

Decadent or Story Teller: A Study of Two Traditions

in the Early Work of William Faulkner

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A Summary

The argument centres on two language models: one represented by Mallarmé's belief that the world exists to arrive in a book: the other voiced by the Russian linguist Vološinov, who held language to be an ideological arena in which collaborative acts take place. Faulkner's work, up to and including As I Lay Dying, operates within both traditions. The oral community of the South is perceived through the highly literary world of the French Symbolists and the English Decadents. The ways in which the inter-relation develops are the concern of each chapter.

Perverse Poetry: "The Marble Faun" and "A Green Bough" (Ch.1.)

Faulkner's poetry, though often bad, exemplifies his European allegiance. Technique and subject derive from the work of Mallarmé and Swinburne; consequently, given the limited scope of the movement, they reflect the Decadence as a whole. Faulkner's editorial work on the later collection introduces a disruptive spoken element into the artifice of his sources.

Cruel Virgins and Decadent Types in "Soldiers' Pay", "Mosquitoes" and "Sartoris" (Ch.2)

The first three novels centre on character-types to be found in the poetry (androgynes, death's-heads, virgins and incestuous brothers) not simply as redundant juvenilia, but in order to focus a regional concern with separateness and genealogical purity.

William Faulkner on James Joyce: He Do the Rednecks in Different Voices (Ch.3)

Taking Ulysses as an exemplary Modernist text (and an extension of Symbolist interests), I seek to establish the exceptional nature of Faulkner's reaction to Joyce. The Sound and the Fury and to a lesser degree As I Lay Dying were written out of Ulysses, and yet by relying on the spoken word as a locus of semantic weight, Faulkner produced a peculiarly Southern experimental fiction. The inter-relation of linguistic and economic exchange, anecdotage, and the closed community (in the Trilogy) are used to demonstrate one source of Faulkner's verbal power.

"As I Lay Dying": Addie Bundren and God (Ch.4)

Characters silent by choice or affliction abound in Yoknapatawpha. Addie's dislike of words is taken as one way to outline a resilient myth of linguistic origins which runs as a continuing sub-plot throughout Faulkner's work. Two equations are set up with the help of Addie's section, Genesis, Edmund Leach and Lévi-Strauss:

1. Eden = Virginité = Silence
2. The Fall = Fertility = Language

The attraction of the first are anti-fiction and anti-life. The tension between the two is used to explain the elaborate structures of The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying.

"As I Lay Dying": Addie Bundren and Her Sons (Ch.5)

Darl and Cash are taken to embody Language and Silence. Their changing relationship is a debate which resolves some of the issues raised by Addie's monologue.

"The Sound and the Fury": Caddy Smelled like Trees? (Ch.6)

The novel reads like a cast list for the thesis. It features a mute idiot, a Decadent manqué, a virgin (?), an economic and a theological voice. However, even Quentin's readiness to analyze issues common to the Decadence and the South (incest and virginity) does not supply unity. The continuing and largely disguised presence of the first equation may be the source of disruption.

Conclusion

Arguably, Faulkner's power depends upon habits of mind which rise from theological, economic and sexual constraints present in his culture and his literary antecedents.

The pure work implies the elocutionary disappearance of the poet, who yields place to the words, immobilized by the shock of their inequality; they take light from their mutual reflection, like an actual rain of fire over precious stones, replacing the old lyric afflatus or the enthusiastic personal direction of the phrase. (Mallarmé)

I listen to the voices, and when I put down what the voices say, it's right. (Faulkner)

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Chapter 1

Perverse Poetry:

"The Marble Faun" and "A Green Bough"

On being asked by a friend to write some nature poetry, Baudelaire said that he disliked the sea, only swam in his bath tub and preferred a musical box to a nightingale. His reply has some bearing on Faulkner's poetry. In The Marble Faun a garden is so scrupulously gardened that it becomes a design. Despite their title, the poems of A Green Bough are more frequently set in a boudoir than among trees. Yoknapatawpha is "a postage stamp of native soil" but one of Faulkner's ways into it was through the thorough-going artificiality of the European Decadence. This claim is not made to deny the regional approach that follows the work of Malcolm Cowley, William Van O'Connor and Cleanth Brooks in seeing Faulkner as the creator of a myth of the South, but to establish a second point of departure. Often the early translations of Verlaine are dismissed as "being different in a small town";¹ the style of "Count No Count" is presented as an adolescent affectation,² and the European journey cited to evidence early and faltering steps. The apprentice work may in part exemplify the poet lost for a novelist, and the novelist lost for a subject, but its aberrations also signify Faulkner's involvement with the works of Baudelaire and Mallarmé, Swinburne and Wilde.

Faulkner's county did not spring fully inhabited from Mississippi on to the pages of Sartoris, but was populated from Symbolist texts as its proprietor responded both to Southern history and to the premises of Decadent art. The two traditions fuse. The Decadent conviction that civilisation is corrupt and due for disaster weathers the decayed plantation house. In his rooms the Southern Hamlet, indolent, leisured and obsessed with the ruin of the Old South, assumes the ennui of the Decadent hero: Horace Brainard (Norwood) and Augustine

St. Claire (Uncle Tom's Cabin) emerge, through the hermetic chambers of Baudelaire and Huysmans, as Quentin Compson and Charles Bon. Such transformations are common. Southern virgins practise the wiles of La Belle Dame Sans Merci. Idiot sons are conceived with an eye to Zola's pathological genealogies. Brothers and sisters permutate incestuous positions in a Decadent refinement of intensity. Antecedents for each could be found in the Gothic tradition, but the American Gothicism pursues abnormality without implying that language itself is deviant. The Decadents recognised that the artificiality of their materials implied the artificiality of the signs for those materials, as Arthur Symons put it:

What Decadence in Literature really means is that learned corruption of language, by which style ceases to be organic and becomes, in pursuit of some new expressiveness or beauty, deliberately abnormal.³

Such sentiments were available to Faulkner primarily through the Europeans. He does not drop his early reading, his poetry and his first two novels, to discover the South; he discovers the South through them.

II

Those critics who have pursued the formative literary influences have generally adopted one of two roles: the bibliophile who compiles necessary lists (Michael Millgate, H.E. Richardson), or the nay-sayer who declares the exceptional nature of Faulkner's pre-Sartoris publications (Harry Runyan, Addison Bross). Neither is wholly satisfactory, since between the volumes of poetry as between the first two novels there is a progressive assimilation of diverse Decadent materials, and a changing attitude to these materials. In trying to define the change I have accepted the proposition implied by

Mario Praz in The Romantic Agony and stated by E.A. Carter's The Idea of Decadence in French Literature (1830-1900), that the European Decadence intensified rather than expanded its ideas, the fundamentals of which are to be found in Les Fleurs du Mal. My analysis of the poetry avoids specific questions of influence, not because such influences cannot be traced, but because a reader may enter the Decadence at any point and see it almost whole. The movement's concerns grew more elaborate without altering in their basic structure. Consequently, it is possible to follow one anatomical feature from Les Fleurs du Mal through Poems and Ballads to A Green Bough; whether Faulkner first encountered Jeanne Duval's breasts in "Les Bijoux" or in "Anactoria", is less important than their presence in Poem XXIX:

Her hands moaned on her breast in blind and supple fire,
Made light within her cave: she saw her harried
Body wrung to a strange and bitter lyre
Whose music once was pure strings simply married.⁴

Swinburne's Sappho transformed her mistress into "a lyre of many faultless agonies"; whether Faulkner heard this music here, or imitated that which accompanied Mallarmé's *Hérodiade*, is an academic point. Other limbs are more easily identified. The Decadent fascination with the living dead and *La Belle Dame* combine to give the head of John the Baptist lasting currency. In visual terms Moreau's *Salomé* canvases are studies for Beardsley's illustrations of a text by Wilde. Verbally, the martyr appears first in female guise as Baudelaire's "Une Martyre" and is handed down for Mallarmé's use in "Cantique De Saint Jean". Visual and verbal meet in Mosquitoes where Gordon carves a headless, almost sexless torso, and dreams of a "garçon vierge" stained with vermilion and carrying a crown - the boy dances towards a decapitated ebony woman.

There is no specific evidence that Faulkner read Baudelaire, little to suggest that he knew Mallarmé, but it is difficult to see how the extant reading list could fail to be a thorough introduction to the movement. At sixteen Faulkner "discovered" Swinburne.⁵ At twenty he read Mademoiselle de Maupin and Lewis Seymour and Some Women. Two years later he published a translation of "Clair de Lune". The Poems and Ballads are a dictionary of Decadent imagery. Swinburne called Gautier's novel "the holy writ of beauty". George Moore's hero meets Mallarmé, discusses his "ever escaping meaning" and the niceties of an edition of L'Après-Midi d'un Faune - drawings by Manet. Verlaine's poem, according to Hugh Kenner, is the text that inaugurated the English Post-Symbolist Movement. It would seem that Faulkner, more by luck than judgement, entered the tradition at points both random and crucial.

However, bibliographies are not evidence of reading, any more than reading is necessarily a sign of comprehension. Faulkner shared his interest with some less than discriminating contemporaries. Amory Blaine is fond of "The Triumph of Time"; Eleanor Savage (one of his many) chants Verlaine from a wet haystack. What Fitzgerald called "the stuff of the nineties"⁶ was notoriously a phase - pursued for shock value, it generally extended to four or five poems, two or three names and one idea, before being dropped. Faulkner did not drop it. At thirty he published his second re-working of Swinburne's "Hermaphroditus". The interest that made Mallarmé's poem the model for Faulkner's first publication was a continuing and informed interest. Faulkner had access to the critic best equipped to understand French linguistic experimentation and its adaptation to English forms, namely Arthur Symons, who introduced Yeats to Mallarmé's writing. During 1921 and 1922

he published a series of poems, reviews and essays in the New Orleans magazine The Double Dealer: the June issue for 1922 contains a poem called "Portrait" by Faulkner. The poem is unmemorable; my point is that if Faulkner knew the magazine and read Symons on "the much misunderstood question of decadence in art" ("An Appreciation of Havelock Ellis," February 1922), Symons on La Belle Dame ("History of the Moulon de Galette," August 1922), Symons on French posters ("A Paradox of Poster," September 1922) - then Symons introduced him to Baudelaire, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Pater, Beardsley and Wilde. At the very least the Irish critic turned Phil Stones' selective book list into an annotated catalogue. And even if The Double Dealers of 1922 went unread, Faulkner's editorial work for the magazine during 1925 would have made up the omission with more than enough back-numbers and literary talk. The Decadence, then, was almost as available to Faulkner in Oxford and New Orleans as it was to George Moore in Dublin and Paris; his use of it is perversely Southern.

III

The Marble Faun was written between April and June of 1919. Phil Stone loaned Faulkner copies of poems by Verlaine and Mallarmé early in their friendship, and H.E. Richardson points to several direct borrowings; these are the borrowings of a novice. The faun owes far more to a statue appearing in Verlaine's early collection Fêtes Gallantes⁷ than to the narrator of Mallarmé's "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune". Predictably Faulkner responds to the mannered artificiality of Verlaine's "mock pastoral days".⁸ His eye and not his ear is engaged: the Ole Miss illustrator who imitated many of Beardsley's effects may well have read Verlaine's dreams of eighteenth century nobility

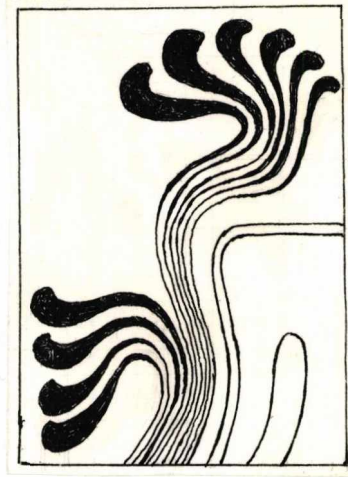
through the drawings for The Yellow Book. Distracted by the pictorial, his ear misses linguistic experiment, so that in his own poem correspondence and synesthesia remain unattempted: nature is not a store of particles from which to dream (Mallarmé), but a completed design. For the French faune, "tufted slumber", "an animal whiteness", "brightness of grapes" cancel the physical world from which they derive - the sleeper, the swan and the vine vanish, as Mallarmé proves his principle that art is produced only by elimination. Faulkner's faun tries, but succeeds only in refining natural detail into the repeated lines of art-nouveau: the result, far from being "a delicious approximation"⁹, resembles a piece of furniture.

The cedars painted on the sky
Hide the sun slow flamingly
Repeated level on the lake,
Smooth and still and without shake,
Until the swans' inverted grace
Wreathes in thought its placid face
With spreading lines like opening fans
Moved by white and languid hands. (p.28)

The cedar's silhouette and reflection meet in a continuous line. A swan opens a ripple into a fan. In one corner a hand moves. Under pressure from some pale languid ladies, trees make a frieze and the lake becomes a mirror. The swan's wake has little option; frozen it rests like an article-de-toilette against the glass. Regularity, singularity and artifice are the designing principles.

Cleanth Brooks has pointed out that roofs are not thatched in Mississippi and that Southern blackbirds shriek rather than sing with "gold, wired throats",¹⁰ but Faulkner has done more than litter the South with accessories from Verlaine's formal garden and Houseman's lost Arcadia. He regulates the artificiality of his sources, even as Maidenhair

redisposes nature's clutter:



The repeated, rhythmic line of the art-nouveau motif imitates natural forms in order to formalize them. Likewise, the faun reduces outlines in number and extends their length. His eye is caught by the single lily or rose. Each "exploding oak and beech" is picked out (p.41); the stars are enumerated on "golden wires" (p.37). Even a flowering orchard narrows to the point at which a petal and a grass-blade touch:

Whisper of an orchard's trees
That, shaken by the aimless breeze,
Let their blossoms fade and slip
Soberly, as lip to lip
They touch the misty grasses fanned
To ripples by the breeze. (p.30)

This point, described as the meeting of two lips, is not a Mallarméan fragment; association, excited by uncertain syntax, does not cluster here. Instead the petals touch the grass, making a line which curves back towards silhouette. Despite the weather the orchard can be clearly seen. Petals and lips, grass and water do not synthesize, and the associative possibility of the words is dampened by a mist that remains a pictorial trick. Elsewhere such blurring is avoided. A silver sail is forged from a nightingale's song (p.33). (the clinically decorous technique was perfected by Housman). The moon's path is as clear as a road beaten by white feet (p.33): commonly one might expect moonlit trees to be dappled, but the faun, with impeccable geometry, ranks the trees into battalions so that the light striking through them shall

cast patterns as regular as the warp and woof of a "veil" (p.29). His compulsive formality has no trouble with black-birds - their flight is slowed and curved into the trace left by ashes on the surface of a lake (p.29). From blossom to black-bird, the faun remakes the world in his own image - and the result, quite logically, is a piece of art.

It is difficult to see how the monologue of a statue, with the mental habits of an aesthetic Medusa, can be read as "a struggle for identity"¹¹. Yet those critics who bother with the poem often talk of "the faun's tension"¹², and of a Keatsian strain¹³ in its situation, caught between motion and stasis. Unfortunately for such readings, the faun disposes of opposites. Although the Earth, the Moon and Pan appear in the poem, they do so only as mirrors. The Earth may be the faun's mother, but motherhood means little more than offering a quarry: her "breast" provided the marble for her son and, "burning with snow", her heart throbs out his message (p.32). The gospel according to the son can be glossed - the garden, appearances to the contrary, is "gray and old", consequently the one dream worth dreaming there is the dream of "winter snows". Pan is said to be a superior deity who pipes Spring into life, but twice in the third poem he plays an apprentice role, statuesquely freezing, to join the faun as a particularly well positioned marble in a formal garden. The Moon, despite a changeable reputation, persists in casting the right light - a marble light. Everywhere the reader turns he encounters carved stone or the threat of snow. Even the seasons are static. Days do pass and the separate poems form an irregular calendar, but it is tempting to say, with the whole cast brooding on a change for the worse in the weather, that winter is never

far away. Since ten of the nineteen sections close with references to dreams, be it to dull eyes or a dying day, night joins winter as the real time of the poem.

