understanding of *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*. This, of course, is in violation of Forster's

admonition not to try to write an author (Conrad) down "philosophically".¹¹⁹ It is however more a question of assessing the extent to which our chosen authors have written their 'philosophy', 'history' and 'experience' (in other words, *themselves*) into their texts.

It follows that it is the novels as much as their creators that we are 'writing down', i.e. the degree to which they have been written or, in the jargon, 'inscribed' in their own work. What follows does not pretend to be an extensive or exhaustive overview of the subject. The intention is simply to bring a number of issues together in ways which seem valuable or illuminating rather than to *test* 'values', as it were, distilled from the texts, against the authors' opinions as expressed in criticism, letters, essays, public pronouncements and so on.

Before we look at what they write, elsewhere, on subjects or in ways relevant to *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*, I want to point to an interesting characteristic of Faulkner's and Conrad's utterances which is related to their native ambivalence, their divided consciousnesses, and which suggests parallels with Bakhtin's model of 'official' and 'unofficial intentions'. In part, these categories come as a result of Bakhtin's rejection of the Freudian Unconscious which, as Henricksen reminds us, he feels himself unable to accept. We all speak in public and private voices; for Faulkner and Conrad however the division is extraordinary in its depth.

Their utterances are often paradoxical and/or in apparent contradiction with sentiments expressed elsewhere. It is not merely that their opinions change with age or that they contradict themselves deliberately in order to outrage and bewilder the sensibilities of their readers. It is rather that they hold conflicting views because of their 'mixed feelings' on a variety of important issues. We can describe this conflict as a division between 'private' and 'public' utterances: what they feel, what they want to feel, what they

pretend to feel for whatever reason (pretend to themselves, perhaps, as well as others).

Conrad's letters to Henley, for example, are calculated, as we have seen, to gain his approval. To be fair to Conrad, career considerations or the matter of pleasing his audience are not principally responsible for the split between public and private voice. Often in the letters, a certain elegance of tone or selectivity is due largely to a desire to flatter out of kindness. In the main, this division is traceable to the characteristic of profound ambivalence over any number of issues which Conrad and Faulkner share.

They combine a powerful need and desire to affirm together with a deep, ineluctable scepticism. This dichotomy which finds almost constant expression in their fictional works clearly lends itself, as we have already said, to Bakhtin's idea of a novel's/author's official and unofficial intentions. Clearly, the explorations conducted in both *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying* in 'outer' and 'inner' speech, relate profoundly to the authors' own divided experience, their own official and unofficial intentions/beliefs. There is evidence enough to support the contention that there is a marked contrast, as far as form and substance is concerned, between their public and private utterances, between utterances meant for consumption by the many and those meant for consumption by the few; or, at times, merely for consumption by different audiences.

Examples of what I would call the public utterance in Conrad are the ironically-titled *A Personal Record* and 'A Familiar Preface'. Faulkner's great public pronouncement is of course the 'Address upon Receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature'. These public words are 'personal', I believe, but only in the sense that they involve the assumption by the writer of specific personae. This assumption is genuine insofar as it draws upon sincerely held beliefs, i.e. a valid (not fraudulent) aspect of the writer's multifaceted personality.

In the 'Author's Note' to *A Personal Record*, Conrad talks of the "simple fellowship" of his Polish background and claims "a special regard for the rights of the underprivileged" which he locates "as far as possible from that humanitarianism" which he describes as "a matter of crazy nerves".¹²⁰ As we have said, ironically for a 'personal record', this work is one of the most public utterances of what we might call the 'public' Conrad.

The 'positive' use of the word "rights" for instance (a word particularly associated with Donkin) strikes us as odd when juxtaposed not only with the consistently anti-Donkin rhetoric of *The Nigger's* conservative narrator(s), whom of course we should not necessarily identify with Conrad, but with the uncompromising conservative pronouncements made elsewhere, in his letters for example. Nevertheless, there is evidence throughout Conrad's fictional and non-fictional work that suggests a radical ambivalence in his view of "the underprivileged" and their "rights", and as to ways they can/should be fulfilled/contained. As we saw in the first chapter, Faulkner shares both the concerns and the ambivalence.

In the preface to *The Nigger*, Conrad talks of "the old, old words" (p.146). In his speech on winning the Nobel Prize, Faulkner talks about

courage and honor and hope and pride and
compassion and pity and sacrifice which
have been the glory of his [man's] past.¹²¹

Faulkner here is using some of the "old words" of which Conrad speaks. The quotation also echoes the "loyalty" (p.6), "endurance", "courage" and "faith" of which Donkin, we are told, knows "nothing". We note that here at least Conrad's narrator says "nothing" about pity or compassion whereas Faulkner does.

Faulkner also talks in the address of "the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed"¹²² which finds a 'pre-echo' in Conrad's assertion of the simplicity of the 'truths' which underlie existence, "a few very simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills".¹²³ There is undoubtedly a romantic and primitivist dynamic to the imagination of both writers. Hence, there is a restorative or recuperative impulse present in much of the major fiction of Faulkner and Conrad and often embodied in narrative closure.

Though we (and they) may question the validity of these conventional forms of endings, what is unconventional about the endings of *The Nigger* and *As I lay Dying* is that the ultimate reassertion of traditional or established values does not necessarily redeem those values from the subversion/challenge to which they have been subjected. They do not escape by any means unscathed from the assault which they have undergone, despite the 'privilege' inherent in their very status as endings, i.e. coming *last*, from the point of view of plot, narrative and chronology. The novels' endings remain problematic even if, as we have seen, they *do* 'make choices'.

In the preface to *The Nigger*, Conrad talks of "fellowship", the

subtle but invisible conviction of solidarity
that knits together the loneliness of innumerable human hearts. (pp.145-146)

The paradox at the core of this formulation is crucial. There is a profound ambivalence in the yoking together of "loneliness" and "conviction of solidarity". Perhaps, it is in the '*invisibility*' of their "connection" (note the characteristic ocular metaphor) that the resolution to this paradox lies.

The participants in this "solidarity" feel alone and isolated precisely because they are unable to see, i.e. are unaware of or unable to experience collectively, that which binds them, i.e. mortality, their common fate. This state of affairs precludes the possibility of *sharing*. So the 'human condition', *itself*, stands in the way of 'human togetherness'. In our *common* isolation lies both the basis of and the obstacle to human solidarity. Solitude and solidarity are opposed.

Conrad meditates on aspects of this problem in a letter to Cunninghame-Graham dated 31st January 1898:

YES. Egoism is good, and altruism is good, and fidelity to nature would be the best of all, and systems could be built, and rules could be made - if we could only get rid of consciousness. What makes mankind tragic is not that they are the victims of nature, it is that they are conscious of it. To be part of the animal kingdom under the conditions of this earth is very well - but as soon as you know of your slavery the pain, the anger, the strife, the tragedy begins. We can't return to nature, since we can't change our place in it. Our refuge is in stupidity, in drunkenness of all kinds, in lies, in beliefs, in murder, thieving, reforming - in negation, in contempt - each man according to the promptings of his particular devil. There is no morality, no knowledge and no hope; there is only the consciousness of ourselves which drives us about a world that whether seen in a convex mirror is always but a vain and fleeting appearance. "Ote-toi de là que je m'y mette" is no more sound a rule than would be the reverse doctrine. It is however much easier to practice [*sic*].¹²⁴

The sentiments expressed here, "There is no morality, no knowledge and no hope", "Egoism is good and altruism is good", strike quite a different note from the patient and committed tone of *The Nigger's* preface. The kind of pessimism expressed is partly disingenuous. Yet, the letter gives, I believe, opposing terms in Conrad's internal 'debate', as

well as one half of a conversation of ideas with R.B. Cunninghame-Graham.

The assumption behind equating through apposition "lies" and "beliefs", "thieving" and "reforming", "Egoism" and "altruism" appears to run counter, as indeed the novel itself does, to the cautiously optimistic casting of the preface which was published in *The New Review* the month before Conrad wrote this letter. The letter is remarkable for its candour (Conrad does not speak of men as "the victims of nature" lightly), which, in itself, testifies to a depth of trust for his correspondent.

The pitfalls of language and the efficacy of toil

Faulkner's and Conrad's 'philosophies' are inseparable from their view of the inherent unreliability and insidiously deceptive nature of words. The dangers of language go beyond the perils of eloquence of the kind Donkin possesses and which enables him to exploit a credulous humanity. Language is untrustworthy and potentially dangerous even when used for the purposes of positive understanding. Though Jim is highly inarticulate, he nevertheless attempts to rationalize and explain in words something for which even the eloquent intellect of Charlie Marlow cannot in the end account: Jim remains 'under a cloud'.¹²⁵ It is impossible to ignore the powerful suggestion that intellect and the linguistic facility which its possession implies leads not to clear understanding but into a *pis aller*. Moreover, the intelligent and the articulate risk isolating themselves from the reality of the ordinary experience of ordinary people.

The more eloquent the speaker, e.g. Kurtz, the more radical and absolute the potential for this exclusion. Eloquence, intellect and awareness feed directly into this isolation. The simple Jim finds 'redemption' in a land of romantic adventure in which crucially he is able to believe. His very simplicity makes this possible. But the romantic cast of the

Patusan episode alerts us perhaps to an aspect of *Lord Jim's* closure that is ultimately unsatisfying or unconvincing (like the ending of *Huckleberry Finn*), i.e. the way human beings 'neutralize' unpalatable realities by postulating or bringing about 'romantic resolution' to their conflicts, dilemmas, or their novels. Of course, Conrad and Marlow both 'create' these resolutions and share our reservations.

Because of their sense of the possible 'danger' as well as the well-formed suspicion of the 'futility' of language, there is a tendency in Conrad and Faulkner to distrust the intellect (the intellectual) if not intelligence itself. Their preoccupation with the recuperative efficacy of work is rooted in the same soil as this distrust.

The major fiction of both writers testifies to a range of anxieties. To be aware is to suffer and in a sense the degree of consciousness/awareness dictates the degree of suffering. To paraphrase from the letter to Cunninghame-Graham written in January 1898, humanity's tragedy lies not in its suffering but in its *consciousness* of suffering (this is a staple of one kind of romantic or primitivist world-view [Blake, Hardy]).

It is in response to the anxiety of his consciousness of what is going on in the Congo that Marlow for example experiences a sense of overwhelming relief when he comes upon the seaman's manual. He embraces with passion both it and the unarguable marine wisdom which he imagines/wants it to contain as a source of stability and as a 'talisman' with which to stave off his own experience of himself as insane/evil, i.e. the consciousness of his own strangeness or otherness. Ironically, he cannot understand it because it is written in 'cipher', i.e. Russian.

This aspect of what we may, presumptuously perhaps, call the Conrad/Faulkner system of values is stongly present in both *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* and is itself given eloquent expression both in Addie's dark meditation on the evils of "words" as well as in the opening

(expressed in the infinite mood) of the fourth chapter of *The Nigger*:

So I took Anse. And when I knew that I had Cash, I knew that living was terrible and that this was the answer to it. That was when I learned that words are no good; that words dont [sic] 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. I knew that fear was invented by someone that had never had the fear; pride, who never had the pride [. . .] and that sin and love and fear are just sounds that people who never sinned nor loved nor feared have for what they never had and cannot have until they forget the words. (pp.172-173)

On men reprieved by its disdainful mercy, the immortal sea confers in its justice the full privilege of desired unrest. Through the perfect wisdom of its grace they are not permitted to meditate at ease upon the complicated and acrid savour of existence. They must without pause justify their life to the eternal pity that commands toil to be hard and unceasing, from sunrise to sunset, from sunset to sunrise; till the weary succession of nights and days tainted by the obstinate clamour of sages, demanding bliss and an empty heaven, is redeemed at last by the dumb fear and the dumb courage of men, obscure, forgetful, and enduring. (p.55)

I have examined both passages in detail elsewhere. Let me just once again draw attention to parallels between the "someone who had to have a word for it" and "sages, demanding bliss and an empty heaven", and between "the ones that had the children" and "men, obscure, forgetful, and enduring".