The faun is more Gorgon than Pan. Nonetheless the material contains the ghost of a conflict and so is slightly more than than a verbal rendering of Beardsley's silhouettes. Occasionally lines suggest that Faulkner has taken more from Fêtes Gallantes than garden plans, and that the plot of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune" was not all he borrowed from Mallarmé. Even in 1919 Faulkner was beginning to see in Symbolist materials the implications of artificiality. For example the opening stanza of the ninth poem approaches Decadent sexuality: perversity is only avoided because the limits of the pastoral convention insist that Nature is clean. A marginal re-emphasis makes the Moon's influence less than healthy:

The ringèd moon sits eerily
Like a mad woman in the sky,
Dropping flat hands to caress
The far world's shaggy flanks and breast,
Plunging white hands in the glade
Elbow deep in a leafy shade
Where birds sleep in each silent brake
Silverly, there to wake
The quivering loud nightingales
Whose cries like scattered silver sails
Spread across the azure sea ...
... While turning always through the skies
Her white feet mirrored in my eyes
Weave a snare about my brain ... (p.33)

The Earth responds to the "white hands" with "nightingale cries": Philomel's metamorphosis is part of the mythology of the poem, and once this is remembered the touch deviates - a rapacious lesbian caress releases "leafy shade", "quivering cries" and "flanks and breast" from rural constraint. With the pastoral less in evidence, the Moon may be re-named Selene in preparation for a debasement of the lover worthy of Swinburne's

fatal queens. Indeed the Decadent echo is picked up by Quentin Compson in The Sound and The Fury when he associates female insatiability with moonlight and cruel feet:

Delicate equilibrium of periodical filth between two moons balanced. Moons he said full and yellow as harvest moons her hips thighs. Outside outside of them always but. Yellow. Feet soles with walking like.¹⁴

Suddenly the infinite longing of Mallarmé's faune and the eternal gaze of the death's-head are possibilities, but they are no more than this. Faulkner's faun, despite his talk of impotence, does not burn: his most frequent sensual gesture is the folding of objects against one another, he "furls" beauty to his eyes (p.19) and watches water and shadows "fold" against him (pp.25 and 48). The effect is oppressive rather than exciting, since "fold" in a stone mouth cannot escape a geological association. The faun's touch is as cold as his gaze, but stoniness alone is insufficient pedigree for a death's-head, particularly as the faun is determined to "earn the gift of sleep" (p.49), thereby sacrificing his waking dreams. The faun has no interest in infinity, whereas the dark-eyed martyrs of Moreau or Mallarmé can only stare into it:

All these figures seem frozen in a sleep walker's gesture; they are unaware of the movement they are executing, sunk in a reverie to the extent of appearing to be carried away towards other worlds. (Moreau)¹⁵

Faulkner does not dedicate his hero to "the infinite extension", seen by Praz as characteristic of the Symbolist imagination; without this dedication his poem is pictorial rather than theoretical. The faun is almost a Symbolist figure. He redesigns nature but stops short of dismissing it for the sake of la rêve; Baudelaire's injunctions are ignored:

It is that admirable, that immortal instinct for the beautiful which makes us consider the earth and its spectacles as a revelation, as something in correspondence with Heaven. The insatiable thirst for everything that lies beyond, and that life reveals is the most living proof of our immortality. It is at the same time by poetry and through poetry, by and through music, that the soul glimpses the splendours beyond the tomb.¹⁶

Although the marble faun dreams he would rather sleep dreamlessly. To this end, instead of moving across and beyond the materials of the natural world, he creates a restful version of them. Predictably, the mannered perspectives of his garden do not invite the eye towards infinity, but merely to the edge of a design, whose pattern is too decorative to be counted pastoral simplification, and not decorative enough to be described as a Decadent rejection of materiality. At this stage in his career Faulkner sees no further than the faun. Symbolist possibilities remain dormant. Only as he writes the poems collected in A Green Bough does he grow aware of the tradition: arguably, in organizing the second collection, he defines his thought on that tradition.

IV

A Green Bough was published late (1933), and there is some dispute about its time of authorship. Faulkner claimed to have written it in his late teens (1914-1917). However, comparison with the technically inferior magazine pieces indicates that he may have been referring to his Ole Miss publications. Richardson takes Faulkner at his word, points out that by 1925 a basic volume with a title existed, and argues that the poems were written between 1914-1925. Nonetheless, it seems likely that only a few of the poems could have been written in conjunction with The Marble Faun, since many of them represent a divergent response to common influences.

Phil Stone believes that Faulkner was making poetic use of his time in the employment of The Mississippi University postal service (January, 1922-October, 1924). This dating is more likely in that it offers a concentrated period during which Faulkner's publication record was blank and his official work effectively a sinecure. Certainly the calendar according to Joseph Blotner notes an increased outflow of manuscripts from Phil Stone's office during the last months of 1924 and the early months of 1925. Even this dating is approximate, depending as it does on the date typed by a secretary at the head of each poem as she prepared to mail it to a magazine. Nowhere is there a definite record of the order in which Faulkner wrote the poems of his second collection; there is evidence that Faulkner was very conscious of them as a collection. The extent of his work on Marionettes (1920) and Vision in Spring (1921)¹⁷ indicates his concern with books as complete objects and not indices. Blotner unsystematically does enough to suggest that the order of appearance is not the order of composition. Most important, Faulkner's reading may well have made him aware of the importance of decisions about sequence. Les Fleurs du Mal is a carefully-structured whole employing Roman numerals. Swinburne claimed that Poems and Ballads were a unity. Yeats in his early collections was exploring the possibility of using single poems as counterpoints within the framework of an entire book. Mallarmé was much concerned with the order and content of his oeuvre. The models and the evidence of letters argue for the unity of A Green Bough: Faulkner requested that his publisher use blank pages to mark "separate and distinct moods and methods", though confessing that this might seem too scrupulous "in respect to second class poetry".

He declared that the collection was a volume "built just like a novel" - perhaps remembering that he had recently finished proof reading Light in August, he more modestly gave Hal Smith permission to add any poem that had appeared in Contempo (February, 1932)¹⁸. Four poems move from the magazine to the book. Unfortunately, Blotner does not indicate whether the decision was Faulkner's or Smith's. Who located the poems in the text is likewise undesignated. Given that the final sanction rests with the author as he proof reads, this uncertainty should not be overstressed.

A background to A Green Bough suggests the need for a critical reading that at least tries to deal with the collection as some kind of whole. However, critics generally enumerate influences and take sides, concluding with Runyan that Faulkner's poetry is "almost wholly derivative"¹⁹, or with Richardson that "Faulkner has by and large absorbed his influences" (p.108). Both views miss how the struggle with source materials is raised to the level of argument by the poet's ordering of the poems. Certainly the sources are numerous, ranging from E.E. Cummings to Housman, from T.S. Eliot to Jonson, but only the Decadents are returned to and re-interpreted. The collection is built around re-appraisals of Symbolist issues, interspersed with groups of poems having other points of reference. Even the secondary elements are not entirely divorced from the central issue. Seven poems echo Shropshire Lad; five of them, grouped as Poems XI to XV, re-accentuate Decadent artifice by means of Housman's sterile tone. T.S. Eliot's influence is as pervasive though less concentrated. The first two poems make use of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "Portrait of a Lady" - that is, of the Eliot who attempts "the Laforguan

dandyism of outlook".²⁰ Mallarmé would have affirmed Eliot's remark that "a poem communicates before it is understood"; whether he would have approved the Elizabethans is more doubtful - but I am not trying to say that every poem deserves its place, standing in a critical relation to every other poem, merely that A Green Bough can be read as Faulkner's reaction to a single tradition.

The first three poems occupying one sixth of the overall space, are symbolist in allusion, intent and effect. Hopefully my reading will state the basic principles of the Decadence and provide a point of reference for the discussion of later poems. Each narrator is a dreamer who denies reason and action. The dying flier rejects the society of the women who tend him. The lover responds to cerebral excitement rather than to feminine presence. The sleeper escapes into dream and dies back into life. For Baudelaire, realists were "parasites of the object"; he instructed that the material world be set aside:

It (art) decomposes all creation, and with the raw materials accumulated and disposed in accordance with rules whose origins one cannot find save in the furthest depths of the soul, it creates a new world ...²¹

Faulkner follows him and dematerializes among other things a social worker, a piano and a cave. Each effect facilitates his narrator's drift through a common langour towards what Valéry called "the infinite extension". An approach to "new worlds" (Moreau) is enhanced by the ease with which the dreamers slip their hold on the old one. Transportation is encouraged by three women, or more particularly two virgins and a temptress (who, smelling of lilies, is probably more virginal than she seems). The trinity eludes pursuit, remaining as chill as Hérodiade and as disconcerting as the nymphs who worry Mallarmé's faune. Infinity is variously manifested: the airman recognizes, "I - I am not dead." (p.11),

the lover "sees his brain disintegrate, spark by spark." (p.13), while "Silence" waits beside the dreamer's bed, "like a priest" with the last rites (p.19). Despite variations all three are death's-heads on arrival. Cadaverous profiles fascinate the Decadents because they reflect the horror and the attraction of the Absolute.

Within their own enclosures - a garden, a room and a cave - Faulkner's heroes improve on Symbolist enclosures; their solipsism makes a lilac hedge, a domestic wall and a rock face materials for la rêve. In Baudelaire's hands Jeanne Duval's body becomes an artefact. Hérodiade, always less substantial, is manipulated by Mallarmé so that the historical events surrounding her vanish from the poem. Faulkner's narrators are equally aesthetic; they ignore their social existence as effectively as Huysmans' locking the door behind him. Conversion to the Symbolist techniques would seem as sudden as it is complete; however, taken singly each poem reveals significant, though as yet unused, divergences.

"We sit drinking tea" is firmly located by its first two verses in Prufrock's world: the cutlery may be different but - teaspoon or coffeespoon - the conversation is Eliotic. Its third verse owes more to Mallarmé's "Les Fenêtres", like the French poet's old man Faulkner's airmen are "tired of the dreary hospital" (p.17) from which their only escape is death. In both poems virgins spring the fatal trap: the French model is predictably a little less substantial than her American counterpart, "a virginal skin of long ago" as against "a white wanton ... (stalked) ... through shimmering reaches of the sky". Finally, the woman's identity is irrelevant; she is an ideal. Faulkner finds her "at the border of a wood" but transposes her from the pastoral into a landscape of cloud

and shadow. Her "rising whiteness mirrored in a lake" is less a body to be visualised and entered than the fragment of an image carrying the lover towards the azure. She offers a mortal embrace:

I felt her arms and her cool breath.
The bullet struck me here, I think
In the left breast
And killed my little point-eared machine. I saw it fall ...
(p.8)

The lines somewhat oddly award the flier a pair of faun's ears, which allow him to transcend aerodynamics. Where dog-fights and fauns co-exist the "thirst for the infinite" (Valéry) will necessarily be confused. A page from the poem's drafts illustrates the problem - a pencil drawing of a bi-plane is used as background for an ink sketch of two figures; the result is a fortuitous picture in which a faun with pointed ears seems to rest on a tail plane, as he pipes to a nymph. The juxtaposition probably occurred because of a paper shortage; its effect is certainly more comic than allusive.²² The two sets of images are no more happily reconciled at the opening of verse four:

One should not die like this
On Such a day,
From angry bullet or other modern way. (p.8)

Flier and reader return to Wilfred Owen's world of hospitalised victims²³, where death is a matter for anger ["Ah, science is a dangerous mouth to kiss." (p.8)], or for pity ["He's not dead, poor chap;" (p.11)], but not for envy.

The first poem's discordant use of materials is overcome in Poem II. "Laxly reclining, he watches the firelight going" studies the typical Decadent situation; a poet/lover contemplates his mistress and is drawn into a dream, which offers, instead of physical satisfaction, the superior ecstasy of drinking "lilies of cold water on the edge of pure oblivion"²⁴

with Paul Valéry. Models are legion. The "Platonic Love" section of Les Fleurs du Mal would have been as instructive as Swinburne's prostration before innumerable women: the spirit is caught in two phrases from Baudelaire's letters to Madame Sabatier: "Brats love ... but poets worship", "You are my superstition".²⁵ In keeping with these remarks the lover's room is a temple dedicated to his idol:

Her silent hands, palm upward, lie at ease,
Filling with gold at each flame's spurting rise, (p.12)

The suppliant's imagination is locked in a vision of permanent aspiration; pursuit can never end because the woman becomes a statue as the first stage in a refinement which will place her beyond the solidity of sound - in silence:

She plays, and softly playing, sees the room
Dissolve, and like a dream the still walls fade
And sink, while music softly played
Softly flows through the lily-scented gloom. (p.14)

The nature of her going is Mallarméan right down to the accessories. She wears his colour "azure", is adorned with his "lily", carries his note of "silence" in her heart, and her unavailability is characterised by his quintessential intangibles, light and water. But authentication is less important than the recognition that Faulkner is manufacturing a Symbolist event, whose basic premise is artifice at all levels. Moreau painted with scrupulous attention to the niceties of architectural design, producing visionary cities which could not possibly stand up. Beardsley decorated his costumes to such an extent that any occupant would have been smothered. For both artists the fragment stands for the whole - the scroll work on a pillar captures a court, a peacock feather typifies a sensuality. Literary Symbolists have a similar predilection for inorganic synecdoche; using a part for the entirety, they atomize reality and then lose the atoms. The result is

not simply much talk of petals in the place of flowers, profiles seen in a strand of hair, shadows, mists and odours - the reductive intent of these and any number of partial images is reinforced by various linguistic devices. Mallarmé composed in phonemes as much as words, using repeated letters in an attempt to make "the line which out of several small words fashions one complete new word, new, a stranger to the language." ("Crise de Vers", p.175) Presumably this neologism would reverberate with the whisper of many ruined words, reborn in the fresh contextuality of its magic term. As in most things Mallarméan suggestion should be left to suggest. Such a word, manufactured, would stand up no better than Moreau's cities. It is simply a rhetorical hypothesis declaring the poet's revulsion from language as presently constituted. The final verse of Poem II effects a muted echo of this rejection: repetition produces strangeness as the sounds of the verbs blend, blurring phonemic distinctions - 'i' and 'o' are manipulated for cadence. It may seem that too much is being made of common alliteration, but even if Faulkner's French was not good enough to translate Mallarmé's sound patterns, it is likely that he knew of coloured audition as a theoretical possibility. George Moore discusses sceptically the claims of Ghil; this particular disciple of Mallarmé believed that "the syllables of the French language evoke in us the sensations of the different colours; consequently the timbre of different instruments. The vowel u corresponds to the colour yellow and therefore to the sound of flutes."²⁶ Although Swinburne's musicality is a matter for the ear rather than for theory, its effect is not so far from Ghil's intent or Mallarmé's valuation of single phonemes. Alliteration, artificial metres and internal rhyme can be pursued to the

point at which they overcome syntax and reduce the line to one or two dominant sounds. A sound is not "a new word" but it may do practical violence to the gaps between phonemes and words, and between words and phrases. The ear depends on these gaps and their differences for its ability to reconstitute language and appreciate the semantic charge that it carries. Sometimes Swinburne's line smothers fine grammatical distinction, so that an arbitrary and novel grouping of letters will rival the word as a poetic unit; when this occurs the idea that language names reality is threatened. If Symbolist art is "a flight from objects", Symbolist poetics, as practised by even its less ideological exponents, is a flight from the word as much more than a clutch of arbitrary letters. Faulkner does not fly very far - just far enough to hear music played by light and to reflect that such music is verbal harmonics.