Both sequences can be read in part as critiques of language, or certain kinds of language use, and intellectuals or those who purport/would claim to speak for ordinary people/the inarticulate. Perhaps significantly, Addie and Conrad's narrator do just that, themselves speaking from

positions of superior knowledge, superior to "the ones that had the children" and those "men, obscure, forgetful, and enduring".

The "ones that had the children" know and care nothing about the words of that "someone". Likewise, Conrad's narrator knows, unlike the "men, obscure, forgetful, and enduring", of the "acrid savour of existence" though it is precisely those "men", naturally, who *experience* them. As such, we may be forgiven for 'hearing' the 'speakers' of these passages, in some sense, as author surrogates or feeling that, to some degree, what is being said enjoys the sympathy of or is underwritten by the author.

There is an immanent distrust, as ever in Conrad, of eloquence and ease of expression (the glib) throughout *The Nigger*. This extends to the ironization of the qualities of the aesthete, the sensitive, the humanist, the intellectual, all those whose sensibilities are felt to be excessive, decadent or morbid. It is a scepticism clearly shared by Faulkner.

The retrospective narrator of *The Nigger* tells us of Wait, "He was demoralising. Through him we were becoming highly humanized, tender, complex, excessively decadent" (p.85). Darl clearly is engulfed in the end by the destructive tendency of language, and the crew nearly succumbs to the eloquence of Donkin and Wait who embody a "sentimental lie" (p.96). Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* escapes its clutches because of his capacity for ultimate detachment and Cash because of a capacity for 'blind' loyalty, a capacity for 'deliberate unthinkingness' and a belief in the necessity of community values.

The great paradox of language is that that with which we seek to communicate can serve to divide us or to isolate us from one another. It undermines community (as on the ship) and, itself, generates/breeds lies, falsehood or at least misunderstanding. For Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, it is little wonder that the solid certainties (nuts, bolts,

mechanical principles) of engine repair in which he is compelled with a sense of some relief to engage become a source of comfort to him. Nevertheless, he is acutely, inescapably aware of the function that these tangible realities serve for him. The ineluctability for the sensitive of this problematic and paradoxical state of affairs is expressed in the fact that the title of that seaman's manual is unclear and in a foreign, *alien* language.

For Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* work is a way of 'killing' anxiety as well as time. The implication of all this is that with one's nose to the proverbial grindstone (a Cashian/Faulknerian metaphor, if ever there were one), one can thankfully avert one's gaze from one's own unbearable reflection(s), the self-consciousness of being and of reality.

In this way, Marlow obscures the terrible truth of the implication of his own involvement in the horrors of the Belgian Congo. Note that he suffers collapse only on his return. Work rescues Marlow from experiencing his existence as an insupportable burden. In the discharge of his 'proper' duties, Marlow finds solace whilst if not abetting, at least being passively involved in the perpetration of what he himself clearly recognizes as criminal.

Marlow's lie to the Intended at the end of *Heart of Darkness* is itself an expression of an intention, i.e. to match words and deeds. In other words, they are 'intended' to maintain her illusion of Kurtz and to bolster his own. Marlow is 'whistling in the dark' to keep up his spirits; in maintaining her faith in Kurtz, he helps maintain his own in 'things', the established order. This lie, which is more than mere lip-service, this act of treachery to the truth and faith to the system should perhaps have destroyed Marlow who claims a repugnance for lies, just as Jim's cowardice destroys Big Brierley's faith and ultimately leads him to take his own life.

Yet, this is not all there is in how the lie works in the narrative and what it means for Marlow. Marlow *does* expose his lie to a certain public, i.e. his hearers on the *Nellie*. Marlow is paradoxically honest in that he admits that even/especially truth is dispensable when it becomes a hindrance to "material interests"¹²⁶ or spiritual survival or even mere convenience, cf. Lord Jim, Razumov, *The Nigger's* 'I' narrator and so on.

At the beginning of the fourth chapter of *The Nigger*, the 'gnomic' narrator talks of "the eternal pity that commands toil to be hard and unceasing" (p.55). These issues are paramount in the conflict between the near-silent, hard-working Singleton and the eloquent, shirking Donkin. The emphasis on the virtues of hard, physical labour, the efficient and effective practice of one's craft and a disdain for ease is central to both *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*.

The values which cluster round the Cash/Cora (head/heart?) opposition in the Faulkner novel are common to both books and may be summarized thus: 'man should keep his face, as it were, near the ground (or the proverbial grindstone), remaining preoccupied with his own proper business, neither examining things too deeply nor contemplating the heavens'. In a sense, language is a *conductor* of awareness which can be both debilitating and damaging. As Tull observes of man and of Darl:

Now and then a fellow gets to thinking about it. Not often, though. Which is a good thing. For the Lord aimed for him to do and not to spend too much time thinking because his brain it's like a piece of machinery: it won't stand a whole lot of racking. It's best when it all runs along the same, doing the day's work and not no one part used no more than needful. I have said and I say again, that's ever living thing [sic] with Darl: he just thinks by himself too much. (p.71)

This echoes p.216 of the *The Secret Agent* where we read that

Mrs Verloc [Winnie], who always refrained from looking deep into things, was compelled to look into the very bottom of this thing. She saw there no haunting face, no reproachful shade, no vision of remorse, no sort of ideal conception. She saw there an object. That object was the gallows. Mrs Verloc was afraid of the gallows.

It is clear that Winnie's anxiety is not existential but concrete, fixed on the social and physical reality of the death penalty. Nevertheless, Conrad in his 'Author's Note' to the novel describes her "suspicion that 'life doesn't stand much looking into'" as "tragic".¹²⁷ For Conrad, "the absurd cruelty" of the "Greenwich Park explosion" is an artistic "necessity" because the cruel and the absurd lie at the heart of his own "tragic" vision. Though for Winnie this tragedy manifests itself in the image of "the gallows", for Conrad, her fear grows out of his (as opposed to her?) sense of "tragic" "necessity".

The restorative (if not redemptive) power of physical suffering, hard toil and privation is articulated by the narrator who opens the fourth chapter of *The Nigger* expressing what Cedric Watts describes as "hard primitivism".¹²⁸ Tull gives voice at least to the efficacy of "doing the day's work". We note incidentally the fact that "Its best when it all *runs along* the same" (my emphasis). As Darl observes however "deceit [runs] along quiet and monotonous" (p.134). Here as everywhere we can tease out ambiguities: deceit is wrong but necessary as a reaction to the complexities of a "'life'" that "'doesn't stand much looking into'".

Yet, merely to declare or to act according to the 'deceit is wrong' position is to smooth over the complexities and difficulties of responding to the many conflicts of human experience. The positions of Cash and Cora are not to be dismissed simply as some species of self-deceit, of contemptible quiescence/acceptance of whatever comes their

way, to *endure* mindlessly and without complaint the vicissitudes reserved for their class. Their lives are *exempla* for a set of values by which to live and an appeal to human beings not to rise above their proper concerns. It is a call to humility, a plea for stoicism and a warning against *hybris*. As Cash remarks in an observation which acknowledges the limitations of his approach in the very act of proposing it:

Folks seem to get away from the olden right teaching that says to drive the nails down and trim the edges well always like it was for your own use and comfort you were making it. It's like some folks has the smooth, pretty boards to build a courthouse with and others dont have no more than rough lumber fitten to build a chicken coop. But it's better to build a tight chicken coop than a shabby court-house [. . .] (p.234)

It is no coincidence that Cash in defence of "the olden right teaching" uses metaphors of building and craftsmanship. The "courthouse" represents high or lofty ideals just as the "chicken coop" represents moderate, perhaps lowly, albeit workable, values. Faulkner/Cash is making the point that sometimes pursuit of the Best (the Ideal) destroys the Good. The "smooth, pretty boards" correspond to the words of Darl Bundren which, for all his exalted consciousness, lead him to delusion and incarceration.

This positing of the dangers of awareness and the burden/pain which it imposes can manifest itself in Conrad as sententiousness and in Faulkner as folksy 'moralism': Conrad's "a few very simple ideas" or Faulkner's "verities". In their defence, Faulkner's and Conrad's assertions can be seen as the articulation of a desire for truth as much as an articulation of the truth itself. As such it indicates or alerts us to the absence as much as the presence of belief/verity.

There is a minor parallel here with Leavis' criticism of *Heart of Darkness* for its "adjectival insistence"¹²⁹ on the presence of something it could not produce. There is a sense in which the 'creeds' to which Faulkner and Conrad give voice are affirmations of half-belief, much in the character of Shatov's "I - I shall believe in God"¹³⁰ in Dostoevsky's *The Devils*. As Lunacharsky (quoted by Bakhtin) says of Dostoevsky, "he would like to believe in something [. . .] and would like to refute something".¹³¹

The *isolato* and the community

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the noun 'isolate' as an "isolated thing" and the past participle of the verb as "untypical, unique". Faulkner's and Conrad's heroes/antiheroes are generally *isolatos*, qualifying as such according to both definitions. Cleanth Brooks observes of the Bundrens, Addie and Darl in particular, that they have lost "the experience of community".¹³² It is the very loss of this experience that was perhaps never a possession, that lies at the heart of much of the great work of both Conrad and Faulkner including the novels that we are discussing.

We may decide that both Conrad's seamen and the Bundren family rediscover a lost sense of 'community' by the end of the novels. Questions remain, however. We may feel that the reestablishment of something like the *status quo ante* at the end of both books consists of false restoration and exclusion rather than (re-)discovery.

At the University of Virginia, Faulkner talks about the common feature of the Bundren's and the Compsons: "the need for solidarity in a country which not too long ago was still frontier".¹³³ The parallel in *The Nigger* is with the need for solidarity demanded by the exigences of life at sea (the sea is of course itself a frontier of sorts). Both writers are at pains to point out the danger (and the damage done) by

isolating oneself (accepting *de facto* isolation?) from the shared codes which form the basis of social order, whether it be in the form of the calm, lucid insanity of the Professor in *The Secret Agent*, the mad impetuosity of Darl Bundren, the vitriol and resentment of Donkin, the non-compliance of Wait or the passive, non-conformism and eccentricity of Hightower.

For those figures, Darl and Hightower especially, who *do* possess qualities of humanity, even of idealism, their all-consuming humanitarianism expresses itself as a form of 'rebellion' against the inhumanities of the 'real' world, which ironically becomes in itself an inhumanity. We remember Svidrigaylov in Dostoevsky's *The Devils* who, setting out to discover the principles of Utopia starting from a basis of absolute freedom, arrives at a programme of total repression, presumably buttressed by some form of totalizing philosophy of which much of the work of Bakhtin and Volosinov as well as Faulkner's and Conrad's could be read as an implied critique.