Since Swinburne, and not the French, may have been his most influential language master, it is useful to detail some of the linguistic implications of the Swinburnean tune:

I would my love could kill thee; I am satiated
With seeing thee live, and fain would have thee dead.
I would earth had thy body as fruit to eat,
And no mouth but some serpent's found thee sweet.
I would find grievous ways to have thee slain,
Intense device, and superflux of pain;
Vex thee with amorous agonies, and shake
Life at thy lips, and leave it there to ache;
Strain out thy soul with pangs too soft to kill,
Intolerable interludes, and infinite ill;
Relapse and reluctance of the breath,
Dumb tunes and shuddering semitones of death.
I am weary of all thywords and soft strange ways,
Of all love's fiery nights and all his days,
And all the broken kisses salt as brine
That shuddering lips make moist with waterish wine,
And eyes the bluer for all those hidden hours
That pleasure fills with tears and feeds with flowers,
Fierce at the heart with fire that half comes through,
But all the flower-like white stained round with blue;
The fervent underlid, and that above
Lifted with laughter or abashed with love;
Thine amorous girdle, full of thee and fair,
And leavings of the lilies in thine hair. 27

The lines from "Anactoria" are a typical if extreme version of Swinburne's sexualisation of reality. Apologists may claim that sex itself is a secondary metaphor for art, but whether Poems and Ballads celebrate passion unachieved or poetry unwritten, they work with sensual analogies whose language is necessarily self-consciously approximate. This is exaggerated in Swinburne because he obeys Decadent ground rules which direct him towards virginal lust and post-coital ennui rather than orgasm. Poetry that centres on perfection is bound to be about failure, although this need not always be faced. Sappho's disappointment generates an excess of terms: "vex", "shake", "strain" are synonyms for a torture she does not wish to name. Synonyms are a form of negative definition; since "strain" is not quite the same as "vex" it refines the word that it substitutes, and its aim is the music of abstract language. As hearing is led by alliteration away from meaning towards sound, the reader is drawn into a complex dematerialization. The poet's voice and semantic concerns will evaporate when/ ^{and} if his interest in sound surpasses his interest in the source of sound, (be it voice, subject or language system).

Intolerable interludes, and infinite ill;
Relapse and reluctance of the breath,
Dumb tunes and shuddering semitones of the death.

Euphemism is a still more satisfactory disguise - Swinburne is constantly euphemistic. The device works primarily in two ways. It is a coterie language; unless the reader knows the code he cannot read the words, and having gone to the trouble or learning the code he is unlikely to challenge its assumptions. The euphemistic message succeeds in direct proportion to the overloading of its own terms. Sappho's

lily is no more a lily than her snake is a snake: its lips are all manner of lips. In Symbolist art the lily is the emblem of restored virginity. Therefore, its petals, discovered in Anactoria's hair, are hymeneal as well as floral. By locating them Sappho recreates her lover's maiden-head and effectively emasculates any previous male lover. Code breaking multiplies the meaning of the words and as snakes, brine, wine, lids and hair are translated, so a physical body is dismembered and redispersed. Sappho's sadistic passion is served by the division and relocation of words. The approximate nature of such language is everywhere apparent, and although words in any literary genre work by excessive signification, Swinburne's systematic euphemism makes excess the central fact of significance. Given that sexual disappointment is stylistically enacted throughout Poems and Ballads, Swinburne's perverse practices may be seen to approach Mallarmé's linguistic theories.

Despite its alliterative opening and Symbolist cast list, Poem II resists its sources. The lover is not content to surrender language to sound, or to use domestic articles as a Thesaurus. However, only one object - a pewter bowl - stands between him and capitulation; the barrier is slight since the bowl contains lilies.

A pewter bowl of lilies in the room
Seems to him to weigh and change the gloom
Into a palpable substance he can feel
Heavily on his hands, slowing the wheel
The firelight steadily turns upon the ceiling.
The firelight steadily hums, steadily wheeling
Until his brain, stretched and tautened, suddenly cracks.
Play something else. (pp.12-13)

The narrator needs to hold a particular object, whose weight will give him the confidence to issue instructions that will return music to the piano and language to situational integrity. His achievement is momentary; the bowl breaks

and with it the poet's nerve. During the central sections (stanzas 6 and 7) submission is so complete that time and place are eliminated, and the poet quits the room for an eternity of cerebral lust:

As through a corridor rushing with harsh rain
He walks his life, and reaching the end
He turns it as one turns a wall (p.14)

Despite the last line's commitment to *la rêve*, the poet, woken by his mistress on the stairs, continues his reintegration attempts (stanzas 8 and 9). *La Belle Dame* becomes a physical entity. The dreamer's reason is restored ["wheels spin in his brain, / And whirl in a vortex of sparks together again." (p.15)]. Finally, as the lover climbs the stairs to mount the dream, the poet ceases to be a Symbolist. However, Faulkner's position is indeterminate. Few of the details are solid enough to particularize the speaker. Piano, mistress and flower arrangement scarcely materialize. An already obscure plot is further disrupted by a dream insert (stanzas 6 and 7): reverie always distorts time, and a dream that becomes a pictorial design dismantles the clock entirely. Mallarmé, suspicious of narrative, would be well pleased. Faulkner hesitates.

In Poem III he almost suspends his disbelief. Baudelaire offers a useful gloss on the poem:

The whole visible universe is but a storehouse of images and signs to which imagination will give a relative place and value; it is a sort of food which the imagination must digest and transform.²⁸

Faulkner asserts the imagination's victory over the world by means of a sustained use of Baudelaire's synesthesia (the vibration of a range of sensual responses to a pitch at which intensity replaces stimulant as the poetic subject), Swinburne's alliteration and Mallarmé's correspondence (the dissolution

of objects via allusion, so that the linguistic sign connotes without denotation.).

The materiality of the poem's setting - a cave - is a problem. How is the Symbolist imagination to overcome geology? The set-back is brief; just as the first two narrators transformed surroundings freely in their approach to different kinds of death, so the dreamer dreams himself free of cartography. Faulkner juxtaposes "cave" and "eaves", thereby synthesising "death" and "sleep" - the appearance of "ribs" confirms that Poem III is formulating its solipsistic contract earlier than its predecessors. "The cave was ribbed with dark", marks a threefold descent, into the self ("ribs"), into sleep ("eaves", line 2) and into death ("cave"). Not surprisingly "the cave no more a cave is". To claim that the external world is suspended would not do justice to the systematic attacks launched on externality - attacks motivated by Axel's sentiment "the quality of our hope no longer allow us the earth". The cave is dark but dawn breaks ("A wave of gold breaking a jewelled crest/And he is walled with gold.") Nocturnal creatures carry light ("the bats/Of light"). Seas flow "overhead". Flame is "icy", and heaven and earth invert, tipping the sleeper "down the inclined air" to the stars. The cave is rapidly transformed into a gallery featuring Symbolist dream-artefacts, each of which carries the observer further from nature. Baudelaire and Moreau might have exhibited here. Jeanne Duval and Salomé, recast in gem and metal, would not have been out of place. Faulkner does not need to petrify flesh: his dreamer is a cave whose body automatically gleams with inorganic matter. Among the gold, coral and silver surfaces, Mallarméan music weaves. "Unheard sound" summons the listener to abstraction: flowing from the

sleeper's brain to the "earth's core" and from the bed of the sea to the stars, it purifies by disrupting the world:

The cave no more a cave is: ribs of music
Arch and crack the walls, the uncaged bats
From earth's core break its spun and floating crust.
Hissing seas rage overhead, and he
Staring up through icy twilight, sees
The stars within the water melt and sweep
In silver spears of streaming burning hair. (p.16)

Associations of geological upheaval and physical wounding fuse, and with a blow as deft as any ordered by Salomé, cave and skull are split. The dreamer loses the world and joins airman, lover and John the Baptist in a new state. The three verses follow a much tried Symbolist tradition. Verse one augments conventional night imagery with conspicuous runover, to describe the fall into sleep. Verse two dramatizes reason as it drowns in la rêve. Verse three celebrates landfall on the shores of the new. With impeccable logic verse four offers the death's-head an infinite emblem upon which to gaze. Nominally the exemplar is a virgin, assembled kit-like from Poems and Ballads (lips by "Laus Veneris", breasts by "Anactoria") but her symmetrical movement is masturbatory; each lip is a separate body "laid one on other"; each breast a silver harp that only its owner's hands can play; and every limb is "wed" to every other limb. The virgin is hermaphroditic, a type described by Joséphin Péladan as the distinguishing mark of the decadence. Her metamorphosis is less odd than it may at first seem - A.J.L. Busst argues that since the virgin is "the supreme cerebral lecher", she is necessarily hermaphroditic in the head.²⁹ Indeed it is possible to set the androgyne at the top of the league of sexual perversity whose every practice indicates a different stage in the Decadent withdrawal from life. Placings might run:

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1. Androgyny

 2. Incest

 3. Virginity

 4. Homosexuality

 5. Sadism/Masochism

 6. Onanism

Separating the bodies would at times be difficult, but judges could be advised to assess rank on the proficiency of each perversion in any or all of the following - eroticism, distortion, display, artificiality, intensity, solipsism, inertia, and erethism. Androgyny is a clear winner because it encompasses the talents of its challengers, making the hermaphrodite a "natural" unnatural.

Incest	Features sterility (incestuous couplings in art are too monstrous to be permitted progeny), and solipsism (as brother and sister mate they reunite a single flesh and name). High-placed because this union traditionally repairs the original spirit/matter, heaven/earth divisions. However, the hermaphrodite contains those unions that incest merely shadows.
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Virginity	Compounds all the skills but remains only a cerebral expression of androgyny.
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Homosexuality	Good on distortion, sterility and artificiality, but derivative. The Mauve Nineties followed Gautier, Baudelaire and Verlaine in praising boyish "beauty" as a substitute for the hermaphroditic love object.
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Sadism/ Masochism	Translates flesh into an object: the product is further distorted when, and if, the female plays the male role and vice-versa. Androgynes switch positions at will and with each reversal stress their ennui.
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Onanism	Possessed of many gifts, none to high efficiency. Liable to be deemed "natural". Hermaphrodites, by definition, are self sufficient.
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Ground Rules (common to all participants):

A: That this sexual league shall lead to no satisfaction, particularly of the female, since satisfaction might return language-dissemination to a womb in which meaning could be born.

B: Commitment to be given to the conspicuous wastage of seed and word.

C: That the wilful collapse of sexual differentiation should, wherever possible, produce the collapse of phonemic, verbal and literary differentiation. So that where bodies fall together, sounds, words and texts should be seen also to fall together.

My League is as artificial as the art that sponsors it. Nonetheless, it is significant that Faulkner's dreamer emerges from "the depth of the unknown" to discover "at the heart of the new", the single most comprehensive embodiment of Decadent art - to Gautier, "l'effort suprême d'Art". The high spot is also the turning point, for Verse six re-routes the Symbolist plot by waking the dreamer. The interruption is variously imaged; musical golden bats give way to birds as their light is extinguished by the dawn; the dead poet is raised from the earth's core to sub-soil level, where he lies in a less decorative grave. To wake the Symbolist hero is to kill him by deprivation - to strip him of the gifts granted by la rêve, music, gems, radiance:

The cave is ribbed with dark, the music flies,
The bats of light are eaved and dark again. (p.19)

The final stages of such a release rightly take funereal form. At the head of the mourners a priest restores time and silences the music. In attendance nuns from the Order of "breathing" offer life, but a gift which involves "the still despair of breath" is no recompense. Inexorably, the procession moves towards the dawn star, "gaunt Orion", hanging outside the dream's threshold.

Here halts the retinue.
The priest between his fingers lets his beads
Purr down. The nuns the timeless interval
Fill with all the still despair breath. (p.19)

Having for some⁴time read the poem as a coherent working out of one of Baudelaire's axioms, it was a shock to learn that the original title was "Floyd Collins". A pot-holer trapped by a rock-fall on January 30th 1925, in Sand Cave central Kentucky, has few links with a nineteenth century literary movement. His death after a seventeen day entombment is the stuff of headlines and national radio coverage, not of literary magazines. "Floyd Collins" changes the plot. Verse one: descent into the cave. Verse two: an accident. Verse three: the injured man hovers between consciousness and unconsciousness. Verse four: exposure and injury induce dreams. Verses five and six: the dream becomes an escape narrative. Verse seven: Collins dies as the rescue party reaches him. Verse eight: the body is brought to the surface. The plot is coherent down to the smallest detail. "Echoes of unheard sound" lose their musicality as dimly heard rescue efforts. Gold and silver are geological colourations rather than borrowing from French metal workers. Even the unnatural waters are naturalised as underground streams.

Neatness should not obscure the fact that the radio story is less available than the Symbolist anti-story. In A Green Bough the Roman numeral III effectively disposes of Floyd Collins. Faulkner is interested in his occupation only in so far as it equips him to be a Symbolist hero. The pot-holer's credentials are impeccable - Collins maps hermetic places. With senses strained to synesthetic acuteness, he quits the surface world and discovers a tomb, in which he is granted a seventeen day dream, worthy of a poem. Even so, it is difficult to forget Joseph Blotner's revelation. Shadows of the caving disaster persist to embarrass the Symbolist reading:

He would leave the cave, before the bats
Of light grow weary, to their eaves return,
While music fills the dark as wind fills sails ... (p.19)

All the while Floyd Collins has light and can hear help, he wants to leave Sand Cave: in Symbolist terms his desire is disloyal. The conflict is inevitable in that Faulkner's choice of Floyd Collins ignores Mallarmé's strictures against anecdote. The airman who remembers Mannheim and the lover who retains an attachment for the pewter bowl repeat the irreverence. It would seem that even in his more committed Symbolist work Faulkner drops the world with a hesitancy which is further reflected in his persistent misuse of various poetic techniques.

Mallarmé appreciated that while a symbol might interrupt a reader's links with the material world, it could do so only by distracting him with an alternative order, possessed of its own solidities and impurities. Glass is his poetic sign for that intruding film of thought which must always separate man from the purity of azure. The Symbolist counters this unwanted (albeit diminished) secondary solidity by atomising its symbol. The resulting synecdochic fragments are synthesised to a point at which their outline can be restored neither to the natural world, not to a pictorial frame. In "L'Après-Midi

d'un Faune" the phrase, "An animal whiteness ripples to rest" refers to a flight of swans landing on a Sicilian pool. Each word is weighted with connotations central to the poem: "animal" - the status of the faun's relation to the nymphs; "white" - virginity; "ripple" - sensuality; "rest" - dream. Consequently the words do not nominate but vibrate with an excess of nomination. The effect, whether it is called "synesthesia" or "correspondence" is mechanical, working as it does on the reductive principle that everything shall be analogous to everything else. Detailed, the process sounds semi-industrial; it works for as long as the reader is prepared to identify hymens and swans, for as long that is as connotation does not move towards denotation. Inevitably selection occurs, if only to let us know that a pond, a shadow and some swans are at issue, but unblending stops short of fixing a syntax and reconstituting a world. I have tried to show how Swinburne stumbles on this kind of effect, while Baudelaire creates it by more exotically pictorial means. However, Faulkner's Symbolist efforts tempt me to separate the synthesised senses, and to restore the stimulatory artefact. Rediscovered, the object is quite likely to have a specific physical setting, with plot potential. As a result, in Poem III, artificiality is tarnished. Metals are never as precious for Faulkner as they are for Baudelaire. The music of Mallarmé is muzac to him; it does not resituate phonemes in abstract harmonies. His most convincing images are those of the real and despised dawn. At their modest best Faulkner's words name; they do not imply:

Bees break apple bloom, (p.18)

... aimless clouds
Go up the sky-hill, cropping it like sheep, (p.18)

And startled pigeons, like a wind beginning,
Fill the air with sucking silver sound. (p.18-19)

Faced with this evidence, one might simply say that, failing to understand a particular literary device, Faulkner uses it badly. However, a passage in Mosquitoes indicates that by 1927 he was uneasy with the mechanistic implications of Decadent poetics. On board the Nausikaa a poet, a critic and a novelist discuss a thin Symbolist volume - Satyricon in Starlight. The title shades the perverse Petronius in Whistler's favourite light; the contents include a version of Swinburne's "Hermaphroditus", and various borrowings from A Green Bough. Wiseman (the critic) finds the whole thing "a sort of cocktail of words" and protests that there is "no nourishment in electricity".³⁰ His remark channels Baudelaire's wine, Mallarmé's magic and Swinburne's erethism into an electrical circuit. The comment is brief and buried among rambling conversations, but it is perceptive and pre-dates editorial work on A Green Bough by seven years. Arthur Symons quotes Mallarmé on a related issue:

The pure work implies the elocutionary disappearance of the poet, who yields place to the words, immobilised by the shock of their inequality; they take light from their mutual reflection, like an actual rain of fire over precious stones, replacing the old lyric afflatus or the enthusiastic personal direction of the phrase.³¹

The poet who speaks locates his words in behaviour - with his demise language loses its semantic weight and may more easily be viewed as a pure sign system. The unvoiced linguistic element is located by its relation to other such elements: occurring in a poetic line it takes its movement from metrical rather than vocal patterns. Consequently, the deflation of the lyric afflatus allows poems to be read as closed language games in which words "play" according to formal rules. The game is finally to make language fall silent. Directionless words become phonemic sound patterns, extended towards music by rhythm. However, a short-fall on accepted

metrical convention makes Mallarmé's rhythm a pattern that leads to the place where it stops, that is to the end of the line. Lines in "Un coup de dés" scarcely start. Indeed, blank pages are the open secret of all Mallarmé's writing, which is not a formulation of words but a deformation of letters.