It is not that Conrad is blind to the faults of the system of which Donkin claims to be a victim and the "poignant miseries"¹³⁴ of humanity: quite the reverse, which is precisely the point. We remember Conrad's remark in the 'Author's Note' to *The Secret Agent* that "there had been moments during the writing of the book when I was an extreme revolutionist" (Cash might insert an 'almost').¹³⁵ Both Faulkner and Conrad are aware of the "passionate credulities of [. . .] mankind"¹³⁶ and specialize in laying bare the anatomy of *ressentiment* and rebellion (Christmas, Donkin, Wait, Darl, Conrad's various revolutionaries). Yet, both are deeply suspicious of the discourses, particularly of liberal/socialist ideologues who claim to speak for 'the people' and of those agitators, non-conformists and others who 'rock the boat'. Conrad, in his 'Author's Note', remarks on

the criminal futility of the whole thing, doctrine, action, mentality; and on the contemptible aspect of the half-crazy pose as of a brazen cheat exploiting the poignant miseries and passionate credulities of a mankind always so tragically eager for self-destruction.

So it is that Darl and Hightower through their excessive sensitivity and humanity, and Donkin, through his eloquence and his possession of a certain kind of highly-developed sensitivity, put themselves beyond the Pale; as far as Addie is concerned, whose observation was it (Dostoevsky's perhaps) that there is no worse cynic than a spoiled idealist. These figures are isolated because of their refusal or inability to accept/abide by shared codes. The fiction of Conrad and Faulkner abounds in *alienated isolatos*, characters who refuse to conform, such as Joe Christmas and who are unable to fit in with the established values of a given community, like Hightower.

Jim, for example, is initially shocked and nonplussed by the cataclysmic realization that he is/is judged a coward. The recognition and the sense of isolation/alienation that must of necessity accompany such a realization takes place gradually; this is why he eagerly accepts the 'offer' of self-imposed exile in the remote *island* world of Patusan. Darl Bundren's eventual physical exile in contrast is forced upon him though he seems almost to accept its logic and its necessity as in a kind of insane relief he laughs all the way to the asylum.

As I say, it is not that Faulkner and Conrad do not sympathize with these figures: on the contrary, Faulkner himself lived in a community which for the most part unaware of his celebrity, as John Faulkner observes in *My Brother Bill*, would have reacted with repugnance had it known the contents of much of the work of the eccentric they affectionately knew as 'The Count' or 'Count-No-'Count. When eventually blessed with fame in his home town, he elicited

the most extraordinarily conflicting reactions: the *KKK* planted burning crosses on his front lawn whilst in the North, *The New York Times* denounced him as a racist.

Faulkner fully understands the predicament of the sensitive, the *isolato* because he *was* one. Yet, we know that Faulkner was also committed to his community if not to all of its 'rules' and assumptions. He, like Addie and Joanna Burden, Gavin Stevens and Hightower was elevated above the ignorance of his immediate fellows and so was isolated/isolated himself from *his* community. In truth, there was a heroism in Faulkner's decision to remain in Oxford, given his deep love of the society of which he was part as well as his profound unease at the 'rules' and assumptions which underlay it.

Likewise, both Conrad's intellect and his foreignness made him in his own way isolated. In England, he was a Pole writing in his third language. The 'guilt' he felt over leaving Poland in order to write in a foreign country is more than hypothesis and has been commented upon extensively by critics. It may well have contributed to a feeling of exclusion, of not belonging in either 'camp'.

Subjectivity, solipsism and the submission of the individual to the collective

In both *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* the 'dominant' or, in the case of Faulkner's novel, *enduring* voices (those that come last in the text) sponsor the value of the submission of the individual to a collective will. This is coded, particularly in *The Nigger*, as a *desirable* need for self-discipline and self-control.

In an observation generally true of Faulkner's work, Cleanth Brooks writes that the virtues praised in 'The Bear' are those of "endurance, patience, honesty, courage".¹³⁷ It is clear however that Brooks' easy assertion of what is 'praised' and, by implication, what is not 'praised' is too

straightforward. So too is the simplistic tradition/good - modern/bad dualism which many attribute to Faulkner.

We remember the central debate in 'The Bear' between Cass and Ike. Their dialogue can be read as a subversive and profound meditation on the kinds of values sponsored by the wilderness passages which, within the context of Ike's and Cass' exchanges, constitute one of the terms in the network of official and unofficial 'intentions', the official and unofficial structure of *Go Down, Moses!*. In the same way, the narratorial complications of *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying* create a sense of unsettled investigation, inquiry and challenge. Conflicting voices disassemble each other. In response to the mood of pervasive doubt in both books, we have no choice but to remain unconvinced whilst at the same time seeking a basis for 'conviction'.

At the root of this scepticism, I believe, lie profound if submerged doubts about the value of language and the values it purports to describe. This comes as a result of grave reservations in the minds of both writers about the possibilities of language as a sound basis for effective, collective, communal ethics. Faulkner and Conrad meditate on Addie's sombre observation of "how the high, dead words in time seem[ed] to lose even the significance of their dead sound" (p.175); "the high, dead words" are, as we have noted, precisely those words that Faulkner uses in his Nobel Prize address and which Conrad, in the preface to *The Nigger*, refers to as "the old, old words" (p.146) which presumably embody the "simple ideas".

Again, what each writer explicitly says about language follows a familiar divide and lends itself, as we have observed, to the idea of official/public - unofficial/private 'intentions'. Still, it is possible to make discriminations. Conrad's faith in language was arguably greater in his early career at least, than Faulkner's ever was - a position understandable in one writing before the First World War and Modernism. Even so, by the time he wrote *Heart of Darkness*,

the kind of scepticism present in the Teacher of Language's famous formulation in *Under Western Eyes* that "Words, as is well known, are the great foes of reality",¹³⁸ is already in place.

The *unofficial* intentions of *The Nigger* (the novel, itself, being in a sense the utterance of a coded, hidden Conrad, Conrad, the writer of 'fiction[s]') clash with the avowed, *official* intentions of its preface:

it is only through an unremitting never-discouraged care for the shape and ring of sentences, that [. . .] the light of magic suggestiveness may be brought to play for an evanescent instant over the commonplace surface of words: of the old, old words worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage. (p.146)

This committed aestheticism and the romance which lurks beneath it seem to affirm a faith in words and language which is at once negated *as well as* borne out by the practice of his art. The view of language implied in this passage is as I say only half the story.

Faulkner was I feel greatly influenced by Conrad's profound scepticism about language. Addie's assertion that words are "just a shape to fill a lack" (p.172) - an imaginary presence to compensate for the absence of something real - gives us a sense of Faulkner's position as well as Addie's.

In the above quotation from the preface, there is the merest and characteristically subtle suggestion that it is precisely "the light of magic suggestiveness" that has etiolated the "old, old words", that has reduced "words" to "significant shape[s] profoundly without life like an empty door frame" (p.173). This suggests that Conrad's scepticism about language extends to the very art of fiction itself. Indeed, on reflection, it would be curious if it were otherwise.

In *Under Western Eyes*, Conrad gives greater voice to this 'unofficial' view (anti-positivist, anti-romantic) through

the appropriately-named Teacher of Languages. It may be that "Words [. . .] are the great foes of reality", yet he, like Conrad (like us all), is driven to language, for what else is there? Perhaps, Addie would evoke a Lawrentian 'language' of 'the blood', i.e. a non-verbal basis for communication/solidarity.

The basic trust in language which Conrad seems to be articulating in the preface to *The Nigger* (i.e. that words need only be dusted down, given a lick of paint or trimmed like a topsail, in a literary/aesthetic sense, and magically restored to their full usefulness and meaningfulness) is brought into serious question. These official sentiments are furthermore radically undermined by the paradoxical and ironical narratorial and thematic strategies of *The Nigger*.

Indeterminacy is a condition of life and language, and complicates even the 'simplest' of events. Sadly, humanity is forced to resort to creating and deploying 'master codes', necessarily imperfect systems of signification (e.g. Christianity, Marxism) which claim to settle indeterminacies and to hierarchize value/meaning. Faulkner and Conrad are affected by a deep unease (more than unease) as to the efficacy both of language and of these 'master codes'.

The basis of this unease is implicit not only in the preface and the novel in general, but, crucially, in the final 'signing-off' paragraph of *The Nigger*. In the preface, Conrad ascribes "true meaning" (p.146) to the play of "innumerable temperaments" which "creates the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time". There is an implicit acknowledgement here of the *contingency* of "meaning", which depends on "temperament", "place and time". The explicit intention of Conrad's remarks is that "true meaning" comes as a blend or reconciliation (accommodation) of many competing meanings. This is, however, a purely abstract, almost scientific formulation which *The Nigger*, I believe, ultimately fails to buttress.

It is a short step from this to the proposition that "meaning" is 'created' or 'experienced' as a purely internal quantity dependent on the subjective, and that the self, as a result, is hermetically sealed and as *separate* or *isolated* as the biological skin-bound unit (the body) which contains it. It is "temperament" then that actually 'assigns' "meaning". It is this suspicion/conviction that fuels doubt over whether language can effect 'true' communication in the moral domain.

Language, reality and experience from the point of view of the self (and what other 'point of view' is there?) are subjective, severely circumscribed, if not closed. The question "Haven't we, together and upon the immortal sea, wrung out a meaning from our sinful lives?" (p.107) is far from merely rhetorical. Ostensibly, its tone rings with the valedictory warmth of the departing sailor/story-teller. Though it may sound like an affirmation, it is in fact an interrogation. The narrator's sentiment is not an assertion but a challenge. It unwittingly gives voice to what we (and Conrad) clearly recognize as a major anxiety.

In opposition to this 'pessimistic' reading which corresponds to the unofficial 'intentions' of the preface, we may place what Lawrence Thompson observes of *The Sound and the Fury* (which also applies to Conrad), a

major thematic antithesis between the chaos-producing effects of self-love and the order-producing effect of compassionate and self-sacrificial love in human experience.¹³⁹

This conflict ties in with the genuine/sham sympathy/solidarity issue. Also implicated is the theme of the conflict between Egoism (self-interest as a sound basis for morality) and altruism, an important aspect of both novels. Then there is the problem of language the ultimate shifter, Morphean (shape-changing, deceptive rather than merely Protean [i.e. merely taking many forms]) and Promethean (bringing fire from the gods), both the

enlightener and the deceiver of Mankind. From this point of view, *As I Lay Dying* and *The Nigger* earn their place as pieces of meta-fiction.

How can a medium with such potential for deception act as a sound basis for exchange, communication, shared values or agreed, common norms of behaviour and cohesive social organization? *The Nigger's* umbrella voices stress throughout that the crew's sympathy for Jimmy is a pernicious form of egotism. What motivates their sympathies, they suggest, is fear for themselves rather than love for Wait, hence their conflicts and divided loyalties where he is concerned. Language is limited by the nature of its users as much as by any inherent qualities. It acts merely as a conductor for the selfishness of those who use (are used by [see Addie]) it.

To recap: it is a central paradox of Conrad's novel (and life?) that that which unites us, binds us and constitutes the very essence of our common humanity, i.e. death, mortality (which, *in extremis*, is the lowest common denominator), isolates and insulates us all from one another. The crew's sympathy for Wait, its 'soft-heartedness', is a sham. In the face of extinction (as the *Narcissus* floats on its side), 'our common lot', they "Huddled close to one another" and "fancied themselves utterly alone" (p.50).

This quotation (which Henricksen notes) and the paradox it contains concisely expresses much of what we have been saying about solidarity and subjectivity. In a typical move however it directly precedes Podmore's act of communal heroism (polar structure again), an alternation of assertion and subversion characteristic of the novel(s) which so complicates interpretation.