The speakers in the first three poems of A Green Bough never quite vanish. Poem I is a study for three voices: two pilots talk while a third listens. The mute listener is the poet, for whom words are "half audible, half silent" (p.10). As the poem progresses so its enthusiasm for the oral wanes. The personal phrase falls quiet and language grows anonymous. Words become whispers as they move from the mouths of social workers, through the conversation of wounded pilots, to the stutter of a man scarcely alive. However, despite the approach to silence voices can still be distinguished "from a great distance" (p.11). In Poem II the lover will not yield his place to the words; twice he interrupts the music to shout "Play something else", and by trying "to keep his tone" (p.13) asserts that language is a personal mechanism. Although Floyd Collins is less successful, his identity continues to haunt Poem III.

At this stage in the collection Faulkner's doubts are little more than technical quibbles, but as Decadent figures recur doubts become decisions and quibbles build towards an argument.

Poems IV to XVI are exercises in a variety of sources, predominantly Housman. Symbolist material is not used again until poems XVII to XIX. "O Attis" (p.39) extends the logic of Housman's pictorial artifice by following Baudelaire's advice that, "the artist instead of imitating nature should

assimilate it and embody his self in it". The poet re-makes the land, synthesising its feature with more regard to sensuality than visual perspective. The result is what Baudelaire called "coloured audition", in which landmarks become pulses of pigment - "white precipice", "hilltops blonde", "blue ecstasy". The poem derives from an earlier work titled, "On seeing the winged victory for the first time", and provoked by the full sized plaster-cast of Nike of Samothrace. Standing in New York's Metropolitan Museum, Faulkner may have recalled Swinburne's habit of composing lyrics to gallery-pieces; certainly his dedication, "O Attis", is in keeping with the cast list of Poems and Ballads. Rituals attending the worship of Attis involved homosexuality and emasculation, details of which would have been available to Faulkner in Frazer's scrupulously full accounts.³² The wind from Lesbos blows across the whole Decadent bricolage; its source is far from casual and can be located in Baudelaire's fascination with Sapphic themes.

Poem XVII (p.40) opens like a ballad and is less easily placed. However, by the end of first verse its tone has shifted - "Serenely blue dissolving of desire". The child's day ceases to be that of a Shropshire lad as it dissolves into Whistler's pictorial simulation of Mallarmé's azure. The Symbolist re-direction is clear from the roles assumed by the adolescent. His ambition to fly carries him to "the infinite extension" where, like an "uncleaving eagle", he would never touch down. This context modifies technical terminology, elsewhere "banshee wire" would refer to the noise made by air-currents in the wing-supports of a biplane, and "slanted aileron" would name a wing flap; here, strangeness divorces them from the aeronautical catalogue so that they function

like neologisms in a Symbolist lexicon. Predictably the boy does not become a magazine hero; instead he grows up to be a death's-head. By the second verse infatuation has fixed his face, "he looked not back/~~Not~~ down, he had not seen", and by verse three he cannot be woken. Poem I's trinity - pilot, dreamer, cadaver - is replaced with a difference: the old flier was regretful; the young flier is a willing victim. The transformation is only to be expected since reverie has spoilt the boy, allowing him to live on an Edwardian estate (leased from Housman) where cotton has never grown and over which aircraft fly, under the neutral insignia of Symbolist poetics.

"Green is the water green" (p.41) celebrates an equally willing submission. The agent of dissolution is Swinburne's languid sea, although the central image is borrowed from Prufrock:

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed in seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.³³

Prufrock's attitude to the mermaids and Eliot's to what they signify, is puzzling: both "human voices" and "the chambers of the sea" are deathly; acceptance of either is loss. Faulkner's lover has no puzzles to solve; he succumbs without murmur to a simple offer. Caressed by the "pale and boneless fingers" of a particularly deathly Belle Dame, he engages in love play with mermaids:

And lapped and lulled is he
By dimdissolving music of the sun.

Dissolution is mortal rather than sexual, since, whatever a mermaid's gifts, that of consummation is not among them. Arguably a third person possessive pronoun constitutes a still clearer refinement of the mistress into a "superstition". If

mermaids are impenetrable so too is Poem XX's unidentified "her" (p.42). Mentioned once ("the grass that knew her feet"), this particular lost and stimulating lady seems more irrelevant than unobtainable. Mallarmé might have called/ an "incantatory absence"³⁴, arguing that the pronoun alludes to a departed person and so conveys her essence - an effect that benefits from the interim light of dawn or dusk. Twilight is common in Verlaine as well as Mallarmé; indeed, George Moore claimed "Never shall I forget the first enchantment of Les Fêtes Galantes. Here all is twilight." (Confessions of a Young Man, p.87). Other poets of the Nineties were as impressed. Arthur Symons called a collection of poems Silhouettes (1892). John Gray published Silverpoints in the following year and many of Ernest Dowson's and Lionel Johnson's poems feature the half light of fog, dawn, evening and rain. Given Quentin Compson's literary bent, it is not surprising that one of the working titles for The Sound and The Fury was Twilight. The much favoured hour provides the setting for "Here he stands while eternal evening falls". The poem features what may be a ruined park or a deserted garden (chosen haunt of many Symbolists); it celebrates a beauty intensified by loss and invites the reader to wander down paths littered with Verlaine's popular dead leaves. Nostalgia is heightened by the occasional glimpse of a ruined wall. Only the season is wrong. Verlaine would have found spring artless, preferring to see autumnal sadness through his twilights. Despite the aberration, Poem XX shows how intimately Faulkner knew the decor of the Decadents. It is the last example of an unquestioning adherence to their taste; as such it is significantly placed almost at the centre of the collection.

From Poem XXII the Symbolist material is virtually continuous, but the dream is rejected or dreamed to different ends. Poems XXIII and XXV open in doubt. "Somewhere a moon will bloom and find me not" (p.45) and "Was this the dream?" (p.47). Suspicion is not a congenial atmosphere for the spiritual temptress. It makes it difficult for her to slip from physicality; although "her hand" may still "dream on (her) little breast", the poet and the reader's eye will remain on the breast. Faulkner continues to mine the Symbolist imagination, but sets its images in situations that will accentuate the doubts implicit in the first three poems. The dreamer and not his reverie is central to these poems; consequently, what was previously an infinite and anonymous longing is liable to become sexual pathology. During Poems XXII - XXIV the dreamer shows a disconcerting tendency to wake up. In XXII he sleeps as well as ever; in XXIII he is troubled and by XXIV he is an insomniac. Earlier he just dreamed or loved or died. Now he questions the relevance of the proffered personae. As a result, speaking voices intrude with increasing confidence upon the poems of the second half of the collection. The talker is situated in a shadowy room and initiates a return from connotation to denotation. "How cans't thou be chaste" (p.46) from this group defines the change. A virgin is set up for pursuit in accordance with by now predictable ground rules, but the dreamer cannot sleep. Nervously, he compares the dream to the actuality. Talk of a "sleeping kiss", an "empty bed" and a "slack girdle" in a single man's room, particularises the talker. "Azure wings" and "muted bells" are cheaply decorative when Swinburnian impotence turns from device into problem. As a result the poem frees itself from the musicality of Symbolist diction. In

Swinburne and Mallarmé loss is rarely personal since it marks the election of the lost mistress to a higher plain, while stimulating the deserted lover to his most valid activity - aspiration. But in this group loss is not aesthetically approved of; it hurts.

By Poem XXVI (p.48) the insomniac has been granted a platform and given the rhetorical equipment to conduct an enquiry:

Still, and look down, look down:
Thy curious withdrawn hand
Unprobes, now spirit and sense unblend, undrown,
Knit by a word and sundered by a tense
Like this: Is: Was: and Not. Nor caught between
Spent beaches and the annealed insatiate sea
Dost myriad lie, cold and intact Selene,
On secret strand or old disastrous lee
Behind the fading mistral of the sense.

The poem articulates the tensions that have informed a large body of the poetry up to this point. The poet stands firmly outside the play of words and commands an end to the languor they induce. He does not allude - he argues, calling upon decoration as though it were prima-facie evidence in a poetic trial. The death-dream of Poem XIX, or one very like it, is to be taken to court: the offending caress that started it, ^{must} of necessity be apprehended. To do this successfully the poet locates the female agent of sleep and cerebral titillation ("Thy curious withdrawn hand/Unprobes"). He wakes her victim ("undrowned"), and restores to him those physical senses atomized by dream ("now spirit and sense unblend"). With reverie immobilised the poet can make his case. Adopting the stance practised in the previous poem, "Was this the dream?" he negates reverie by interrogating it as a past event. Where the poet is a prosecutor pursuing charges, his imperatives assume a listener and a potential dialogue. Although a single command or question

does not reinvigorate the elocutionary poet, it does make his silence less inevitable. The un-named virgin in the case (for whom the dreamer once reached), is named as prime aggressor. Her poetic ways are on trial. Synesthetic and synecdochic devices which "knit" words into multi-faceted stimulants are particularly guilty, because they ease the transition from reality ("Is") to dream ("Was"), and facilitate entrance to the hermetic world of the imagination ("Not"):

Like this: Is: Was: and Not.

The summary is an overpunctuated cryptogram. Its syntactical excess rhetorically counterpoints excessive signification by the Symbolists. Mallarmé's prose poems often seem to invite grammatical analysis, simply to prove that it goes nowhere: because a satisfying syntax cannot be reconstructed, time and anecdote will not reform. By these means Mallarmé's un-grammar insists that words are free. Faulkner counters by punctuating allusiveness into singularity. The result is intelligible without being convincing. However, as the poetic prosecutor turns from linguistic reverie to the landscape of dream, his case collapses. "Nor" is a shaky start to any condemnation: it lacks the rational force of "and not". The case to be made is that there is no realm of infinite aspiration behind materiality. However, the virgin Selene, mythical ruler of this mythical location (landscaped as "the fading mistral of the sense"), so engages the poet's imagination that he forgets his brief and contradicts himself.

It could be objected that my reading forces single words to encapsulate a whole tradition; "not" typifies Symbolist negation; the glimpse of a hand summons a virgin who is only later identified; a plaintiff (the dreamer) is assumed present

though never acknowledged. I do not deny the obscurity of the poem, but believe that the nature of this obscurity should be precisely defined. Mallarmé's language echoes with allusion in "Ouverture Ancienne D'Hérodiade"; Baudelaire's "À celle qui est trop gaie" is exotically abstract. Faulkner tried these modes of obscurity in Poems II and III. Here he is algebraic. Working from the assumption that by this stage in the collection we know what the signs stand for, he gets on with resolving the equation. His assumption may be a mistake. Certainly Poem XXVI suffers from precision as much as from its central change of direction. Nonetheless both failings stem from an almost obsessive pursuit of narrow materials. Single-mindedness is underlined by the regularity with which Faulkner returns to the key images of the Virgin and the Hermaphrodite during the final poems of A Green Bough. Selene, it seems, is not to be left intact.

Poem XXIX describes an androgynous birth of triplets, accompanied by obscure music:

As to an ancient music's hidden fall
Her seed in the huddled dark was warm and wet (p.52)

The progeny are a child, Spring and the World. Such fertility is engendered by what Angelo Bertocci has identified as the basic premise of a symbolist system, "the view that everything is in some way or to some degree analogous to everything else"³⁵. Moreover the birth of Spring and the World suggests that their mother is the Utopian brand of hermaphrodite, whose body contains a pre-lapsarian sexual unity. Despite its Symbolist credentials the poem has a distinctly non-Symbolist slant, in that it lingers on the birth pangs and implies that the pain is worth it, since what is born is more significant than the unity lost ("And in the caverned earth spring's rumor shakes/

As in her loins,") . Not until the third verse is the interrupted and infinite harmony restored:

One to another in sleepy difference
Her thin and happy sorrows once were wed,
And what tomorrow's chords are recompense
For yesterday's single song unravished?

The restoration work is distinctly tatty: Poem III's androgynous and unravished virgin is pregnant: her pure music has dated and as a result the poem's central image is indeterminate. The labour and the triplets could be naturalised as seasonal change and fecundity; if the somewhat tried reader does this he may choose to ignore the fertilisation cosmology, putting the Symbolist constellation of "three cold stars" down to some unsatisfactory pictorial urge on Faulkner's part.

However, Poem XXXIV simplifies the role of the virgin and records a decision about her status. Comparison with "The cave was ribbed with dark" indicates how much has changed. Both feature virgins, out of Poems and Ballads, who rouse cold kings, but where the virgin of the earlier poem fired only lust, the second lady, despite imitating Anactoria's music, flesh and "ship of night", permeates the world with her fertility. Twilight is no longer a summons to a different realm. Its uncertain light serves a single and certain metaphoric purpose: it illuminates sensual satisfaction:

Her soft doveslippered eyes strayed in the dusk
Creaming backward from the fallen day,
And a haughty star broke yellow musk
Where dead kings slept the long cold years away. (p.57)

The light in her eyes is domestic rather than metallic. They shine with fulfilment not cruelty. Her dampness, that of sexuality and birth, has resolved the antithetical "ice" and "fire" into a single term. Transformations continue. The line "The dawn is milk to swell her breast..." alters the function of the mammalian gland - in Symbolist iconography a place to die; here

a place to feed. As though to affirm complete victory Faulkner makes this virgin The Virgin and calls his poem "Pregnancy".³⁶ To impregnate The Virgin and then to detail her sexual satisfaction is an open rejection of Symbolist pathology. Not surprisingly Poem XXXV (p.58) follows it up with a declaration large enough to decimate whole ranks of Les Belles Dames - "The courtesan is dead, for all her subtle ways". Fortified by this, Poem XXXVII (p.60) successfully buries Lilith. The original candidate for entombment was Cleopatra. One can only speculate that Faulkner found her too diminutive an example of the virago, and aiming higher changed his title. Encouraged, the next poem approaches another stronghold of the Decadence, lesbian love. Its source is Baudelaire's group of poems "To Lesbos", a figure so important to the French poet that he first called Les Fleurs du Mal, Les Lesbiennes. Sappho would figure highly on any list of Decadent beauties - Swinburne called her practices "the holy writ of Beauty". However the poem's antecedents are complicated by a prior appearance in Mosquitoes in a version owing more to Swinburne than to Baudelaire. Mrs. Wiseman's poem, entitled "Hermaphroditus", differs from the later text in two very important ways; "Lay no hand to heart, do not protest" appeared first as "Lay not to heart thy boy's hand, to protest", while "With secret joy of thine own flank and breast" read "With secret joy of thine own woman's breast". The Satyricon in Starlight poem is about a hermaphrodite, but as it appears in A Green Bough it concerns a lesbian. Arguably, Faulkner made the change because he found that in the act of anthologising his poetry, he could give a logical structure to his own movement away from Symbolist perversities. Having already encountered and challenged the androgyne he turned to the lesbian as an equally representative figure, but one less

mythological and therefore more open to psychological enquiry. The switch is also important for the way in which it humanizes the Decadent protest. Symbolist abuse of the body abuses the flesh and along with it the social system that distributes the flesh (by designating what organs shall be used to what purpose). Mary Douglas in Natural Symbols has stressed that sanctions about orifices are basic to social control.

On the face of it little could confuse a social guardian more than a hermaphrodite: however, Faulkner does not seek confusion. He turns "he/her" into "her" in the cause of clarity. With the removal of the boy's hand and the woman's breast, it is easy to see the figure as plain woman. Her solipsism results from nothing as obscure as biological deformity, or dedication to a statue in the Louvre³⁷ - a mirror is explanation enough. The woman deserted by her mistress wakes and looks at her reflection. She almost smiles, checks her figure and is lonely. The situation is in itself a critique of "Lesbos". Baudelaire defended Lesbian love because its excess gave it the "refinement" of art and set it beyond social morality:

Laisse de vieux Platon se froncer l'oeil austère;
Tu tires ton pardon de l'excès des baisers,
Reine du doux empire, aimable et noble terre,
Et des raffinements toujours inépuisés.