The line's main term is "fancy". The word's frivolous connotations, a deliberate camouflage on Conrad's part, should not obscure our estimation of the importance of 'fancy' in human perception. When we think of 'fancy', we think of romance (literary art, particularly Romantic poetry)

'illusion' or an imaginative leap (as in 'flights of fancy', a phrase which rings faintly with pejorative overtones).

For the crewmen, paradoxically, their 'fancy' is not illusory but very real and defined only by the limits of their own horrid, *subjective* imaginings? Especially on a re-reading (because we, as the retrospective narrator, know that they *do not* die), the observer is able to distance himself from the crewmen and to share the perspective of the narrator who uses the word 'fancy' with detachment if not scorn. It is a pervasive if cruel truth that we are ever able to remove ourselves from the subjective realities of others; in fact, for all individuals, the reality of another can, perhaps, never be more than 'fancy'.

The word is being used not only in its negative sense but also as a conceptual 'synonym' for perception. The crewmen are "utterly alone" in that they perceive themselves so to be. Moreover, it is a position which Singleton (cf. his coldness to wait on his pending death) and the novel's dominant voices (ironically, in an appeal to a greater collective reality) strongly sponsor. What we have in common is a sense of having nothing in common or rather not having *enough* in common. Our *common* isolation is, paradoxically, that which unites us; but it is possibly *all* that unites us. This revelation tends to weaken the basis of the kind of collectivity to which the conservative voices appeal.

It is little wonder then that Archie describes Podmore's heroism as "'Meeraculous'" (p.51). This is in response to the general view of the seamen that what the cook has done is impossible. In one way, we can see this simply as the exaggeration of Archie's fevered mind. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which we too cannot believe (unless we believe in miracles) in what Podmore (the Christian Evangelist) has done, in that it represents an act of 'true' solidarity, genuinely trans- and inter-subjective.

The crewmen are not 'alone' in the conventional sense and neither are they 'all-one'; that is the essence of their/our

condition. Each is concerned, solely (in both senses of the word), with his own suffering or privation and the fear of his own impending death at the point of the story just after the storm. It is this personal fear or egotism rather than real solidarity that provides the basis for the crew's 'sympathy' for Wait and Donkin.

When we look at what "temperament" means for Conrad in the preface, we think of Werner Senn's observation that, in Conrad at least, subjectivity is man's "basic [if not *only*, I may add] epistemological tool".¹⁴⁰ Yet, subjectivity is only one term in an epistemological debate. In a meaningless universe or in a universe where there can be no knowledge beyond the subjective, life (experience), in all its aspects, becomes not a question of fact but one of belief.

As a result, communal beliefs or the values upon which to build solidarity/common purpose are determined by congruences of opinion and conviction. Solidarity and sympathy, in order that they be based on something 'real', depend upon a 'matching' of 'constructs', as it were, between individuals. So 'right' and 'wrong' depend, to quote Cash, on "what the most folks say is right" (p.234) and that "it aint [sic] so much what a fellow does, but it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him when he does it" (p.233). This brings us back to Conrad's "innumerable temperaments". The alternative (or complement), of course, is to enforce agreement/meaning or to manipulate consent.

Perhaps, there is some refuge from this uncertainty or contingency in the 'universal realities' of the material world. The physical universe, for all those whose senses are unimpaired, is surely extremely similar if not the same. Most of us have physical sensation and sensory perception in common. This shared characteristic arguably goes beyond the truism that what is *physically* salt for one man is salt for another. For example, the crewmen all sense that the storm endangers their lives; so far so good, perhaps.

Yet, once we stray beyond the realm of the physical, consensus breaks down. Perhaps, this is why Conrad so often clothes his quest for 'non-physical' truth in sensory metaphors, particularly the ocular (in *Lord Jim*, *par excellence*). Metaphor, of course, shapes and influences our perceptions of what is being *metaphorized*. The insistence on the ocular as a metaphor for truth is there in Conrad, in order that we may believe that there is some ultimate truth to be glimpsed; it may even be that what he is suggesting is that truth can only ever be glimpsed and even then only through a haze.

Faulkner, himself, uses a conventional though doubly ocular metaphor to suggest what it is that, in essence, defines Darl's isolation. It is Darl's incapacity to see "eye to eye" (p.234) with those around him that leads to his downfall. Darl 'sees' experience as a conflict between solipsisms and his perspective testifies to the ultimate isolation of the individual whether mad or not, which knowledge Darl is unable to keep from himself (perhaps the very basis of his 'insanity'). The following exchange is with Vardaman:

'Then what is your ma, Darl?' I said.
'I haven't got ere one,' Darl said. 'Because if I had one, it is was. And if it was, it can't be *is*. Can it?'
'No,' I said.
I am. Darl is my brother.
'But you are, Darl,' I said.
'I know it,' Darl said. 'That's why I am not *is*.
Are is too many for one woman to foal.' (p.101)

In other words, the only possibility of existence is "*am*". Neither "*is*" nor "*are*" is possible since the subject cannot exist for others in the same way that he exists for himself. A notion of solidarity based on words therefore is a chimera (albeit a necessary one) since words have different meanings depending on who uses them, who hears them, how and in what context.

This, I think, is the import behind Darl's "'Are is too many for one woman to foal'" and it applies as much to Eve, the first Mother, as to Addie. "Are", a unified plurality, an over-arching (all-embracing) collectivity, a supra-subjective, inter-subjective moral reality/being is discursively necessary if conceptually impossible even amongst the members of the same family (the family unit, the 'Human Family'). We may leave aside, for the moment, the whole matter of the fragmentation of the intra-subjective (the Ego, the psychological, the spiritual) whether real or perceived.

The animal metaphor "foal", as well as bringing to mind Jewel's 'horse-mother', works in two opposed ways. On one hand, it suggests that man is bestial, egotistic, a bundle of barely controllable drives. On the other, it brings to mind forms of collective and supportive social organization amongst animals which juxtapose with the incapacity of humanity to create such forms for itself. The word also conjures up the ideas of vulnerability, childhood and innocence which clash with our sense of the essential warring tendencies of human beings.

Subjectivities do sometimes overlap but this phenomenon is largely fortuitous, beyond the bounds of conscious control though significantly within man's (the novelists') capacity to posit. Notwithstanding, the illusion of subjective congruence (where individuals [disparate entities] think they share or claim to share a world-view) is common whether 'voluntary' or coerced.

Even the bond of family ties cannot guarantee such connection, as the example of the Bundrens testifies. Though a biological reality, the notion of a family as a truly unified/unifying institution is a social convention, it would seem, like any other: an accident of birth. Any ordered society (cohesive, communal) has to be based on a common and commonly recognized system of exchange.

Though our experiences are not entirely disconnected, our resources for effecting 'connection' are extremely limited and the medium through which we convey our 'common' experiences to others and ourselves, i.e. language, is contingent and unstable. As a result, a given social system cannot depend for its efficacy on the subjective convictions of the individuals which are governed by it; a degree of coercion is always necessary be it fear of God, fear of one's parents or fear of the state.

We may enquire as to the ultimate difference between fear and belief. Belief can of course be coerced through the enforcement of behavioural and linguistic conformity (cf. Fogel, *op. cit.*) to the point where individuals 'internalize' the values of those who coerce them, i.e. their oppressors. The self becomes a 'shared' thing, constituted by external and internal' discourses, an eminently Bakhtinian hypothesis, though these conflicts are experienced as internal, rarely as 'shared'.

As such, the self is an essentially divided, ambivalent, unreconciled thing. So it is that individuals support a system which both exploits and oppresses them. The poor whites of the American South and the crew of a Victorian sailing-ship are, as we have said before, both victims *and* upholders.

The differences between Singleton and Dilsey, Donkin and Darl lie in the fact that they choose/are forced to respond to the experience of injustice in ways that accord with their class, psychology or family and cultural history. Darl's 'solution' is to internalize the conflicts and contradictions imposed upon him and ultimately to go insane. But he goes insane because he is too sensitive, too aware. Unlike Darl, at no point does Dilsey really articulate, to herself even, what is 'wrong' or allocate blame; she is silent on that score, speaking loyalty rather than sedition and, arguably, seeking to justify the unjustifiable by turning her experience into a question of duty as defined by a set of

transcendent (Christian) signifiers. In his own way, Cash is aware of the explosive tensions of the self but manages, unlike his brother, to absorb or reconcile them with some degree of success.

This knot of issues is addressed *dialogically* in *The Nigger*. For example, following the broad thrust of Aaron Fogel's argument, we note the way in which the crewmen echo the orders of their commanders when instructed to perform certain acts (see Fogel on the rebellious significance of Wait's cough in *The Nigger*).¹⁴¹ As Levenson observes, the association is made in Conrad of speech/eloquence with "rebellious individualism",¹⁴² egotism and anti-social behaviour. Remember, the crew's mutinous disputations are characterized as a "stormy chaos of speech" (p.79).

Disunity is particularly threatening at moments of extremity (e.g. the onset of the storm) where the need for discipline and unquestioning coöperation and communication 'down-the-line' is paramount. Effective coöperation depends on the recognition/cementing of a verbal/value 'act' or contract. Crucially, the contract extends beyond the limits of the extreme situation where such discipline is necessary, to areas and elements of the crewmen's lives which would seem unconnected to it.

A strong message in *The Nigger* is that the principles of good seamanship extend to all areas of life. Language, work and good conduct are inextricably bound up with one another. Yet, as I have argued, language cannot be used as an absolute referent between individuals to describe truth/value. If able to define the 'value of work', language fails when called upon to define *workable* values/principles with which to form a sound basis for genuine community.

In *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* the relation of words to identity as well as value is problematized. Baker cannot read Wait's name on the roster, he "can't make out that name" which is "all a smudge" (p.10). For the reader, the 'names' or identities of the crewmen are "smudge[s]" to be

deciphered. Not only Wait but Baker, Allistoun, Wamibo, the Bundrens and the others are signifiers around whom different and unstable meanings cluster.

Both Conrad and Faulkner link this sense of the instability of language with eloquence and vocal grandeur. Kurtz and Wait possess loud, impressive voices and as Tull unwittingly attests, Whitfield's "voice is bigger than him" (p.91). Yet their eloquence does not atone for their hypocrisy/sham: in fact, it abets it.

As we have said, both Faulkner and Conrad wrote out of transformation and upheaval. Crisis is inevitably accompanied by a breakdown in consensus or, rather, in the forces which keep that consensus in place. This loss of a sense of community, the concomitant of such breakdown, is in turn accompanied by the 'implosion' of language itself; the breakdown not so much of linguistic structures as of the conventions which make language relatively reliable in any given social context.

The breakdown of such conventions is merely a reflection of social disintegration. Integration and disintegration are major themes in *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying* and anticipate the climate of moral chaos and *absolute relativism* of the post-modernist era. 'Moral reality' is a collective phenomenon only in the sense that we each have one; each 'reality' is different however. In order to communicate, we must verbalize; in so doing, as the apocalyptic vision goes, we create conceptual constructs based on a relationship of exchange between different and unequal individuals, classes or, more broadly, language groups. Because unequal, even if not perceived so to be, the whole enterprise of seeking common values by which we can all *voluntarily* abide is undermined.

In Faulkner and Conrad, even members of the same language groups, families, ethnic communities are unable to recognize and accept common realities (shaped as they are by language). This I think lies at the heart of Faulkner's and Conrad's

distrust of words, of the intellectual, of eloquence and the 'faith' (which is perhaps merely an absence of faith in anything better) that they place, albeit sceptically, in taciturnity and silent endurance.

Communication without language: Faulkner and Conrad, writers

There is a sado-masochism in the fulfilment and satisfaction which Addie Bundren claims in the following passage:

I knew that it had been, not that they had dirty noses, but that we had had to use one another by words like spiders dangling by their mouths from a beam, swinging and twisting and never touching, and that only through the blows of the switch could my blood and their blood flow as one stream. (p.170)

The implied image here is a conventional one of words as webs ("like spiders dangling from their mouths") of deceit which we use, egotistically, to entrap or manipulate others, thereby entangling ourselves. The Teacher of Languages "Words are the great foes of reality" is echoed by Addie's assertion "that words are no good" (p.171). Further, the necessity "to use one another by words" results in "never touching".

What Addie is suggesting here, however unpalatable it may be, is the basis for a solidarity (a "touching") beyond or before language, though her appeal is for personal/familial solidarity rather than a community ethics. It is her way of 'freeing' her children from the limitations of "secret and selfish thought, and blood strange to each other blood and strange to mine" (p.170) so that "their blood can flow as one stream". This is her response/solution to isolation and deceit, an isolation created in large part by the alienating effects of language:

When the switch fell I could feel it upon my
flesh; when it welted and ridged it was my
blood that ran, and I would think with each
blow of the switch: Now you are aware of me!
Now I am something in your secret and selfish
life, who have marked you blood with my own
for ever and ever.

"Touching", for Addie, appears to involve a merging of identities with her children stemming from an incapacity to distinguish between her self and her offspring. "When the switch fell I could feel it upon my flesh", she claims, with impossible empathy. Her derangement in this respect matches Darl's complementary inability to identify with others at all outside the marginal realms of the telepathic and purely imaginative.

There is undeniably a fascistic dimension to the idea of a connection through violence, a connection of the blood: "blood flow[ing] as one stream". In *Light in August*, Joe Christmas and his adoptive father, McEachern, are, likewise, united beyond language in the violence and the blood of ritual punishment. It is a bond(age) with which Joe feels far more comfortable than the conscious and very human concern, the maternal if not entirely selfless love of Mrs McEachern. Her mothering 'instincts' are seen as merely the prelude to betrayal by Christmas whose own mother abandoned/was kept from him at birth.

It is this early betrayal which effaces Christmas' capacity to love and to accept love. He feels 'safer', more secure with violence in the end. This observation lends a logic to his apparent eventual acceptance of Grimm's fatal assault. Addie would share the view that love, whether maternal or otherwise, is the great betrayer insofar as it cannot deliver what the *word* promises (i.e. word and deed cannot be matched); it illegitimately raises the loved individual's hopes as to the possibilities (rather than the limitations) of human agency and the realities of existence, i.e. unrealizable aspirations, false expectations.

Motherhood, *par excellence*, pretends a security that it cannot give. Note Anse's place on this scale of "touching" through violence. By his own admission, he is incapable of punishing, guiding his children. His soft-heartedness is worse than useless; he spares the rod and spoils the child: "'Go wash them hands,' I say. But I just cant [sic] seem to get no heart into it" (p.38).

The assumption behind Addie's view is that 'real contact' is possible only through violence and love. Her distrust and disillusion with language, though it does not *in itself* represent Faulkner's position, gives one term in his divided consciousness. The same can be said of Conrad. Yet, this neo-Lawrentian evocation of a communion of the blood clearly remains a deeply contentious one.

There are other forms of non-verbalized understanding evoked by the novels; the way in which Singleton and the second eldest sailor seem or are reported to commune/share a certain understanding, i.e. wordlessly, to "see eye to eye" (p.234), for example; or the unspoken 'knowledge' between Dewey Dell and Darl which she finds so unwelcome. The fact that she finds it so, affects our sense of its acceptability. If we feel there is something intrusive or invasive about Darl's 'telepathy', we feel it as being especially true of Addie's 'communion of the blood': what of the recipients of this violent "touching"?

What Addie proposes however is, I believe, more than connection through violence and more than a language of mere gesture. There is again a Lawrentian flavour to the *perverse idealism* of what she says; Addie is a liberationist of sorts, but not a sexual liberationist. Liberation from our subjective imprisonment/isolation for Addie comes, paradoxically, through violence/punishment and love/bondage. There is a parallel in *The Nigger* with the notion of a crew of tough, rough men working hard, fighting hard, almost mechanically, blindly (like Percy Grimm) following orders in an almost dehumanized fashion. This implies an

acknowledgement that language and consciousness, the very essence of what makes us human is, *itself*, the root of the tragedy of the human predicament.

In his letter to Cunninghame-Graham, Conrad, tongue poised tentatively rather than firmly in cheek, truly nails his primitivist as well as pessimist flags to the mast:

 fidelity to nature would be [. . .] best
 of all [. . .] if we could only get rid of
 consciousness. What makes mankind tragic is
 not that they are the victims of nature, it
 is that they are conscious of it. To be part
 of the animal kingdom under the conditions
 of this earth is very well - but as soon as
 you know of your slavery the pain, the anger,
 the strife, the tragedy begins. We can't re-
 turn to nature, since we can't change our
 place in it. Our refuge is in stupidity, in
 drunkenness of all kinds, in lies, in beliefs,
 in murder, thieving, reforming - in negation,
 in contempt - each man according to the promp-
 tings of his particular devil. There is no
 morality, no knowledge and no hope; there is
 only the consciousness of ourselves [. . .]

Yet, if Conrad were consistent, "no hope" would mean no writing. He is, we should remember, engaging in albeit friendly dialogue with Cunninghame-Graham's idealism and socialism, his sense of *hope*, i.e. he does not scornfully dismiss it. These words sincerely express one aspect of Conrad's divided consciousness but only one.

Such a radical distrust of language and the possibility of establishing right and wrong (the "best of all") would seem an insurmountable drawback for any novelist or any narrator/speaker for that matter. This would seem particularly true of writers, like Conrad and Faulkner, profoundly concerned with the relationship between words and morality. This is where the second element of the divided consciousness in Conrad and Faulkner comes in. Despite their doubts and disclaimers, they acknowledge the need for, indeed, are unable to resist, the 'pull' of language. In

spite of everything, they are *writers*. Theirs are perhaps examples of that "puny inexhaustible voice" which manages to be "not merely the record of man" but "one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail".

What then of "The problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing",¹⁴³ a formulation, incidentally, very similar to, almost echoing, Conrad's remark in a letter to *The New York Times* on "the irreconcilable antagonisms that make our life so enigmatic" and which constitute "the only fundamental truth of fiction". These observations firmly put the emphasis on conflict, enigma and the individual subjective experience though "*our* life [singular, my emphasis]", paradoxically, posits the existence of a single common ("our") experience. How then do Conrad and Faulkner resolve the conflicts and enigmas, the personal drama which informs their fiction?

What, in short, is Faulkner's and Conrad's attitude to the orthodoxies, as articulated by Cash and the 'I' narrator, which ostensibly sustain the closures of *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying*? As we have already seen, it is clear that although both endings constitute closure of a kind, the values which sustain them do not 'dominate' our understanding in the sense that they do not, conclusively, 'dismiss' the subversive material that has come before.

Many read the Dilsey section in *The Sound and the Fury* as a key to the novel's other monologues. They accord it a normative, epistemic status because of its less experimental, more traditional style of narration and because it embodies (one kind of) traditional Christian morality. Yet Dilsey's 'endurance', as we have stated, is an equivocal thing. We may (or may not) need the 'Dilsey order-of-things' to make life bearable. What is clear is that just as a sense of 'enigma' or "doubt", "survived Jimmy" (p.96), so the endings of *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury* do not neutralize the play of antagonisms, they only keep that play within certain bounds. Darl, as Benjy, is incarcerated but not destroyed;

though Wait dies, Donkin, the failed sailor, survives and perhaps thrives ashore.

The manifest dialogic nature of the narrative structure of *The Sound and the Fury*, *The Nigger* and *As I Lay Dying* draws attention to the insufficiency of any of the world-views offered. This is the tragic kernel of the novels' closures. It is not that a sense of community, a human order without conflict or enigma has been lost, it is that the orthodoxies have never furnished humanity with any such order. This is Faulkner's and Conrad's great theme: in the absence of a shared belief, shared moral values or a shared faith in God, what is there to bind human beings together? Further, we may ask whether the possibility of such an order is one in which Faulkner and Conrad can no longer believe.

As we have already noted, their dilemma is Dostoevskian (cf. Lunacharsky) in that it affirms a will to believe in the absence of the belief itself. If their hearts believe, their heads do not; theirs is an equivocal affirmation if, also, an equivocal denial. In one of Dewey Dell's sections, we read this exchange between Darl and Jewel:

'Look Jewel,' Darl says.
Jewel sits on his horse like they were both
made out of wood, looking straight ahead.
I believe in God, God, God. I believe in
God. (p.122)

The attribution of this last assertion is not clear. It does not seem to fit Dewey Dell's simple child-like language. Whether we take the utterance to belong to Darl, Jewel, Faulkner or all three, we cannot ignore the similarity with Shatov's 'affirmation' of faith, already quoted, in *The Devils* or Quentin's litotic

"I don't hate it [the South]," Quentin said,
quickly, at once, immediately; "I don't hate it,"
he said. *I don't hate it* he thought [. . .] *I
don't. I don't! I don't hate it! I don't hate it!*"⁴⁴

Conrad's and Faulkner's fiction is the locus of the dialogic debate between their own internal conflicts, public and private, between warring selves: aristocrat and man of the people, sceptic and believer, pessimist and optimist. They believe with the heart but not the head. The voices of Conrad and Faulkner are to one extent or another inscribed, as Henricksen suggests of Conrad, in all their speakers. It would be simplistic and pointless, however, to say that either is more or less pessimistic or optimistic than the other.

If we recall, Henricksen argues that it is the 'I' narrator in whom Conrad is most fully 'inscribed', the voice which most fully represents him. The gloss which this narrator puts on his story is hopeful if flawed and revisionist in the way Henricksen describes. I do not think it is possible to locate Faulkner in *As I Lay Dying*, with the same confidence, in a single speaker.

Nevertheless, there are clues in the quotation below, from Addie's monologue, which shares some stylistic features with Faulkner's Nobel Prize address:

And so when Cora Tull would tell me I was not a true mother, I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart, for the same person to straddle from one to the other; and that sin and love and fear are just sounds that people who never sinned nor loved nor feared have for what they never had [. . .] (pp.173-174)

To begin with, the attribution of these words to Addie is, typically, not straightforward. By the time we reach her monologue, chronologically, she is already dead. Yet, the monologue is explicitly attributed to her. In her repetition of phrases such as "I knew", we are explicitly made aware of the fact that she is conscious of the significance of her reflections. The fact that, as we have seen, the closing

lines of this passage echo, in a remarkable way, the quotation from 'An Outpost of Progress' further reinforces the sense of the fulsome presence of the author's voice.

The distrust of language to which Addie is giving voice (inevitably articulated through language) is shared, I would argue, by her creator and contributes to his own status, *pace* Brooks, as a primitivist and pessimist.¹⁴⁵ The voice of Faulkner is also present in the distinctive and characteristic style and resonance of phrases such as "sin and love and fear".

We note the characteristic repetition of the conjunction, "and" (cf. the Nobel Prize address *inter alia*) which lends a sense of portentousness to the lines and which also occurs in Conrad at the beginning of the fourth chapter of the *The Nigger*:

[. . .] till the weary succession of nights
and days tainted by the obstinate clamour of
sages, demanding bliss and an empty heaven, is
redeemed at last by the vast silence of pain
and labour, by the dumb fear and the dumb cour-
age of men obscure, forgetful, and enduring. (p.55)

An exhaustive stylistic comparison of Conrad's and Faulkner's fictional and non-fictional writing would be an intriguing if formidable task. These observations provide a pointer to what would be, principally, a linguistic study, an attempt to locate the personal voice of the author, his *parole*, the rhythms of his own *idiolect*, amid the "obstinate clamour" of competing voices.