Let the severe eyes of old Plato frown;
You exact your pardon from the excess of kisses,
Queen of the sweet empire, loving and noble land,
And of the always inexhaustible subtleties. ³⁸

In A Green Bough the lesbian is "weary". Her "refinement" has become a guilty dream that derides the belly. She no longer seeks the infinite but suffers in isolation. To Baudelaire perversity was narcotic. The poet as voyeur derides conventions - sexual and poetic. Ignoring not simply "love" but mutual satisfaction, he purifies his own body by refusing to use it. His pleasure is masturbation in the head. To watch les femmes

damnées intensifies this satisfaction: a female coupling reduces differences of sex, class, age and inclination (at least in the male imagination), until the act is effectively performed by one, in a mirror. Faulkner appreciates the onanism. He watches it and reaches conclusions at odds with Baudelaire:

And near thy mouth thy twinned heart's grief doth hide.
For there's no breast between: it cannot break. (p.61)

As in poem XXVI, Faulkner's struggle with his sources produces constricted expression. Paraphrase is unfortunately necessary: the woman cannot express the grief so near her mouth because its source, her "twinned heart", has left. Only the mistress' return could induce confession, as reconciliation occurred in bed. "Twinned heart" is overloaded, alluding to the deserted woman's heart as well as to that of her lover - both grieve. However, without the physical cure of her mouth on her lover's breast, neither heart will break and talk. Sexual positions blur and the suspicion of a sex-change between the drafts does little to clarify the poem. Only the last remark is, in its isolation, insistent: whatever the subject of its shifting pronoun - whether a mirror, one heart, two, or even a hymen - the phrase pronounces "the holy writ of Beauty" sterile.

The problem is that Faulkner's statement can be heard only in translation and translators are not to be trusted. Perhaps in this case an exception can be made: Faulkner is answering a tradition from within its own lexicon and therefore his discourse is liable to be self reflexive. A second terminology is particularly useful for the Decadents, who were conspicuous in their rejection of everyday usage. Having accepted Symbolist premises it is difficult to avoid the ahistorical implications of their two basic plots. The Decadent having shut the door (Plot 1), decorates it (Plot 2). Against this Faulkner

deploys a vague conviction that perversity is painful and hermetic language exclusive. A more effective counterplot might have been to stay outside the heavily embossed door, and there to formulate a different view of the forbidden subjects - history and society. This done the metallic door could be forced and the discoveries made within reapplied. The poet inside the room needs the novelist, outside in Yoknapatawpha. In his absence the critic may have to play translator, offering an alternative language. Even so the last ten poems of A Green Bough, particularly the final four, are strident in their abuse of Decadent assumptions.

Poems XXXIX (p.62) and XL (p.63) oppose allusive language. The first is a riddle that repeats the formula "What is like ..." (for example, a tree in Spring) six times. Six times the answer is Eden. By this device evocation is made mechanical, and mystery receives a one word answer. The second is so Jacobean in conceit that the old almost becomes new. Symbolists set great store by the reinvention of language; Faulkner indulges anachronism to the point of neologism in order to cast some doubt on the seriousness of French efforts. However with Poem XLI Faulkner returns specifically to the French tradition. He rewrites Verlaine's "Le Faune", by implication replotting "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune", in his own and Mallarmé's versions. The second stanza mocks the Satyr for wasting time with dreams and losing the virgin to a faun, "bolder than the rest". Apparently all fauns are neither marble nor dedicated to ennui. The directness of language is repeated in Poem XLII whose first lines recall the opening of Baudelaire's "Les Métamorphoses du Vampire":

La femme cependant, de sa bouche de fraise,
En se tordant ainsi qu'un serpent sur la braise,

Then the woman with the strawberry mouth,³⁹
squirming like a snake upon the coals ...

Beneath the apple tree Eve's tortured shape
Glittered in the snake's, her riven breast
Sloped his coils and took the sun's escape
To augur back her sin from east to west. (Poem XLIII, p.65)

The dawn's message is that Eve has at last been penetrated. Faulkner suggests that only in the Old Testament would the act be frowned upon. Man is at liberty to pursue Swinburnian fetishes ("the whip of blood to charm"), since indulgence and abstinence are equally an expression of the flesh, to which "with breath he's heir". Thus a verse recalling Baudelaire's most horrible disillusion with the body, turns into a semi-pagan hymn to physicality. The redirection is emphatically affirmed by the new gods, elected in the second stanza. Allusions to a phallic snake and a golden apple combine the Old Testament myth of knowledge and a Greek legend about beauty. The alliance ought to be unhappy, but as the "crumb" of knowledge blazes in the "fire" of passion, the fused deities embrace the old world and the new - "Nazarene, and Roman and Virginian" - equally indiscriminately. The reconciliation is a metaphoric trick played at just the right point in the collection. Poem XLIII (p.66) accepts the slight of hand. The tone of this only mildly amusing seduction poem would have been out of place anywhere else in the book. Gone is the anguish over virginity. The "honeyed thighs" open, leaving only parental problems - a mother to be assured of honourable intent ("no - madam I love your daughter - I will say"), a father waiting to discuss prospects ("- sir your health your money how are they -"). Free of death, sex follows the god physicality and is content to sing its own praises. Even the fact that the last poem is an epitaph only slightly dampens

the enthusiasm. Faulkner escapes the dreamers and death's-heads to rest in Mississippi. His premature death, aged twenty-seven, is both artificial and self-indulgent, but the mud and roots of the Oxford hill country creep in:

But I shall sleep, for where is any death
While in these blue hills slumbrous overhead
I'm rooted like a tree? Though I be dead
This earth that holds me fast will find me breath. (p.67)

Faulkner seems finally to have quit the boudoir for the trees. At the close of A Green Bough he directs the collection towards Yoknapatawpha, where the figures from the hermetic room will find more critical usage.

It is attractive to read the poetry as a statement of re-alliance. However, to release Faulkner from the Symbolist allegiance too prematurely would unbalance the gradualness of the collection, and fail to account for the consistent re-appearance of Decadent characters in the fiction. The virgin, the hermaphrodite and the Symbolist artist are part of Yoknapatawpha, drawing sustenance from a literary tradition as much as from Southern history. Each type transforms and is transformed by the social and mythical milieu. It is only by tracing such inter-relations that Faulkner's use of sources may be defined. The first four novels redeploy A Green Bough and return repeatedly to the solipsistic artist, conjuring perverse virgins from widows, sisters, tourists, indeed from whatever female company comes to hand. The continuing proximity of the boudoir to the trees is plain from a plot summary of Soldiers' Pay: Faulkner's Krebs returns home to a formal garden, arranged by Beardsley, in which his enemy is La Belle Dame Sans Merci.

1. Faulkner's comments on his early poetry in "Verse Old and Nascent: A Pilgrimage" (Early Prose & Poetry, ed. C. Collins) should not be taken too seriously. The essay assumes a dismissive tone, even as it gives ample evidence of range and seriousness in the early reading.
2. During his year at the University of Mississippi (September, 1919–November, 1920), Faulkner adopted mannerisms of dress, ranging from British Airforce uniform to spats and a monocle. This, among other things, earned him the nicknames, "Count No Count". Baudelaire's dandy may well have provided the intellectual justification for this display.
3. Arthur Symons, in an essay on George Meredith (1897). Quoted by Ruth Z. Temple in The Critic's Alchemy (Twayne Pub. Inc., New York, 1953), p.151.
4. William Faulkner, The Marble Faun and A Green Bough (Random House, New York, 1960, p.52.). Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
5. In "Verse Old and Nascent. A Pilgrimage" Faulkner notes:

At the age of sixteen I discovered Swinburne ... My mental life at that period was so completely and smoothly veneered with surface insincerity - obviously necessary to me at that time, to support intact my personal integrity...that I cannot tell to this day, just how deeply the footprints of his passage are left in my mind.
6. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise (Penguin,

Harmondsworth, 1967), p.145.

7. Three of Faulkner's Verlaine adaptations were drawn from this collection - "Fantoche", "Clair de Lune" and "A Clymène". The fourth, "Streets", was taken from the later Romance Sans Paroles (1874)
8. "L'Allée", Paul Verlaine: Selected Poems, trans. C.F. MacIntyre (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1948), p.58. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
9. The phrase is Mallarmé's. See "Crise de Vers," collected in Mallarmé, ed. Anthony Hartley (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.162. Subsequent references to Mallarmé's prose and poetry are drawn from this edition.
10. Cleanth Brooks, "Faulkner as Poet," Southern Literary Journal, Vol. 1 (Autumn, 1968), pp. 5-19.
11. G.P. Garret Jr., "An Examination of the Poetry of William Faulkner," Princeton University Library Chronicle, Vol.18 (Spring, 1957), p.125.
12. H.E. Richardson, William Faulkner: The Journey to Self Discovery (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 1969), p.59. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
13. R.P. Adams, Faulkner: Myth and Motion (Princeton University Press, 1968), p.20.

14. William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.118.
15. Quoted by Philippe Jullian in Dreamers of Decadence: Symbolist Painters of the 1890's (Praeger, London 1971), p.155.
16. Charles Baudelaire, "Notes Nouvelles sur Edgar Allan Poe," collected in Baudelaire As a Literary Critic, ed., trans., L.B. Hyslop and F. Hyslop Jr. (Pennsylvania State U.P., University Park Pennsylvania, 1964), p.13.
17. Both works were lettered, bound and, in the case of Marionettes, illustrated by hand. For details see Joseph Blotner, Faulkner: A Biography. Vol. 1 (Random House, New York, 1974), pp.296-297, 307. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
18. For details of this correspondence see Joseph Blotner, Faulkner: A Biography, Vol. 1, pp. 753-755. A complete catalogue of Faulkner's poetic MSS. has been put together by Keen Butterworth under the title, "A Census of Manuscripts and Typescripts of William Faulkner's Poetry." This is collected in A Faulkner Miscellany, ed. James B. Meriwether (University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, 1974), pp.70-97. Blotner and Butterworth provide the magazine titles under which various poems appeared prior to book publication.
19. Harry Runyan, "Faulkner's Poetry," Faulkner Studies, Vol. 3 (Spring, 1954), p.25.

20. Hugh Kenner, T.S. Eliot: The Invisible Poet (Methuen, London, 1965), p.18.
21. Charles Baudelaire, quoted by Wylie Sypher in Rococo To Cubism In Art and Literature (Random House, Vintage Books, New York, 1960), p.125.
22. The sketch is among the private papers of Mrs. Dean Wells, of Oxford, Mississippi.
23. The third verse of Poem XXX (A Green Bough, p.53) echoes Wilfred Owen's "Futility": "What good is budding, gray November earth?/No need to break your sleep for greening's sake." owes much to "-Oh what made fatuous sunbeams. toil/To break earth's sleep at all?"
24. The original line is "Boire des lis d'eau froide au bord d'un pur oubli," (Paul Valéry, "Narcisse") and is quoted by Philippe Jullian in Dreamers of Decadence, p.242.
25. Quoted by Charles du Bois in "Meditation on the Life of Baudelaire," collected in Baudelaire: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Henri Peyre (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1962), p.57.
26. George Moore, Confessions of a Young Man (McGill-Queen U.P., London, 1972), p.86.
27. Algernon Charles Swinburne, Poems and Ballads (John Camden Hotten, London, 1866), p.66. Subsequent pagination refers

- to this edition.
28. Charles Baudelaire, from "The Salon of 1859," collected in Baudelaire As a Literary Critic, ed., and trans., L.B. Hyslop and F. Hyslop Jr. (Pennsylvania State U.P., University of Pennsylvania, 1964), p.186.
29. Joséphin Péladan is well qualified to offer such generalizations; his fourteen volume work, La Decadence Latine, written between 1884 and 1925 straddles a large section of the history of the Movement. Péladan's taste is set in historical perspective by A.J.L. Busst's article, "The Image of the Androgyne in the Nineteenth Century," collected in Romantic Mythologies, ed. Ian Fletcher (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1967), p.43. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
30. William Faulkner, Mosquitoes (Dell, New York, 1962), p.204. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
31. Arthur Symons, The Symbolist Movement in Literature (Constable, London, 1911), pp.131-132.
32. Eliot's formulation of "the mythic method" in his Ulysses review for The Dial (1923) together with his Waste-Land-Note recommending the Adonis, Attis, Osiris volumes of The Golden Bough, sent many on a "wild goose chase" after the single volume edition of Frazer's work (1922). Richard P. Adam's book, Faulkner: Myth and Motion, makes the extent of Faulkner's allusions plain.
33. T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Collected Poems 1909-1962 (Faber, London, 1963), p.17.

34. A.R. Chisolm, Mallarmé: Grand Oeuvre (Barnes and Noble, New York, 1962), p.20.
35. A.P. Bertocci, From Symbolism to Baudelaire (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1964), p.36.
36. Joseph Blotner, Faulkner: A Biography Vol. 1, p.375.
37. Swinburne's "Hermaphroditus" is dedicated to a statue in the Louvre. The figure has a woman's breasts and male genitalia: he/she reclines on a couch in an ambiguous posture. Swinburne follows the Pre-Raphaelites in linking his lyrics to visual artefacts, but extends the intertextuality of his poem by further alluding to Salmacis. According to Ovid, Salmacis and Hermaphroditus blend under water in one androgynous being. Ovid's Metamorphosis and the catalogues of the Louvre preserve the literary status of the central figure.
38. Charles Baudelaire, Les Fleurs Du Mal, trans. Wallace Fowlie (Bantam Dual Language Books, New York, 1964), p.105.
39. Charles Baudelaire, Selected Poems, trans. Geoffrey Wagner (The Falcon Press Ltd., London, 1946), p.43.

Chapter 2

Cruel Virgins and Decadent Types in "Soldiers' Pay"

"Mosquitoes" and "Sartoris"

"Sex and death: the front door and the back door of the world."¹ The aphorism is ponderous and might even be meaningless were it not for the meeting of its terms in Mrs. Powers. Mahon comes home, from service with the Royal Airforce, to die. It is therefore strange that he does so as a result of sex rather than war. We are told repeatedly that the invalid waits for something: he marries and dies. Presumably, he was waiting for a dark lady as much as for the memory of a dog-fight. The terms of his final combat-dream reinforce the point since they are those that attended Mrs. Powers' first touch. Bullets and the hand of La Belle Dame inflict alike blisters, scrofulous outbreaks and fractured bones. Though Salomé's touch was less direct, it proved no less fatal - and it is from Salomé that Mrs. Powers inherits her skills.

Hérodiade is "a synthetic portrait of the whole decadent movement" (Praz, p.137). Mrs. Powers is one of her children. Direct descent may be established with a comparison between a typical passage from "La Nourrice. Hérodiade" and the first impression of Faulkner's virgin as she encounters her Saint John aboard the Cincinnati train, takes possession and lays him out in the hotel room (pp.27-28):

J'aime l'horreur d'être vierge et je veux
Vivre parmi l'effroi que me font mes cheveux
Pour, le soir, retirée en ma couche, reptile
Inviolé sentir en la chair inutile
Le froid scintillement de ta pâle clarté
Toi qui te meurs, toi qui brûles de chasteté
Nuit blanche de glaçons et de neige cruelle!
Et ta soeur solitaire, ô ma soeur éternelle
Mon rêve montera vers toi : telle déjà,
Rare limpidité d'un coeur qui le songea,
Je me crois seule en ma monotone partie
Et tout, autour de moi, vit dans l'idolâtrie
D'un miroir qui reflète en son calme dormant
Hérodiade au clair regard de diamant ...
Ô charme dernier, oui! je le sens, je suis seule.

I love the horror of being virgin, and I wish to live among the terror my hair causes me so that, withdrawing to my bed in the evening, I may feel like an inviolate reptile in my useless flesh the cold glitter of your pale brilliance, you who are dying, you who burn with chastity, white night of icicles and cruel snow! And your lonely sister, O my eternal sister, my dream shall rise towards you: already thus, rare limpidity of heart which dreamt of it, I think myself alone in my monotonous fatherland, and everything around me lives in idolatry of a mirror reflecting in its slumbering calm Herodias with her clear diamond glance ... O final charm, yes! I feel it, I am alone.²

A.C. Bross argues convincingly that Mrs. Powers originates among the drawings of Beardsley.³ Certainly she appears from behind "a terrible old woman" carrying with her an air of artificial gardens. As if such an entrance were not enough to qualify her as one for whom Beardsley "would have sickened", she wears the "peacock hues" that were first modelled by Salomé in "The Peacock Skirt". The plate is one of several that indicates a pictorial influence. "John and Salomé" features an androgynous couple whose twinned profiles turn up in Mosquitoes. Any confusion over hearing Mrs. Powers described as "a black lady" is resolved when one looks at "The Black Cape", and the Reverend Mahon's horticultural taste is placed by the poplars and candelabra - trees which adorn "The Eyes of Herod". Faulkner knew and admired Beardsley's drawings: he autographed his 1912 edition of the illustrated text. Despite several happy parallels Mrs. Powers' beauty is built to the general specifications of the Decadents: her formulaic features - red-mouth, pale-skin, black-hair - could come from any fatal virago (Dolores would do), and even her costume owing something to Beardsley owes as much to Gautier. In Mademoiselle de Maupin D'Albert's designs for As You Like It read like a preliminary sketch by the master for a jobbing tailor. Beardsley and Faulkner share these instructions:

There are stuffed undulating robes, with great folds, whose colours play like those on the necks of turtle doves and reflect all the changing tints of the iris, large sleeves, ruffs and open slashed lace rising higher than the head which they serve to frame, corsets laden with knots and embroideries, aiglets, strange jewels, crests of heron plumes, necklaces of big pearls, fans formed from the peacock tail with mirrors in the centre, little slippers and patterns, garlands and artificial flowers, spangles, wire worked gauzes, paints, patches and everything that can add flavour to the theatrical toilette.⁴

What the critic fails to see is that whether Faulkner refers directly to Wilde or indirectly to Swinburne, he is making use of a closed tradition that works and reworks a limited set of ideas. The ur-text is Mallarmé's "Hérodiade", from which all the virgins derive.

Hérodiade, loving "the horror of being virgin", withdraws to her bed and the stimulations of a singular imagination. Mrs. Powers follows her, experiencing a disjunction from "useless" flesh as complete as that enforced by Beardsley's drawings or the designs of Gautier. In bed she "burns with chastity", denies her husband and ignores Gilligan. Both women are characterised by their hair, which for Mallarmé was an image of ambiguous physical excitement. To split hairs, Hérodiade is blonde and Mrs. Powers dark - an indication that this feature is taken from Beardsley's black-haired illustrations and from Wilde's text:

Lowe remarking her pallid distinction, her black hair, the red scar of her mouth, her slim dark dress, knew an adolescent envy of the sleeper (Mahon) ... How impersonal she was, how self-contained. Ignoring them. (p.27)

Lowe's glimpse has all the stresses that occur in Salomé's eulogy to John:

There was nothing in the world so white as thy body.
There was nothing in the world so black as thy hair.
In the whole world there was nothing so red as thy mouth.⁵

Any surprise that one model for Mrs. Powers should be male is dispelled by a look at the drawing "John and Salomé" (p.45). Salomé and The Baptist's faces are indistinguishable. Beardsley's profiles embody a Decadent tendency toward the androgynous type, which Hérodiade realises by her assumption of male dominance; an assumption that Mrs. Powers repeats in her name and influence.

Hérodiade is as "cold" as the moon; her constant rejection of the Nurse's touch prepares us for Mrs. Powers' "self-contained" stare and her suspicion that she might be "cold by nature" (p.33). For Mallarmé coldness, moonlight, mirrors and sisters exist in a complex correspondence, which Wilde simplifies into a symbol. Salomé's page instructs the audience in the second speech of the play that the virgin and the moon are to be equated:

Look at the moon! How strange the moon seems. She is like a moon rising from a tomb. She is like a dead woman. You would fancy she was looking for dead things. (p.29)

The Young Syrian finalises the equation by seeing in the moon the reflection of "a little princess". Moonlight kept falling on the faun's marble sides, and in Poem III a virgin moaned above coffins. Faulkner needs small encouragement to follow Wilde - Mrs. Powers spends much of Soldiers' Pay "looking for dead things". She marries the dying Mahon (ignoring Emmy's obviously better claim) and sees herself as a woman who kills husbands, "All the men that marry me die you know" (p.255). She is of the Decadent lineage of fatal viragoes, containing within themselves the entirety of sensual experience and requiring the death of their lovers:

All the thoughts and experiences of the world have etched and moulded there ... the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the mysticism of the middle age ... the sins of the Borgias.⁶

Pater's description of the Mona Lisa, echoed in the vernacular by Lowe, becomes "She seemed ... she was young; she probably liked dancing, yet at the same time she seemed not young - as if she knew everything." (p.28). There is about Mrs. Powers an air of assumed experience, based on a long-past and untraced depravity. She stands, "white, slim and depraved". Her touch is the touch of Hérodiade, transforming a quiet version of the wounded Hemingway hero into a death's-head equipped to play John to her Salomé. The novel changes completely when Mrs. Powers enters the carriage; for two chapters the reader has been in the territory of "Solder's Home", but after a laying on of hands performed by a dark lady, Mahon is reduced to the status of skull:

'Look how you've got his arm' ... She moved his withered hand from his thigh. (His hand, too, seeing the scrofulous indication of his bones beneath the blistered skin.)
'Oh, his poor terrible face,' she said, shifting the pillow under his head. (p.27)

The touch blinds: behind his dark glasses Mahon's eyes, in the manner of Decadent portraiture, neither closed nor open, are locked on an untranslatable inner world.

Yet Mrs. Powers takes Mahon preferring his passivity to the "idolatry" of whole men, because Mahon is an improved version of Powers. With her first marriage Mrs. Powers gained a three day honeymoon, letters from France and presumably the solace of soldiers at home on leave. With her second she regains everything purified of physical risk. Lowe writes letters, Gilligan supplies the military escort and Mahon plays dead. He wears Powers' facial scar, lives on Powers' insurance money and, thanks to Sgt. Madden's inarticulacy, appears at Mrs. Worthington's party under his predecessor's name. Mahon is the ghost of Powers. Powers, alive, failed to penetrate his wife's "intimacy"

and died. At the front he is shot in the face by a hysteric. In his wife's bed he is accused, emasculated and cleared away. The first death is accidental, the second is murder or at least a murderous dream:

(Dear dead Dick.) (Mahon under his scar, sleeping.)
(Dick, my dearest one.) ... (Dick, Dick. Dead, ugly Dick.
Once you were alive and young and passionate and ugly,
after a time you were dead, dear Dick: that flesh, that
body, which I loved and did not love; you beautiful,
young, ugly body, dear Dick, become now a seething of
worms, like new milk. Dear Dick.) (p.37)

The balance struck by the first two parentheses is curious; Dick under ground becomes Mahon under a scar, and the scar thanks to a shifting possessive pronoun could belong to either man or to both. The dream as a whole is patterned upon assertion and denial, "I loved ... did not love", "beautiful ... ugly". Negation is intensified by the name change from Richard to Dick to ugly Dick, a sexualisation that results in emasculation by innuendo. The mess of worms and milk reduces sexual potency to putrefaction, while at the same time evoking images of purity and birth. The duplicity is vital. Mrs. Powers rejects mutuality as the first stage in her restoration of the hymen. Dick is presented as a thief, "your ugly body breaking into mine like a burglar" (p.153), an image that combines fears of rape and loss, but one whose criminal aspect can be punished, "my body flowing away washing away all traces of yours". Putrefaction is not a rejection from weakness but an assertion of power: "My body flows on and on. You cannot hold it, for yours is so ugly, dear Dick ..." (p.151). With Dick gone and her body clean, Mrs. Powers takes a man who cannot repeat the crime, and with him two men to pursue and stimulate her restored virginity. Her situation is stereotypically Decadent and stands as a model for the novel.

It might seem odd to argue from European typology to a novel set in Georgia, but in Mississippi too the same things happen. Narcissa Benbow rather reluctantly lays hands on Young Bayard Sartoris and, in her imagination at least, he becomes variously "a bronze" or "a chiselled mask".⁷ Both materials translate the tearaway into an artefact befitting Symbolist interiors:

On the pillow Bayard's head lay as she had remembered it that former day - pallid and calm, like a chiselled mask brushed lightly over with the shadow of hispent violence. (p.243)

The mask points not only to Beardsley's Salomé illustration, "The Climax", but to Khnopff's obsession with classical casts and to the rigidity shared by figures and decorative motifs in Symbolist art. Moreover, like Mahon, Young Bayard puts up surprisingly little resistance - when not encased in plaster he spends most of his time seeking death.

Soldiers' Pay is filled with fatal pursuits. George Farr pursues Cecily and drowns (since he was the first to see her virginal body "prone and narrow as a pool dividing" (p.247), he should perhaps have known that the surface would reform, with him beneath it). Janarius Jones pursues Emmy and catches her only as Mahon's coffin is lowered into the ground (Mahon played Powers and Jones plays Mahon). Gilligan pursues Margaret and is rewarded by a part in the last and best chase of all, man versus train, "ten to one on the train" (p.257). The Belle Dame Sans Merci from Alabama leaves her novel posed at the back of a train, watching Gilligan lose his race and confirm her victory. With no apparent family and an undeclared destination she is free to pursue her dream:

It is best just to be free, not to let it into the conscious mind. To be consciously anything argues a comparison, a bond with antithesis. Live in your dream, do not attain it - else comes satiety. (p.251)

Though Gilligan does not die, he has to convalesce in the Reverend Mahon's garden as a substitute son. His recovery involves by implication an acceptance of the black-sermon heard on the last page. The text is "Feed thy sheep, O Jesus". The argument concerns, "All the longing of mankind for a Oneness with Something, somewhere". The conclusion, "pagan" and untranslatable, equates sexuality with death and both with a twilight landscape in which "sleep" and "slumber" attend every landmark. Despite a black intonation, reverie hovers over the close of Soldier's Pay, as the novel fades into Whistler's grey.

Faulker is not using the entirety of Mallarmé's ideas; he may not even have Mallarmé's words in mind; instead he employs established Decadent patterns in characterisations that owe far more to the French tradition than to the new-woman of the post-war years. Whether or not she could quote Verlaine, the flapper, according to Scott Fitzgerald, Anita Loos, or Edmund Wilson, flapped in order to exchange nominal virginity for a marriage contract. Rita in I Thought of Daisy ghosts for Edna St. Vincent Millay and has a working knowledge of French poetry: the hero turns to the chorus girl who interrupts her recitation with a gramophone. Mrs. Powers has little interest in the matrimonial contracts or adulterous victories which underpin advertising in Vanity Fair or Harpers: the value Faulkner puts on her hymen is more literary. His valuation is approved by numerous figures in Mosquitoes, shared by Narcissa Benbow (Sartoris), defended by Quentin Compson (The Sound and the Fury), and propagandised by Addie Bundren (As I Lay Dying) and Rosa Coldfield (Absalom, Absalom!). Nor do the implications of the Decadence vanish into Southern mythology after the first five or six novels. The virgin according to Mallarmé is not unlike

the virgin according to Mississippi. Both ladies share asexuality, are excessively priced and command a pedestal from which they stimulate poets and blacks, respectively. The Symbolist mistrust of language, as a bourgeois machine for the appropriation of materiality, complements the Calvinist view of knowledge as a stain which deepens in direct proportion to linguistic capacity. Decadent perversities, used as badges to declare the artists's separation from social institutions, are an extreme version of the Southern declaration that sexuality is a sign of The Initial Lapse. Baudelaire painted flesh to hide its normal orifices, Doc Hines curses flesh as "woman filth" and sets it aside no less effectively.

The Decadents offered Faulkner versions of what he would encounter in Yoknapatawpha; the offer was important because it enabled him, during a formative period, to experiment with stereotypes as literary devices, free from cultural complication. Such freedom is of course comparative. Faulkner's response to the Symbolist woman derives from his culture's mistrust of the female. Whether or not one accepts Frederick Jameson's argument⁸ that Baudelaire's decoration of the body transforms organic into inorganic, as an expression of bourgeois guilt over its abuse of the social body - it is clear that his technique appealed to a historical mistrust of sexuality in Faulkner. Likewise Swinburne's musification of words may have satisfied an anti-intellectual Methodist child in Faulkner. Even so, the movement must have seemed, in Oxford Mississippi, a very literary one. While writing his poetry Faulkner learned the rules of a league of sexual deviation; consequently, on encountering the Southern virgin and Southern genealogy, as fictional materials, he was able to pull the regrown hymen trick and make incest resonate

with original unities, as a way of interpreting complex cultural situations. Mrs. Powers restores her virginity in a garden by Beardsley; the act is of no social consequence. Addie Bundren performs the same operation but in As I Lay Dying numerous social myths are re-oriented by means of a Decadent sleight of hand. The linguistic implications of the technique were pointed out by Symons in The Symbolist Movement; in the later novels Faulkner would apply them to cultural doubts about knowledge:

Thus an artificiality, even in the use of words, that seeming artificiality which comes from using words as if they had never been used before, that chimerical search after the virginity of language, is but the paradoxical outward sign of an extreme discontent with even the best of their service. (p.127)

The essay on Mallarmé from which this comes would almost certainly have been known to Faulkner: Janarius Jones' career indicates how readily he applied his reading. The character is almost an anthology and his Symbolist pedigree is impeccable. Possessed of all the Decadent artist's idiosyncrasies, he manages to be no more than a rag bag of textual extremities. Called Janarius, for Janus the Roman god of doors who had two faces, his name catches the hermetic narcissism of the movement. Figure and dress are borrowed from Beardsley's common association of lechery with fat, ugly men who are generally also moonfaced and baggily attired. His pose of continuous pursuit emulates Mallarmé's faun, and when he falls he unwillingly assumes the posture of Swinburne before innumerable Queens. A walking dictionary of Symbolist extracts, he quotes from A Green Bough as though it were his own, thereby confirming knowledge of the French tradition. Mrs. Powers places him as a Swinburne reader with a preference for "Atlanta" (p.239). With this kind of taste it is predictable that he should affect "pure ennui" and

lust for satisfactions cerebral rather than physical [The assures Cecily that he does not want her body (p.189)]. All is performed and declared in a landscape that might have been transplanted artefact by artefact from The Marble Faun. The Charleston rectory boasts poplars like Greek columns or virgins or both (p.51), privet hedges by The Yellow Book, pear trees like candlesticks (p.234), hyacinths that "dream of Lesbos" (p.51), all set around a rose tree like a Byzantine goblet (p.51). Wherever nature sprouts Faulkner afflicts it with analogy in the cause of Art. The effect on the Georgia countryside is striking; pigeons become paint smears, unicorns are imported (p.162), fauns and nymphs disport and things as mundane as a swimming-hole (pp.131-2) and Nigger Town (pp.265-6) are liable to be translated into Art Nouveau. In such a setting public entertainments could only feature "boy(s)/^{male}and female", dancing to the Masturbator's Song, with steps that are all "touch and retreat" and "no satiety" (p.163). Jones' footwork is scarcely more successful as, through most locations, satyr-like, he pursues the nymph of the moment. Despite his credentials he is out of place in Soldiers' Pay. His cynicism is peripheral. His chases are the backdrop to many scenes and the centre of few. His art is declared pretentious. Jones would appear to be Faulkner's device for satirizing the tradition struggled with in the poetry. But any irony is tentative. Thus the scene in which the fat man finally gets to grips with Cecily, only to follow Symbolist precedent by dissolving her body, has comic undertones:

'If I really held you close you'd pass right through me like a ghost, I am afraid,' he said, and his clasp was loosely about her ... He refused to hear her breath as he refused to feel a bodily substance in his arms. Not an ivory carving: this would have body, rigidity; not an animal that eats and digests - this is the heart's desire purged of flesh. 'Be quiet,' he told himself as much as her, 'don't spoil it.' (p.186)

Jones' refusal to feel the flesh that he holds moves from a distaste for the stuff itself through Baudelaire's idealisation of immobility and on to Mallarmé's synecdoche. The sequence would be impeccable but for the fact that Poems XXII and XXVI taught Faulkner to overcome the initial aversion. Jones is an anachronism; nonetheless the comedy that surrounds his figure is unstressed.