Notes

The title quotation is taken from a letter to the *New York Times* (2nd August 1901) where Conrad writes of the "irreconcilable antagonisms that make our life so enigmatic". Quoted by Frederick Karl in *Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives*, p.460

- 1 Todorov, Tzvetan *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle*, p.80
- 2 *ibid.*, p.60
- 3 Kristeva, Julia 'The Ruins of a Poetic', p.102
- 4 Eco, Umberto 'On the Crisis of the Crisis of Reason' *Travels in Hyper-Reality*, p.127
- 5 Kristeva, *op. cit.*, p.106
- 6 Todorov, *op. cit.*, p.82
- 7 *ibid.*, p.21 Todorov quotes Bakhtin from 'Concerning Methodology in the Human Sciences'
- 8 Henricksen, Bruce 'The Construction of the Narrator in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*', p.791
- 9 *ibid.*, p.790
- 10 *ibid.*, p.792
- 11 Prince, Gerald *Dictionary of Narratology*, pp.19-20
- 12 Guetti, James Lawrence *The Limits of Metaphor*
- 13 Lowrey, Perrin 'Concepts of Time in *The Sound and the Fury*' *English Institute Essays* pp.61-62
- 14 Henricksen *op. cit.*, p.791
- 15 *Faulkner in the University*, p.20
- 16 *Lion in the Garden*, p.186
- 17 *Faulkner in the University*, p.144
- 18 All references to *The Nigger* are to the Norton critical edition of the novel.
- 19 All references to *As I Lay Dying* are to the Vintage Books edition.

- 20 Faulkner *Sanctuary*, p.2
- 21 Watts, Cedric 'Introduction' to the Penguin edition of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (London, 1987), p.114n
- 22 Cohn, Dorrit *Transparent Minds*
- 23 Conrad, 'A Familiar Preface' (1912) repr. in *Joseph Conrad on Fiction* ed. Wright, pp.119-120
- 24 *ibid.*, p.120
- 25 *ibid.*, p.124
- 26 Conrad *Lord Jim*, p.112. Marlow tells us: "'I am missing innumerable shades [. . .] Because he [Jim] complicated matters by being so simple . . . By Jove! he was amazing'".
- 27 Quoted by Carabine in 'Some Observations on Wright Morris's Treatment of "My kind of People, Self-sufficient, Self-deprived, Self-unknowing". The quotation is from *Earthly Delight, Unearthly Adornments* (New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row, 1978), p.8
- 28 Carabine quotes Wright Morris quoting Yeats from the last introduction to the plays in *About Fiction* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p.67
- 29 *ibid.*
- 30 Carabine 'Some Observations', p.120
- 31 Conrad 'Author's Note' *A Personal Record*, p.xiii
- 32 Conrad's dedication of *The Nigger* to Garnett: "This tale about my friends of the sea" (p.xiii).
- 33 See 'Some Reflections on the Loss of the "Titanic"' from *The English Review* repr. in *Notes on Life and Letters*
- 34 Knowles, Owen 'Some Aspects of Conrad's Dialogism', p.180
- 35 Guérard, Albert *Conrad the Novelist*, p.209
- 36 Knowles, Owen *op. cit.*, p.164
- 37 Harold, Brent 'The Value and Limitations of Faulkner's Fictional Method' (1975) *The Best from 'American Literature'*, p.100

- 38 Taylor, Walter "Pantaloons": The Negro Anomaly at the Heart of *Go Down, Moses*, *ibid.*, pp.60-61
- 39 *ibid.* Taylor quotes Faulkner's "A Letter to the Leaders of the Negro Race" from 1956, originally titled "If I Were Negro" *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters*, p.110.
- 40 *Faulkner in the University*, p.197
- 41 Lothe, Jakob *Conrad's Narrative Method*
- 42 Fogel *Coercion to Speak*, p.52
- 43 Conrad, *The Secret Agent*, p.73
- 44 Hawthorn, Jeremy *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment*
- 45 Baker observes: "Can't make out this hanging back and growling. A good crowd, too, as they go nowadays." p.63
- 46 Lothe, Watts *op. cit.*
- 47 Ford, Ford Madox *A Personal Remembrance*, p.130
- 48 Lothe, Watts, *op. cit.*
- 49 Watts, *op. cit.*, p.61n
- 50 Genette, Gérard *Narrative Discourse*
- 51 Conrad *Heart of Darkness*, p.147
- 52 Watts, *op. cit.*, p.79n
- 53 This sequence marks the first appearance of the conservative, *ironizing*, narrator.
- 54 Conrad *Nostromo*, p.521
- 55 Kartiganer, Donald M. *Absalom, Absalom!: The Discovery of Values* (1965) *American Literature*, p.42
- 56 *The Secret Agent*, p.11
- 57 Watts, Cedric *Joseph Conrad: A Literary Life*, p.69
- 58 This sequence is probably one of the novel's most extraordinary.
- 59 Aiken, Conrad 'William Faulkner: The Novel as Form' *Atlantic Monthly*, pp.61-62 *passim*
- 60 Guérard, Albert *Triumph of the Novel*, p.305

- 61 Cohn, Dorrit *op. cit. passim*
- 62 *Faulkner in the University*, p.110
- 63 Bonney, William *Thorns and Arabesques*, p.160
- 64 Knowles, *op. cit., passim*
- 65 *The Secret Agent*, p.11
- 66 Senn, Werner *Conrad's Narrative Voice*, p.156
- 67 Bunselmeyer, J.E. 'Narrative Styles' (1981) *American Literature*, p.145
- 68 Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination, passim*
- 69 See discussion of Wright Morris in Carabine *Some Observations*
- 70 Cohn *op. cit., passim*
- 71 Frye, Northrop *Anatomy of Criticism*
- 72 Conrad *Under Western Eyes*, p.14
- 73 Hawthorn *op. cit.*, p.8
- 74 *ibid.*, p.18
- 75 Foulke, Robert 'Postures of Belief' *MFS*, p.314
- 76 Bonney *op. cit.*, p.172
- 77 James Guetti quoted in Senn *op. cit.*, p.38
- 78 London *op. cit.*, p.43
- 79 Guérard quoted in Boyd, Michael *The Reflexive Novel*, p.61
- 80 Jameson *op. cit., passim*
- 81 Watts, introduction, p.xxiv
- 82 Melville, Herman *Moby Dick*, p113. He uses the word to describe the crewmen of the *Pequod*.
- 83 Bakhtin, Mikhail *op. cit.*, p.15
- 84 Hawthorn *Ideological Commitment*, p.9
- 85 Faulkner *Go Down, Moses*, p.225

- 86 *OED*
- 87 Watts, introduction, p.43n
- 88 *OED*
- 89 *Nostromo*, p.521
- 90 Watts, introduction, pp.xiv-xvii
- 91 Conrad *Chance*, p.191
- 92 *The Secret Agent*, p.11
- 93 Jean-Aubry, G. *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters*, p.328
from a letter to Wells dated February 1904.
- 94 Conrad 'An Outpost of Progress' *Tales of Unrest*, p.153
- 95 Synge, John Millington 'The Playboy of the Western
World' *The Complete Plays*, p.227
- 96 *Heart of Darkness*, p.147
- 97 *ibid.*, p.51
- 98 *ibid.*, p.159
- 99 *ibid.*, p.51
- 100 Stamm, Burgoyne, Flitterman-Lewis *New Vocabularies in
Film Semiotics*
- 101 *OED*
- 102 McGuire Coffee, Jessie *Faulkner's Un-Christlike
Christians*
- 103 *OED*
- 104 Quoted by Bruce Henricksen in 'The Construction of the
Narrator in *The Nigger*' *PMLA*, p.785
- 105 Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, p.272
- 106 Cohn *op. cit.*, *passim*
- 107 Genette *op. cit.*
- 108 Henricksen *op. cit.*, p.786
- 109 *ibid.*, p.788
- 110 *ibid.*, p.785

- 111 *ibid.*, p.786
- 112 *ibid.*
- 113 *OED*
- 114 Faulkner *The Sound and the Fury*, p.179
- 115 Synge, John Millington *op. cit.*
- 116 *The Nigger* (Norton edition, ed. Robert Kimbrough), p.107n
- 117 *The Secret Agent*, p.11
- 118 Faulkner 'Address upon Receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature' *The Portable Faulkner*, p.724
- 119 Quoted by Leavis *op. cit.*, p.200 from *Abinger Harvest*
- 120 Conrad 'Author's Note' *A Personal Record*, p.xiii
- 121 *The Portable Faulkner*, p.724
- 122 *ibid.*, pp.723-724
- 123 Conrad 'A Familiar Preface' *A Personal Record*, p.19
- 124 Conrad *Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham*, pp.70-71
- 125 *Lord Jim*, *passim*
- 126 *Nostromo*, p.521
- 127 *The Secret Agent*, pp.10-11
- 128 Watts, introduction, pp.xxi, xxin
- 129 *The Great Tradition*, p.155
- 130 Dostoevsky, Fyodor *The Devils*, p.259
- 131 Quoted by Bakhtin *Problems*, p.29
- 132 Brooks, Cleanth *The Yoknapatawpha Country*, p.149
- 133 *Faulkner in the University*, p.121
- 134 *The Secret Agent*, p.8
- 135 *ibid.*, p.11
- 136 *ibid.*, p.8

- 137 Brooks, Cleanth 'Primitivism in *The Sound and the Fury*'
English Institute Essays, p.18
- 138 Conrad *Under Western Eyes*, p.3
- 139 Thompson *op. cit.*, p.106
- 140 Senn *op. cit.*, p.152
- 141 Fogel *op. cit.*, p.52
- 142 Levenson *op. cit.*, p.102
- 143 Faulkner 'Upon Receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature'
Essays, Speeches and Public Letters, p.119
- 144 Faulkner *Absalom, Absalom!*, p.303
- 145 Brooks 'Primitivism'

Bibliography

Primary Sources

CONRAD, Joseph *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979) First published in book form by Heinemann in 1897. The copy text for this edition is the Heinemann edition of 1921.

'To My Readers in America'

CONRAD, Joseph *Chance: A Tale in Two Parts* ed. Martin Ray (Oxford: O.U.P., 1990)
First published in book form by Methuen in 1914. This edition follows the same pagination as the Dent Collected Edition of 1949 and is substantially similar except for punctuation and other minor alterations.

CONRAD, Joseph *Nostramo* ed. Keith Carabine (Oxford: O.U.P., 1984)

CONRAD, Joseph *Youth, Heart of Darkness, The End of the Tether* ed. Robert Kimbrough (Oxford: O.U.P., 1983)

CONRAD, Joseph 'An Outpost of Progress' *Tales of Unrest* (London: Eveleigh Nash & Grayson) pp.124-170

CONRAD, Joseph *Lord Jim* (London: Penguin, 1986)

CONRAD, *The Secret Agent* (London: Penguin, 1981)

CONRAD, Joseph *Almayer's Folly* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895)

CONRAD, Joseph *Under Western Eyes* ed. Jeremy Hawthorn (Oxford: O.U.P., 1983)

CONRAD, Joseph *Notes on Life and Letters* (London: John Grant, 1925)

CONRAD, Joseph *A Personal Record* (London: Dent, 1919)
First published by Mr Eveleigh Nash as 'Some Reminiscences' and reissued. as *A Personal Record* by Messrs Thos. Nelson & Sons in 1916.

CONRAD, Joseph *Joseph Conrad: Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1969) ed. Cedric Watts

CONRAD, Joseph *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad Vol.1 1861-1897* ed. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1983)

CONRAD, Joseph *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad* Vol.2 1898-1902 ed. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1983)

CONRAD, Joseph *Joseph Conrad on Fiction* ed. Walter F. Wright (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1967)

FAULKNER, William *As I Lay Dying* ed. Noel Polk with page notes prepared by Joseph Blotner (New York: Vintage, 1990) First published by Cape & Smith in 1930. The copy text for this edition follows Faulkner's ribbon setting copy.

FAULKNER, William *Absalom, Absalom!* ed. Noel Polk (New York: Vintage, 1990) First published by Random House in 1936. This edition is based on a comparison of the first edition, Faulkner's holograph manuscript, the typed setting copy and the working galley proofs.

FAULKNER, William *The Sound and the Fury* (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

'Selected Letters'

'An Introduction to *The Sound and the Fury*' (*Southern Review* and *Mississippi Quarterly* versions)

'Interviews in Japan'

FAULKNER, William *The Portable Faulkner* ed. Malcolm Cowley (London: Penguin, 1966)

'1699-1945. Appendix: The Compsons

'Address upon Receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature'

FAULKNER, William *Faulkner in the University: Class Conferences at the University of Virginia 1957-1958* ed. Frederick L. Gwynn & Joseph Blotner (New York: Random House, 1965)

FAULKNER, William *Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner 1926-1962* ed. James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate (New York: Random House, 1968)

FAULKNER, William *William Faulkner: Essays, Speeches, Public Letters* (New York: Random House, 1965)

FAULKNER, William *Sunday Times* (4th March, 1956) Interview conducted by Russell Howe.

CONRAD, Joseph *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad* Vol.2 1898-1902 ed. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1983)

CONRAD, Joseph *Joseph Conrad on Fiction* ed. Walter F. Wright (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1967)

FAULKNER, William *As I Lay Dying* ed. Noel Polk with page notes prepared by Joseph Blotner (New York: Vintage, 1990) First published by Cape & Smith in 1930. The copy text for this edition follows Faulkner's ribbon setting copy.

FAULKNER, William *Absalom, Absalom!* ed. Noel Polk (New York: Vintage, 1990) First published by Random House in 1936. This edition is based on a comparison of the first edition, Faulkner's holograph manuscript, the typed setting copy and the working galley proofs.

FAULKNER, William *The Sound and the Fury* (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

'Selected Letters'

'An Introduction to *The Sound and the Fury*' (*Southern Review* and *Mississippi Quarterly* versions)

'Interviews in Japan'

FAULKNER, William *The Portable Faulkner* ed. Malcolm Cowley (London: Penguin, 1966)

'1699-1945. Appendix: The Compsons

'Address upon Receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature'

FAULKNER, William *Faulkner in the University: Class Conferences at the University of Virginia 1957-1958* ed. Frederick L. Gwynn & Joseph Blotner (New York: Random House, 1965)

FAULKNER, William *Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner 1926-1962* ed. James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate (New York: Random House, 1968)

FAULKNER, William *William Faulkner: Essays, Speeches, Public Letters* (New York: Random House, 1965)

FAULKNER, William *Sunday Times* (4th March, 1956) Interview conducted by Russell Howe.

Secondary Sources

- ARMSTRONG, Paul B. 'Conrad's Contradictory Politics: The Ontology of Society in *Nostramo*' *Twentieth Century Literature* #1 Vol.31 (Spring, 1985) pp.1-21
- BAINES, Jocelyn *Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography* (Penguin, 1986)
- BAKHTIN, Mikhail *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* trans. R.W. Rotse (United States: Ardis, 1973)
- BAKHTIN, Mikhail *The Dialogic Imagination* ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1990)
- BECK, Warren 'William Faulkner's Style' *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)
- BERKA, P.J. 'Zhitomir and the Ukrainian Background in the Early Childhood of Joseph Conrad' *The Conradian* #2 Vol.18
- BERTHOUD, Jacques 'Introduction' to the *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1984)
- BLEIKASTEN, André *Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying'* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973)
- BLOTNER, Joseph *Faulkner: A Biography* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1974)
- BONNEY, William W. 'Semantic and Structural Determinacy in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*: An Experiment in Reading' in Conrad, Joseph *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* ed. Robert Kimbrough (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979)
- BONNEY, William W. *Thorns and Arabesques: Contexts for Conrad's Fiction* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1980)
- BOOTH, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (2nd ed., London: Peregrine, 1987)
- BOWLING, L.E. 'Faulkner's Technique of *The Sound and the Fury*' *The Kenyon Review* #4 Vol.X (Autumn 1948)
- BOYD, Michael *The Reflexive Novel: Fiction as Critique* (London: Associated Univ. Presses, 1983)
- BUNSELMEYER, J.E. 'Narrative Styles' (1981) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

- BRANNY, Grazyna 'A Conflict of Values: Alienation and Commitment in the Writings of Joseph Conrad and William Faulkner' (Phd. dissertation, Jagiellonian Univ. Krakow, 1992)
- BROOKS, Cleanth 'Primitivism in *The Sound and the Fury*' ed. A.S. Downer *The English Institute Essays 1952* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1954)
- BROOKS, Cleanth 'Faulkner and History' *Mississippi Quarterly* #XXV Supp. (1972) pp.3-14
- BROOKS, Cleanth 'Man, Time and Eternity' Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)
- BROOKS, Cleanth *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* (London: Yale U.P., 1963)
- BROOKS, Cleanth *William Faulkner: Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond* (London: Yale U.P., 1979)
- BROOKS, Peter *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Knopf, 1984)
- BOUVARD, Loïc 'Conversation with William Faulkner' *Modern Fiction Studies* #4 Vol.V (Winter, 1959-1960) pp.361-364
- BOWLING, L.E. 'Faulkner's Technique of *The Sound and the Fury*' *The Kenyon Review* #4 Vol.X (Autumn 1948)
- CANTWELL, Robert 'The Faulkner's: Recollections of a Gifted Family' *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)
- CARABINE, Keith 'Some Observations on Wright Morris's Treatment of "My Kind of People, Self-Sufficient, Self-Deprived, Self-Unknowning"' *America VIII: The Yearbook of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature* ed. David D. Anderson (East Lansing, Michigan: Midwestern Press, 1981) pp.115-134
- CARABINE, Keith 'Review of Zdzislaw Najder's *Conrad Under Familial Eyes*' pp.48-59 *Conradiana* #1 Vol.XVIII (1986)
- CARABINE, Keith 'Conrad and American Literature: A Review Essay' *The Conradian* #2 Vol.13 (December 1988) pp.207-219
- CARABINE, Keith '"Irreconcilable Antagonisms": England as an "Undiscovered Country" in Conrad's "Amy Foster"' *The Ends of the Earth": English Literature and the Wider World 1876-1918* Vol.IV (London: Ashfield Press, 1992) pp.187-204
- CHASE, Richard 'The Stone and the Crucifixion: Faulkner's *Light in August*' *The Kenyon Review* #4 Vol.X (Autumn 1948)

CHASE, Richard 'Faulkner - The Great Years: *The Sound and the Fury* in Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

CHASE, Richard *The American Novel and its Tradition* (New York: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1980)

CHRISTMAS, Peter 'Conrad's *Nostromo*: A Tale of Europe' *Literature and History* #6 (Autumn, 1977) pp.59-81

CHUNG, Hae-Ja Kim 'Point of View as a Mode of Thematic Definition in Conrad and Faulkner' *DAI* #35 (Ann Arbor, 1974) 442A-443A

COHN, Dorrit *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (New Jersey: Princeton U.P., 1983)

COLLINS, Carvel 'The Interior Monologues of *The Sound and the Fury*' ed. A.S. Downer *The English Institute Essays 1952* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1954)

COUSINEAU, Thomas J. 'The Ambiguity of Razumov's Confession in *Under Western Eyes*' pp.27-40 *Conradiana* #1 Vol.XVIII (1986)

COWLEY, Malcolm *The Faulkner-Cowley File: Letters and Memories 1944-1962* (New York: Viking Press, 1966)

CULLEN, John B. with Floyd C. Watkins *Old Times in the Faulkner Country* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1961)

CUNLIFFE, Marcus *The Literature of the United States* (London: Penguin, 1986)

DOLLARD, John *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (3rd ed., Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday Anchor, 1957)

DOSTOEVSKY, Fyodor *The Devils* trans. David Magarshack (London: Penguin, 1982)

DUKES, Thomas 'Christianity as Curse and Salvation in *The Sound and the Fury*' *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

DUNN, Margaret M. 'The Illusion of Freedom in *The Hamlet* and *Go Down, Moses*' (1985) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

ECO, Umberto *Travels in Hyper-Reality* (London: Picador, 1987) First published in Great Britain as *Faith in Fakes* (1986).

EGAN, Philip J. 'Embedded Story Structures in *Absalom, Absalom!*' (1983) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

ELLISON, Ralph 'Twentieth-Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity' in Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

FAULKNER, John *My Brother Bill* (New York: Pocket Cardinal Edition, 1964: first published by the Trident Press, N.Y., 1963)

FOULKE, Robert 'Postures of Belief in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*' in Conrad, Joseph *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* ed. Robert Kimbrough (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979)

FEHR, Bernard 'Substitutionary Narration and Description: A Chapter in Stylistics' *English Studies: A Journal of English Letters and Philology* #3 Vol.XX pp.97-107

FOGEL, Aaron *Coercion to Speak: Conrad's Poetics of Dialogue* (Harvard, 1985)

FORD, Ford Madox *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1924)

FRIEDMAN, A.W. *Multivalence: The Moral Quality of Form in the Modern Novel* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U.P., 1978)

GENETTE, Gérard 'Boundaries of Narrative' *NLH* #8 (1976) pp.1-13

GENETTE, Gérard *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell U.P., 1980)

GENETTE, Gérard *Narrative Discourse Revisited* trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell Univ. Press, 1988)

GENOVESE, Eugene G. *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1970)

GLASSMAN, Steve 'The Influence of Conrad's *Chance* on *Absalom, Absalom!*' *Notes on Mississippi Writers* #1 Vol.15 (1983) pp.1-3

GOELLNER, Ellen 'By Word of Mouth: Narrative Dynamics of Gossip in Faulkner's *Light in August*' *Narrative* #2 Vol.1 (May, 1993) pp.105-123

GRAY, Dr. Richard *The Literature of Memory: Modern Writers of the American South* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977)

GREGORY, Horace 'Review of *Go Down, Moses and Other Stories*' *New York Times* (10th May, 1942)

GUERARD, Albert J. *Conrad the Novelist* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard U.P., 1958)

GUERARD, Albert J. 'The Faulknerian Voice' *The Maker and the Myth: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha* 1977 ed. Evans Harrington & Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: Mississippi U.P., 1978) pp.25-43

GUERARD, Albert J. *The Triumph of the Novel: Dickens, Dostoevsky, Faulkner* (New York: O.U.P., 1982)

GUERARD, Albert J. 'Notes on the Rhetoric of Anti-Realist Fiction' *Triquarterly* #30 (Spring, 1974) pp.3-50

GUERARD, Albert 'The Nigger of the "Narcissus"' in Conrad, Joseph *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* ed. Robert Kimbrough (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979)