Faulkner's uncertainty over Jones does not indicate dissatisfaction with the entire Decadent tradition, but with one version of its artist. This is part of the translation, witnessed in A Green Bough, of the poet/dreamer into the questioner of neurosis. However, it also reflects a change within the Decadent tradition itself and is not a purely Faulknerian development. The artist was becoming, even with Baudelaire, inseparable in the popular mind from the neurotic: indeed, Baudelaire fostered this with his championing of Poe, his fabrication of a line of tainted ancestors, and poems like "La Muse Malade" (p.23), whose opening verse celebrates insanity. The transition from pathological material to a concern with the pathology of that material occurred during the second half of the 19th Century. Critical works on degeneracy, tainted heredity and sexual abnormality appeared with profusion in most European languages (many of them specifically declared the Symbolist poets mad)⁹. Science was given fictional currency by Zola's massively researched pathology of the decline of the Rougon-Macquart family (interestingly Carter claims that Zola's madmen and idiots owe as much to Hérodias and Madeline Usher as to their author's researches in the Bibliothèque Nationale). Balzac attempted to write the natural history of his period and the Goncourt novels often centred on morbid states.

Faulkner feels unhappy with Jones because, in terms both of the poetry and the tradition, Jones is out of date. The Decadent artist does not vanish from Yoknapatawpha; he runs mad from pressures within the Symbolist movement. Pressure existed as late as 1930 persuading Arthur Symons to publish an interpretation of his own breakdown. Confessions: A Study in Pathology calls Gautier, Baudelaire and Verlaine into its frame of reference as students of neurotic states: its opening sentence could stand as an epigraph for Quentin Compson's efforts in both The Sound and the Fury and Absalom, Absalom!:

To trace, to retrace, to attempt to define or divine, the way in which one's madness begins, the exact fashion in which it seizes on one, is as impossible to divine as why one is sane.¹⁰

Less sympathetic readers might chose to substitute some Baudelaire, "I have nursed my hysteria with rapture and fright". Whatever the preference, it is clear that Faulkner's neurotics and simpletons should be considered as versions of 'the artist', before they are dismissed as obscurantist tricks or lost in the Gothic. A transition from Janarius Jones to Darl Bundren can be followed within the works themselves, passing through Gordon (Mosquitoes), Horace Benbow (Flags in the Dust) and Quentin (The Sound and the Fury). As the changes occur Faulkner drops the word 'artist'. It is as though part of the escape from the sealed chamber is the discovery that the artist is not a special man. Bloom may well have taught him that carpenters, furniture salesmen and sewing machine agents have much to offer. Whatever the cause, after an exhaustive exploration of artistic-types in the first three novels, the word artist ceases for Faulkner to be a term of approbation.

For all this, Gordon's sculpture and Jones' poetry are part of a shared tradition. The statue is considered in Mallarméan terms as "marble purity" and her virginity emphasises

the hermetic nature of such art - unavailable to profane minds incapable of disinterested contemplation. Mallarmé's aristocratic aesthetic rings "harsh and intolerant" in Gordon's mouth, for whom life is the enemy - "Pure because they have yet to discover some way to make it unpure. They would if they could, God damn them!" (p.272). The truncated form of the virgin owes much to Baudelaire's more exotic images, to the body in "Une Martyre" or to Jeanne Duval in "Les Bijoux".

Je croyais voir unis par un nouveau dessin
Les hanches de l'Antiope au buste d'un imberbe,
Tant sa taille faisait ressortir son bassin.
Sur ce teint fauve et brun le fard était superbe!

I thought I saw before me, united in a new pattern,
Antiope's hips and a stripling's bust, so strongly
did her narrow waist accentuate her pelvis. The
rouge was superb on that wild, tawny complexion.¹¹

The reference to the Queen of the Amazon's sister unites boyishness with mutilation and exactly complements Gordon's "novel design". The atmosphere of the whole poem redolent with "moorish concubines" and closing on an execution ["Each time that it (the dying lamp) uttered a flaming sigh/It drenched with blood the amber coloured skin"], supplies the bric-a-brac of Gordon's imagination - chained dancers, headless virgins, vermilion stained youths and even a beheaded negress. His artistic sources are confirmed by numerous 'intellectual' conversations, particularly that on Mrs. Wiseman's poetry.

Although Gordon is a silent outsider aboard the Nausikaa, he does not jar against the novel. Faulkner is unembarrassed because he has set the artist in motion towards the neurotic. Gordon is obsessional, thinks in highly pathological terms and declares his creative impulse to be "a madman's dream"; as a result Decadent ornamentation manifests a state of mind. The step from Gordon to Horace Benbow is no larger than that from

Janarius Jones to Gordon. Although Horace has lost professional status, his amateur artefacts tie him directly to the sculptor. The two men share one model - indeed at first glimpse Narcissa might be a view of Gordon's "virgin", exhibition notes by any number of Symbolist admirers:

A girl with a bronze swirling of hair and a small, supple body in constant epicene unreprieve, a dynamic fixation like that of carven sexless figures caught in moments of action, striving, a mechanism all of whose members must move in performing the most trivial action, her wild hands not accusing but passionate still beyond the veil impalpable but sufficient.¹²

The terms "epicene" and "sexless" are almost as obligatory as the Decadent poetics which blur the shift from artifice to mechanism with a run of "m's": criticism is disguised by a cadence which subverts meaning. Horace himself might have been proud of this note, for we are told that he is a poet and despite a conspicuous absence of poems there is sufficient evidence to locate influences. A pre-war year at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar gave him a taste for the fin-de-siècle with a preference for the 90's over the Georgians. Horace's Oxford is almost as mythical as Gatsby's "Oggsford". It is a textual place owing more to Symons and Verlaine than to England - walls, particularly old ones, are much in evidence, vistas "dream", "twilights" "dissolve" and inevitably no wind blows when it can sigh (since by sighing it is an "exhalation" and by exhaling it exhibits ennui rather than turbulence (pp.192-3 F.I.T.D.)). In Oxford Horace follows Mallarmé's "Plainte d'Automne" by "loving all that is summed up in the word fall"; he spends "doomed days" composing fragments that relieve him of the necessity of seeing either the day, or the doom of a country on the edge of war:

Outward, above and beyond buildings peaceful and gray and old, within and beyond trees in an untarnished and gracious resurgence of green, afternoon was like a blonde woman going slowly in a windless garden; afternoon and June were like blonde sisters in a windless garden-close, approaching without regret

the fall of day. Walking a little slower, perhaps; perhaps looking backward, but without sadness, untroubled as cows. (pp.192-3, F.I.T.D.)

"Cows" is obtrusive, a note from Oxford, Mississippi to Oxford, England. Otherwise the Decadent lessons have been well learned. Baudelaire's insistent "across and beyond" is modified, so that Verlaine's transported garden can dissolve a town into issues of internal rhyme (noon/June), or el_usion (Garden-close"): the hyphen makes "close" a noun referring to a group of trees, but "approaching" erases punctuation to stress the proximity of evening, "close-approaching". Alternatively "close" may be an adjective describing the position of the blonde sisters. Horace encourages his text to wound and unmake itself - Swinburne's linguistic fetishes have been read and understood). If the last and bovine simile is by Symbolist standards a mistake, it is one which legal practice in Mississippi will correct. By recrossing the Atlantic/^{he} simply exchanges hermeticisms. The differences between his Oxford study and his law office are minimal; books of 90's poetry give way to legal tomes - both provide a printed environment. Neither Sartoris nor Flags in the Dust suggests that Benbow conducts his practice as Stevens will, from store-fronts more often than from behind his desk. When he does have a case it is a matter of "interminable litigation" which, since it is "without the threat of consummation", can only affirm Horace's taste for "purposeless dreams" (p.194, F.I.T.D.), preferably ones involving virgins. Even tennis offers no alternative - Horace plays it solely as an opportunity to compose poetry and count Altnataesque women among the spectators. When at a loss he enumerates Mrs. Marders' Beardsleyesque chins:

(Horace watches) ... the taut revelations of ...
(his partner's) ... speeding body in a sort of ecstasy.
Girlwhite and all thy little Oh. Not pink, no. For a
moment I thought she'd no. Disgraceful, her mamma would
call it. Or any other older woman. Belle's are pink.
O muchly "Oaten reed above the lyre," Horace chanted,
catching the ball at his shoetops with a full swing,
watching it duck viciously beyond the net. Oaten reed
above the lyre. And Belle like a harped gesture, not
sonorous. Piano, perhaps. Blended chords, anyway.
Unchaste ? Knowledgeable better. Knowingly
wearied. Weariedly knowing. Yes, piano. Fugue.
Fugue of discontent. O moon rotting waxed overlong
too long

Last point. Game and set. She made it with savage
awkwardness; and turned at the net and stood with lowered
racket as he approached. Beneath the simple molasses
of her hair she was perspiring a little. "I kept on
letting 'em get my alley," she explained. "You never
bawled me out a single time. What ought I to do, to
break myself of that?" (p.203, F.I.T.D.)

The passage raises a recurrent problem about literary authority,
common to Faulkner's first three novels. The problem is not a
Boothian problem. The Rhetoric of Fiction for all its insight
is no help, since the issue is not who speaks (Faulkner or
his character) but what speaks (a Faulkner text or a text of
the 90's)? The speaker is clearly Horace, but his motifs and
language derive from Faulkner's "omniscient" voice, itself in
turn derived. Nor will terms like "imitation" or "parody"
serve, because all too often the reader cannot be sure which,
if either, is going on. In texts with a high degree of self-
consciously intertextual reference, distinctions between "copy"
and "parody" blur. For example in "Oxen of the Sun" is Joyce
mocking literary styles or writing a mimetic literary history?
Furthermore, how is one to distinguish parody of a voice from
pathos for the strength of the voice imitated? Why did Wilde
write Salomé in French? What is the nature of the relation
between Arthur Symons' "Fantoche" and Verlaine's "Fantouche"?
When writers do their own voices in the voices of others,
texts fuse inextricably and more than literary identity is at
risk. Geoffrey Hartman has written persuasively about this

in the context of Derrida.¹³ He claims that parody is an exercise in disproving the singularity of a text by forging a signature. Duplication produces two originals and the existence of a second original calls into question the whole idea of origin. The argument is persuasive only where the term "parody" dips into "forgery". However the shift is perhaps more common than genre-supporters care to allow: "parody" is after all a word whose insistence on clear intention evades the complex motives of copyists. A little of the anxiety generated by an unidentified forgery, hovers over Horace's tennis thoughts. "Oaten reed above the lyre," confesses itself a quotation, but its honesty is deceptive; certainly I cannot locate a source. The Marble Faun and A Green Bough yield no clues. A dictionary of first lines produces William Collins, "Ode to Evening":

If ought of oaten stop, or pastoral song
My hope O pensive Eve, to soothe thine ear

Merely a near miss? The search becomes a list of guesses, and as the list extends (widening intertextuality) so the issue of signature diminishes. Authorship of pastoral seems less important than the convention itself. So, Horace loses his voice and his Decadent catch-phrases assume a generic and not a lyric authority.

I may seem to be inventing difficulties - Horace is after all parodying his own artistic pretensions and with them the excesses of A Green Bough. However, many passages in Soldiers' Pay and A Green Bough resist even under-confident statements about tone:

an overcast sky, and earth dissolving monotonously
into a grey mist, greyly. Occasional trees and houses
marching through it; and towns like bubbles of ghostly
sound beaded on a steel wire - (p. 21 Soldiers' Pay)

As a result of long acquaintance I would be prepared to say that this is Faulkner, and to add that it is Faulkner using Housman. 'Using' is evasive. I am not sure about how Housman is being used and about how much Whistler gets into the picture. It is symptomatic that this kind of doubt should attend novels whose broad subject is the Symbolist movement. The movement inclines naturally towards parody because in the parodic it discovers a compensatory substance. Robbed of its semantic charge, a word in a parody may still appeal to intertextuality as a presence - the presence of other texts. Weight donated by the institution of Literature may not be a semantic value but it is weighty. However because it is often borrowed on undeclared terms it troubles borrower and reader alike. The phrase 'Faulkner has not yet found his own voice' is clearly called for, but only if used as more than a critical commonplace. Any novelist aware that his work is an exchange with other texts, rather than an exchange with a community, is going to have problems with his voice.

The value of intertextuality is too often an assumed absolute in modern criticism. Saussure's arbitrary language model which stresses semantic absence has given a theoretical basis to the position. Critics like Roland Barthes, Stephen Heath and Geoffrey Hartman believe that in the absence of a logocentric system or a theological signature 'behind' language, words mean only in relation to other words. The belief turns anxiety into a value, and openness or connotive-infinity into the norm. However when I read a text I proceed through a whole series of closures. I 'naturalize' sections. I treat descriptions as 'reality codes'. I make decisions about characters. I encode certain repeated authorial habits as

signifying certain themes. I identify narrators. I interpolate into the text notions about history and identity that the text asks me to incorporate - and by this process I reach a point of meaning which, although it is not THE END, is a kernel of problems, or possibly a number of points in the text where the problems are most apparent.

I do not mean to suggest that my own reading habits are representative, or that by themselves they constitute an argument against a critical school whose assumptions are grounded in Symbolist theory. Nonetheless the habit of provisional closure (crudely 'naming', less crudely 'denotation'), indicates that language can and does perform meaningfully outside theological sanctions. Words may once have been part of a Divine Signature, but there are other signatures of a compelling nature. Signatures appearing on economic contracts, on marriage papers, even names chalked on walls, are to a lesser degree binding. Economic, marital and class structures are all systems that language serves: with the Divine Exchange System closed, these and other exchanges open to re-substantiate words. Operating within them, words cease to be arbitrary and in the presence of a stable audience/market move away from the anxious reassurances of intertextuality. The Symbolists acted against the prevailing institutions; they devalued meaning as part of an attack on the social structures that supported it. Openness, synesthesia, synecdoche and decadent iconography were all part of an attack on 'naturalized' social mythologies. As such each was a means to unintelligibility, whose end could be described as the premeditated introduction of cancer into language. I do not use the term rhetorically: cancer works under the surface, on principles of multiplication which eventually deconstruct - its sources are obscure but belong

to basic biochemical forms. Structuralist critics cannot always claim this degree of motivation for their demythologizing, and their fêting of the Saussurian model as 'truth', may reflect not simply the decline of the theological sanction, but the anxious mobility of alternative value-schemes.

Metaphysical anxiety rarely afflicts the language used by voices in everyday exchange, and as a result spoken words are not "floating signifiers" (Hartman). They do not depend singly upon one another's texts for their temporary stability. Rather they are passages towards historical memory, at least partially motivated by cultural institutions and the symbolic systems that those institutions guarantee. Language can only be self-motivated by a conscious decision on the part of its user: if he is to sustain his decision he will constantly have to purge the impurity of language, that is to defeat the 'natural' inclination of words to refer beyond themselves. The Symbolists took this decision. Faulkner, despite the prevarications of the first three novels, did not. He chose to restore the elocutionary poet to A Green Bough because he was aware that words in Yoknapatawpha retain a theological shadow, and that, perhaps because of this stain, they function as part of an operative oral community. As a result Horace Benbow retains a voice.¹⁴ And yet his poetic thoughts do not result in a book. No poem emerges from the bricolage of single lines, single phrases and iambic habits which characterize his imagination. Instead imitation, parody, theft and forgery all operate at different times; finally, however, their play receives a generic signature through the poet's work with glass. When Horace takes up glass-blowing he signs himself into a tradition and affirms his descent from Gordon. The sculptor's virgin

statue is refined to its essence, a hymen blown in glass and called Narcissa. Named for the type of self-immersion, created in Pater's flame from Mallarmé's image for multivalent infinity¹⁵ - it is an abstract divorced from the notion of subject, but suggestive of its creator's subconscious. Benbow blows his hymens in a cellar, chosen against all considerations of safety because it best approximates to the Venetian caves, with "bloody walls", in which he first saw glass manufactured. The tradition goes so deep that Horace's parodies cannot be taken seriously. He is finally a copyist, not a critic, and the book of poems if ever written would confirm to a prevailing tone - that tone would be Decadent and address itself to incest.