GUETTI, James *The Limits of Metaphor: A Study of Melville, Conrad and Faulkner* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell U.P., 1967)

HAROLD, Brent 'The Value and Limitations of Faulkner's Fictioal Method' (1975) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

HAWTHORN, Jeremy *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment* (London: Edward Arnold, 1990)

HAWTHORN, Jeremy 'The Incoherences of *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*' *The Conradian* #2 Vol.11 (Nov. 1986) pp.98-115

HENRICKSEN, Bruce 'The Construction of the Narrator in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*' *PMLA* #1 Vol.103 (January 1988) pp.783-795

HLAVSA, Virginia V. 'The Mirror, the Lamp and the Bed: Faulkner and the Modernists' (1985) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

HODGES, R.R. *The Dual Heritage of Joseph Conrad* (The Hague & Paris: Mouton, 1969)

HOLLOWELL, Dorothy Morgan 'A Study of Conrad and Faulkner: Links to Imperialism' *DAI* #41 (Tufts Univ., 1980) 1054A

HOFFMAN, 'Introduction' *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)

HOWE, Irving 'Faulkner and the Negroes' in Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

IRWIN, John T. 'Doubling and Incest in *the Sound and the Fury*' in Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

ISER, Wolfgang *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (London: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1987)

JAMESON, Frederic *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981)

JEAN-AUBRY, G. *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters* (London: Heinemann, 1927)

JEHLEN, Myra 'Faulkner's Fiction and Southern Society' in Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

KALIK-TELJATNICOVA, A. 'De L'origine du Prétendu "Style Indirect Libre"' *Le Français Moderne* #4 Vol.33 1965: pp.284-294, #2 Vol.34 1966: pp.123-136

KARL, Frederick R. *William Faulkner: American Writer: A Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1989)

KARL, Frederick R. *Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives: A Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979))

KARTIGANER, Donald M. 'Absalom, Absalom!: The Discovery of Values' *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

KARTIGANER, Donald M. 'The Divided Protagonist: Reading as Repetition and Discovery' *Texas Studies in Literature and Language: A Journal of the Humanities* #1 Vol.30 (Spring, 1988) pp.151-178

KARTIGANER, Donald M. 'The Meaning of Form in *The Sound and the Fury*' in Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

KAZIN, Alfred 'The Stillness of *Light in August*' *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)

KINCAID, James R. 'Coherent Readers, Incoherent Texts' "Critical Response II" *Critical Inquiry* (Summer, 1977)

KINNEY, Arthur F. *Faulkner's Narrative Poetics: Style as Vision* (Univ. of Massachussets Press, 1978)

KLOTZ, Marvin 'Procrustean Revision in *Go Down, Moses*' (1965) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

KNOWLES, Owen 'Aspects of Conrad's Dialogism' *The Polish Review* Pts.2-3 Vol.20 (1975) pp.164-180

KNOWLES, Owen Typescript of an unpublished bibliography of Conrad criticism.

KRISTEVA, Julia 'The Ruin of a Poetics' *Russian Formalism* ed. S. Bann and J.E. Bowlt (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973) pp.102-121

LANGLEY JR, John 'Joe Christmas: The Hero in the Modern World' *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)

LAWRENCE, D.H. *The Symbolic Meaning* (United Kingdom: Centaur Press,1975)

LEAVIS, F.R. *The Great Tradition* (London: Peregrine, 1983)

LEVENSON, Michael 'The Modernist Narrator on the Victorian Sailing Ship' *Browning Institute Studies* Vol.11 (1983) pp.101-112

LEWIS, R.W.B. 'William Faulkner: The Hero in the New World' in *Faulkner, William The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

LITZ, Walton 'Genealogy as Symbol in *Go Down, Moses*' *Faulkner Studies* #4 Vol.1 (Winter, 1952) pp.49-53

LIND, Ilse Dusoir 'The Design and Meaning of *Absalom, Absalom!*' *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)

LONDON, Bette 'Only a Voice/Only a Lie: The Novel as Polygraph' Ch.2 *The Appropriated Voice: Narrative Authority in Conrad, Forster and Woolf* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Mich. Press, 1990) pp.29-58

LOWE-EVANS, Mary 'Conrad's James Wait: Prototype of Faulkner's Charles Bon' pp.221-230 *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* #3 Vol.21 (Autumn, 1989)

LOWENS, Peter 'The Conrad-Pinker Relationship: An Unpublished Letter' pp.45-47 *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

LOTHE, Jakob 'The Nigger of the "Narcissus": Problematic but Effective Combination of Authorial and Personal Narrative' Ch.6 *Conrad's Narrative Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)

LOWREY, Perrin 'Concepts of Time in *The Sound and the Fury*' ed. A.S. Downer *The English Institute Essays 1952* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1954)

NAJDER, Zdzislaw ed. *Conrad Under Familial Eyes* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1983)

NAJDER, Zdzislaw 'Conrad's Polish Background, or, from Biography to the Study of Culture' pp.3-8 *Conradiana* #1 Vol.XVIII (1986)

O'CONNOR, William Van 'Faulkner's Legend of the Old South' *Western Humanities Review* #7 (Autumn, 1953) pp.293-301

O'DONNELL, George Marion 'Faulkner's Mythology' *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)

PALLISER, Charles 'Predestination and Freedom in *As I Lay Dying*' (1986) *The Arizona Quarterly* #2 Vol.35 (1979) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

PARR, Susan Resneck 'The 14th Image of the Blackbird: Another Look at Truth in *Absalom, Absalom!*' *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

PITAVY, François L. 'The Narrative Voice and Function of Shreve: Remarks on the Production of Meaning in *Absalom, Absalom!*' *William Faulkner's 'Absalom, Absalom!': A Critical Casebook* ed. Elizabeth Muhlenfield (New York: Garland, 1984)

POMORSKA, Krystyna 'Mixail Baxtin and his Verbal Universe: M.M. Baxtin *Questions of Literature and Aesthetics' Poetics and Theory of Literature* #2 Vol.3: pp.379-386

PRINCE, Gerald *A Dictionary of Narratology* (London: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1989)

REED JR, Joseph W. 'Narrative Technique in *The Sound and the Fury*' in *Faulkner, William The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

RIEDEL, F.C. 'Faulkner as Stylist' *SAQ* #56 (1957) pp.462-479

RIMMON-KENAN, Shlomith *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen & Co., 1983)

ROSENZWEIG, Paul 'The Narrative Frames in *Absalom, Absalom!*' *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

ROSS, Mary *Notes on "Go Down, Moses": William Faulkner* (Harlow, England: Longman York Press, 1982)

ROSS, Mary *Notes on 'Absalom, Absalom!': William Faulkner* (Harlow, England: Longman York Press, 1981)

- ROSS, Mary *Notes on 'Absalom, Absalom!': William Faulkner* (Harlow, England: Longman York Press, 1981)
- ROSS, Stephen M. 'Conrad's Influence on Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*' *Studies in American Fiction* #2 (1974) pp.199-209
- ROSS, Stephen M. *Fiction's Inexhaustible Voice: speech and Writing in Faulkner* (Athens and London: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1989)
- RYAN, Kiernan 'Revelation and Repression in Conrad's *Nostramo*' *The Uses of Fiction: Essays on the Modern Novel in Honour of Arnold Kettle* ed. Douglas Jefferson & Graham Martin (O.U.P. 1982) pp.69-82
- SARTRE, Jean-Paul 'On *The Sound and the Fury*: Time in the Work of Faulkner' in Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)
- SECOR, Robert and MODDELMOG, Debra *Joseph Conrad and American Writers: A Bibliographical Study of Affinities, Influences and Relations* (Westport, Conn., Greenwood, 1985)
- SENN, Werner *Conrad's Narrative Voice: Stylistic Aspects of his Fiction* (Bern: A. Francke AG Verlag, 1980)
- SHIRES, Linda M. 'The "Privileged" Reader and Narrative Methodology in *Lord Jim*' *Conradiana* #1 Vol.XVII (1983) pp.19-30
- SHOEMAKER, Alice 'A Wheel within a Wheel: Fusion of Form and Content in *Absalom, Absalom!*' *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)
- SLATOFF, Walter J. 'The Edge of Order: The Pattern of Faulkner's Rhetoric' *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)
- SOLOMON, Eric 'Joseph Conrad, William Faulkner and the Nobel Prize Speech' *Notes and Queries* #7 Vol.14 (1967) pp.247-248
- SOWDER, W.J. 'Colonel Sutpen as Existential Hero' (1962) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)
- STEIN, Jean 'William Faulkner: An Interview' (1956) *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)
- SYNGE, John Millington 'The Playboy of the Western World' *The Complete Plays* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1963)

SZITTYA, Penn R. 'Metafiction: The Double Narration in *Under Western Eyes*' *English Literary History* Vol.48 (1981) pp.817-840

TATE, Allen *Memoirs and Opinions 1926-1974* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1975)

'William Faulkner: 1897-1962' (1962)

'Faulkner's *Sanctuary* and the Southern Myth' (1968)

TATE, Allen *Essays of Four Decades* (London: O.U.P., 1970)

TAYLOR, Walter '"Pantaloon": The Negro Anomaly at the Heart of *Go Down, Moses*' (1972) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

THOMPSON, L. 'Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*' ed. A.S. Downer *The English Institute Essays 1952* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1954)

THOMPSON, L. 'Mirror Analogues in *The Sound and the Fury*' A.S. Downer *The English Institute Essays 1952* (Columbia U.P. N.Y., 1954)

TOBIN, P. 'The Time of Myth and History: *Absalom, Absalom!*' (1973) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

TODOROV, Tzvetan *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle* trans. Wlad Godzich (University of Minnesota Press, 1984) [*Theory and History of Literature* {Vol. 13}]. Published in UK by Manchester University Press.

TZVETAN, Todorov 'Knowledge in the Void: *Heart of Darkness*' trans. Walter C. Putnam III, pp.161-172 *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* #3 Vol.21 (Autumn, 1989)

VANN WOODWARD, C. 'The Irony of Southern History' Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

VICKERY, Olga W. 'The *Sound and the Fury*: A Study in Perspective' in Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

VOLOSINOV, V.N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* trans. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (London: Seminar Press, 1973) App. 2: Titunik 'Formalism vs. Sociology of Literature'

WALLINGTON W. 'The *Sound and the Fury*: A Logic of Tragedy' (1981) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)

WARREN, Robert Penn 'Introduction: Faulkner: Past and Future' in Faulkner, William *The Sound and the Fury* ed. David Minter (London: W.W. Norton, 1987)

WARREN, Robert Penn *Selected Essays* (New York: Random House, 1958)

WARREN, Robert Penn 'William Faulkner' *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Harbinger: 1960)

WATT, Ian 'Conrad Criticism and *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*' in Conrad, Joseph *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* ed. Robert Kimbrough (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979)

WATT, Ian 'Conrad's Preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*' in Conrad, Joseph *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* ed. Robert Kimbrough (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979)

WATTS, Cedric 'Introduction' to Penguin ed. of *Lord Jim*

WATTS, Cedric 'Introduction' to Penguin ed. of *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* (1988)

WEGELIN, Christopher '"Endure" and "Prevail": Faulkner's Modification of Conrad' *Notes and Queries* #10 Vol.21 (1974) pp.375-376

WESTON, John Howard '*The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* and its Preface' in Conrad, Joseph *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* ed. Robert Kimbrough (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979)

WHEELER, O.B. 'Faulkner's Wilderness' (1959) *On Faulkner: The Best from 'American Literature'* ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Cady (London: Duke U.P., 1989)