Benbow is most clearly Decadent in his feelings for Narcissa. Her marriage to Young Baynard Sartoris merely interrupts their spiritual affair: Horace, deprived of a sister, marries a woman of her kind. Comparison between Narcissa and Belle Carpenter involves sets of terms like purity/flesh - hymen/womb - white/dirt. However, these are not conclusively oppositional, since the women are figures from the same Decadent landscape. Horace exchanges the virginal for the erotic chimera¹⁶. In his poem, "Baudelaire", Eugene Lee-Hamilton celebrates Paris and its poet for their "gorgeous iridescence of decay". Belle's decay may have lost a degree of "iridescence", but there is still, in Sartoris, something "gorgeous" about her.¹⁷ Horace on several occasions refers to congress with his mistress as drowning in a sea: to Swinburne readers recalling "The Triumph of Time" such seas are inseparable from "great sweet mother(s)". It would seem that prohibition on pure incest with the sister, induced dirty incest with the mother - at least at the textual level of his own symbology,

the level at which Horace is happiest. Such symmetry reads like critical contrivance, until one discovers Joan Mitchell in Flags in the Dust. Belle's sister firms the edges of the design. She, with whom Horace has a brief affair between separating from his sister and marrying, is more obviously Narcissa's typological relative. She adds "La" and "damn" to Belle's name, and is indeed without mercy. She swears like a man and is likened to various violences - a tiger (p.341, F.I.T.D.), a "sheathed poinard" (p.345, F.I.T.D.) and "a window of sharp knives" (on several occasions). Even so, her "savage" and "carnivorous" habits do not violate an aura of "cold inscrutability" which attends her. Joan mediates Horace's transition from one Decadent type to another, while underlining his perverse penchant for sisters - a taste shared by Quentin Compson.

Faulkner denies Quentin the activities and the title of an amateur artist. Only the artist's model, despite abstraction, remains the same; the virginal sister becomes the artefact and the artefact is refined into a symmetrical shape hermetically sealed outside "the loud world" (p.160). As Faulkner somewhat dismissively put it in the Appendix:

Quentin III: Who loved not his sister's body but some concept of Compson honour precariously (and he knew well) only temporarily supported by the mute fragile membrane of her maidenhead as a miniature replica of the whole vast globy earth may be poised on the nose of a trained seal ...¹⁸

The link between Quentin and Darl Bundren consists in the delicacy with which their sanities are balanced. Such tenuousness is to be expected - by choosing Darl, Faulkner breaks the shared academic education of his previous candidates and demonstrates his dissatisfaction with the term 'artist'. More surprising is how much is held in common by the sons of

a first family and a Mississippi hill farmer: both experience incestuous feeling and are of a literary bent. Incest binds Horace, Quentin and Darl and is, in the first two cases, approached in a typically Decadent manner. Baudelaire's poem "Les Bijoux" is again useful, here, as a gloss on Horace and Quentin's relation to their sisters:

Et son bras et sa jambe, et sa cuisine et ses reins,
Polis comme de l'huile, onduleux comme un cygne,
Passaient devant mes yeux clairvoyants et sereins;
Et son ventre et ses seins, ces grappes de ma vigne,
S'avançaient, plus câlins que les Anges de mal,
Pour troubler le repos où mon âme était mise,
Et pour la déranger du rocher de cristal
Où, calme et solitaire, elle s'était assise.

(Her arms and legs, her thighs and loins, glistening like oil, rippling swanlike, passed before my clairvoyant and serene eyes; and her belly and her breasts, those clusters of my vine, thrust themselves forward, more alluring than the angels of evil, to trouble the rest my soul had found, and cast it down from the crystal rock whereon it had settled, calm and solitary.)
(p.42)

Voyeurism and religious adulation combine in an isolation at once pure and too curious. Faulkner's brothers turn their sisters into idols, from motives not unlike those of Baudelaire in his affaire with Madam Maria X:

Through you Marie, I shall be strong and great.
Like Petrarch I will immortalize my Laura. Be my
guardian angel, my Muse and my Madonna, and lead
me to the pathway of beauty.

Narcissa and Caddy are in different ways protectors, mothers, mistresses, muses and artefacts to their brothers. They entice the artist towards a dangerous beauty. Sexual daydreaming can sometimes glimpse society's manipulation of the body. Certainly worshipful Southern reveries about "the woman" are motivated by a careful displacement of limbs: beneath the eulogies are stringent rules about orifices and users. Permitted the hire of so suggestive a model, some artists might have produced more than a glass vase or thin verse. However, the Symbolist works within a system that dispenses with the

social myths which dispose the body: therefore for him the woman becomes Beauty and Beauty becomes Object. Quentin succeeds in reversing this process by undoing the symmetry of his own design-called-Caddy and returning the Object (sister) to history. Unprotected by religious sanction or aesthetic law, the chimera is open to systematic enquiry - Caddy becomes a little girl with the hots. But the artist's revolt is late, fatal and untypical of the first four novels.

More representative of Faulkner's use of the Decadence is the appearance of the hermaphrodite in Mosquitoes.

Androgyny has two conspicuous moments - Mrs. Maurier's curious pregnancy (pp.241-2), and Gordon's resentment of his own masculinity (p.45). The images that attend Mrs. Maurier's hysterical swelling, "chill ... airs", "slow motions", "petals" and "waxy flowers", derive from "Hermaphroditus" but realise a domestic article. As Mrs. Maurier thinks of wax-flowers under a bell jar, the informed reader hears Swinburne doing Mallarmé:

She sat on the edge of her bed, feeling her strange chill limbs, while that swelling thing within her unfolded like an intricate poisonous flower, an intricate slow convolvulae of petals that grew and faded, died and were replaced by other petals huger and more implacable. (Mosquitoes p.241)

... ô roses! un arôme,
Loin du lit vide qu'un cierge soufflé cachait,
Un arôme d'ors froids rôdant sur le sachet,
Une touffe de fleurs parjures à la lune
(À la cire expirée encor s'enfeuille l'une),
De qui le long regret et les tiges de qui
Trempent en un seul verre à l'éclat alangui.

0 roses, a scent carrying far from the empty bed hidden by a blown-out candle, a scent of chilly golds loitering above the sachet, a bunch of flowers forsworn to the moon (one still drops its petals on the dead wax), whose long regret and stems soak in a single glass with languorous brightness. (Hérodiade pp.35-6)

Both texts invite the question:

To what strange end has some strange god made fair
The double blossom of two fruitless flowers?
("Hermaphroditus")¹⁹

Hermaphroditus and Hérodiade are masks for the artist. Mrs. Maurier is a patroness whose spiritual impregnation occurs because of and through the mask of her entrepreneurial activity.

But what do a hysterical pregnancy and Gautier's "effort suprême d'art" have in common? Faulkner's use of Mrs. Powers read alongside A.J. Busst's account of Hérodiade may offer some clues. Busst's argument runs - before seeing John, Hérodiade harmoniously synthesises intelligence and sensation. Her virginity is androgynous and as pure as Adam's initial containment of Eve. Passion rouses her sexuality and makes her for the first time fully aware of her own duality. She orders John's death thereby enacting symbolically her own penetration. The sword blow ruptures the hymen, blood flows on to her thighs and by taking the Saint's head in her hands she repossesses the male force. At the close of the poem Hérodiade is hermaphroditic, but knowingly so.²⁰ A less exotic version of this pattern is followed by Mrs. Powers who makes and takes a death's-head in order to convalesce her hymen and create a self-sufficient sexual imagination.²¹ Predictably, at his second attempt, Faulkner perfects the trick. Narcissa plays Hérodiade again, but in Flags in the Dust each stage of the performance is more clearly marked. When Narcissa sees Young Baynard fall from a horse and injure his head, she tries to forget the accident:

(but) a minor part of her consciousness probed ceaselessly, ... until with a stabbing rush like a touched nerve it filled her mind again - ... Baynard's bleeding head chiselled and calm and cold. Then the long effort of thrusting him without her bastions again. (p.161, F.I.T.D.)

The "stabbing rush" of the male principle (Baynard and a stallion) is deflected by the expedient of transforming a bleeding head into a "piece of Roman statuary" (p.159). Having taken and survived a sexual blow she sets Baynard outside her "bastions again" (regrows her hymen). The exercise is efficient and thoroughly artificial.

Gordon brings back colour to these practices. He follows Gautier's stricture by pursuing androgynous habits of mind. Meeting Mrs. Maurier he complains that she is not Pat's mother and cannot tell him "how conceiving her must have been, how carrying her in your loins must have been" (p.126). His desire to assimilate female sexuality is not always as vociferous, and is frequently confused, but it is never dull. At times his creativity is exclusively male - a virgin boy in male congress with the "horn" of "form"; the progeny is derisive and creativity turns feminine, "fecund and foul" (p.40), bearing for no apparent reason.

Gordon's unsystematic enquiry into what sexual position will guarantee creativity yields a final vision in which male and female assume a posture prefigured by Mallarmé:

... a young naked boy daubed with vermillion, carrying casually a crown ... (dances in front of) ... the headless naked body of a woman carved of ebony ... (p.279)

Evidence encourages the idea that the dancer in the parable and "le garçon vierge" of Gordon's soul, are one and the same; both have a taste for truncated virgins; the vermillion signature marks this as a performance by another red-head, even as it smears him with the blood of the conquered virgin. His dance moves to "a senseless laughter" that involves a crown, the joke being on the woman who has lost the where-withal to support the honour. Hérodiade took a male head.

The virgin boy has taken a female head and returned to celebrate his triumph.

Hérodiade, Mrs. Powers and Gordon reclaim androgynous purity - only Gordon subsequently throws away the gift. His last act in Mosquitoes is to enter a brothel, where he is seen "to lift a woman from the shadow ... (of) a narrow passageway ... (and to) raise her against the mad stars" (p.280). The act is a desecration of his art; in effect he penetrates his own statue and celebrates the duality that Hérodiade and Mrs. Powers struggled to internalize. The figures of his perversely pure imagination are dismissed, and "le garçon vierge" is recast as a sterile mannerism. Mrs. Maurier/androgynous has a very definite place in this context. Gordon achieves and rejects the hermaphroditic status of the supreme artist; his gesture is underlined by our glimpse of androgyny as hysterical pregnancy. However hermaphroditic plots and counterplots are weakened by obscurity: Fairchild offers critical commentary but in a novel of endless critical conversations his aids are easily mislaid:

"That's what it's about. ("Hermaphroditus," by Eva Wiseman) It's a kind of dark perversion. Like a fire that don't need any fuel, that lives on its own heat (p.208) ... But in art a man can create without any assistance at all: what he does is his. A perversion, I grant you, but a perversion that builds Chartres and invents Lear is a pretty good thing." (p.265)

Faulkner may be disenchanted with the figure at the head of the Decadent sexual league, but he does not break with the tradition as a whole. The rise of the novel assured the decline of the hermaphrodite who, for obvious reasons, is unavailable to any form of realistic narrative. He/She vanishes into various acceptable and related states of psychological tension - virginity, masturbation, incest and homosexuality. Faulkner continues to haunt his 'artists' with androgynous ghosts.

Quentin is a typical if over-symmetrical example; he suffers from incestuous guilt, is obsessive over virginity and stimulates Shreve's latent homosexuality. Even his name derives from a curious coincidence of Decadent anecdote and American slang - Saint Quentin committed incest with his sister Mary and figured in several homosexual stories; as if such tendencies needed accentuation, "San Quentin Quail" was a euphemism for those underaged girls whose attractions might put men in San Quentin. More seriously indicative of continued allegiance is the structuring of the first five novels around Decadent archetypes. Soldiers' Pay and As I Lay Dying focus on the death's-head and on the living dead. Mosquitoes features a boat-load of virgins. Sartoris and The Sound and the Fury concern themselves with the incestuous sister. The Symbolist derivation of these images is apparent in the ease with which they become artefact, whether coffin, statue, glass-wear or Roman vase.²²

Despite Faulkner's continuing interest and the activities of the assembled celibates and virgins aboard the Nausikaa, Mosquitoes witnesses a reduction in the Symbolist guest list. If the dismissal of the hermaphrodite lacks authority, Gordon's action in the French Quarter is unambivalent. He prostitutes the statue, having previously violated her image with a second work. During the course of the novel Gordon sculpts two different pieces, one torso and one head: both are studies of virgins - their opposition resolves the novel. The virginal torso stands firmly in the Decadent tradition, and any criticism of it is tacit. The studio contains objects that mutely reprove the central piece: Jeanne Duval, Baudelaire's black mistress, served as an early model for a figure later to be cased in ebony and set among "chained women" (p.280). It is therefore curious

that the initial work should have been done in a slave-loft, particularly as the studio is still haunted by shades of "servants and masters" (p.10). The ghosts herald the first appearance of a statue that is "passionate still for escape" (p.11). Not only is the torso doubly imprisoned in stone and in virginity, but its sculptor is also enslaved. Artists are twice casually set among the dark servants. Jenny comes across Faulkner at a race track - ' "a little kind of blackman - " "A nigger?" "No ... (but) awful sunburned ..." ' (p.119). Pat asks Gordon why he is so "black" (p.22). The colour and status is perhaps significant in New Orleans, particularly given Blassingame's argument that even during anti-bellum times racial lines were breached more frequently here than in any other American city, to the extent of legitimizing forms of inter-racial marriage.²³ Faulkner locates Gordon's studio in the Quarter and hides black critics in the wall; these critics while accepting their enslavement knew it to be "an unnatural proceeding" (p.10). (Everything about the statue's antecedents suggests that its creation was equally perverse). The association of the New Orleans black, the blacked-up artist and the soon to be ebony virgin, could be read, in a city with a broken colour line, as an invitation for the artist and his work to escape their hermetic tradition. At this stage in Mosquitoes the suggestion belongs to Faulkner and is made quietly. Gordon remains unmistakably enamoured of his first virgin; indeed even a living rival tempts only the copyist in him:

... for an instant she (Pat) stopped in midflight, hand to hand and arm braced to arm, high above the deck while water dripping from her turned to gold as it fell ... Sunset was in his eyes: a glory he could not see; and her taut simple body, almost breastless and with the fleeting hips of a boy, was an ecstasy in gold marble, and in her face the passionate ecstasy of a child ... Then she was gone and Gordon stood looking at the wet

and simple prints of her naked feet on the deck. (p.68) The epiphany of the androgynous virgin in "golden marble", excludes times and flesh in Mallarméan manner. Only the footprints remain to disconcert, being the mark of someone who refuses to stand still and be epiphanised. Gordon, as if to underline his needs, tells Pat a story told by Cyrano concerning a king who fell in love and took precautions against his love's departure:

"He didn't take any chances. He had her locked up. In a book." "In a book?" she repeated. Then she comprehended. "Oh ... That's what you've done, isn't it? With the marble girl without any arms and legs you made? Hadn't you rather have a live one?" (p.223)

Patricia's leading question is without an answer until Gordon unveils his second virgin - Mrs. Maurier is very much "a live one". By taking her as his model, Gordon shifts virginity from the Decadent league and sets it among plantations and first families of the South. Wiseman offers an historical account of the new work; in doing so he ceases to be the literary critic and emerges as the grandson of Julius Kaufman, Semitic Snopes, whose land deals facilitated Mrs. Maurier's Sutpen-like rise to the landed gentry. Faulkner will not take up Wiseman's anecdote, until Absalom, Absalom!; meanwhile it is disruptive to discover a skeletal Sutpen in a Huxley novel-of-ideas. Mosquitoes, like Crome Yellow, is a string of intellectual debates given some sequence by the spasmodic recording of hours and days, and justified by the commonplace that time is irrelevant on a cruise. Mrs. Maurier's story is also a "moment"²⁴ but an exceptional one, in that it encapsulates an extended history. Likewise her virginity, and its retention, is a cultural rather than an aesthetic phenomenon.

Mosquitoes escapes from the circularity of its talk through the opposition of its two virgin statues. Although its cargo of psychic and actual virgins remains celebrate and intact for four days, the statue at least is partially penetrated. Penetration is incomplete because Gordon still longs for his androgynous work.

Art takes longer to escape the Symbolist chamber than might have been expected. Faulkner's poetry argues spasmodically with Decadent ideals, and yet his second novel can only reiterate the need for emergence at several levels. The image of the darkened room and the problem of how to get in and out recurs, with emphasis on the exit. Fairchild provides the metaphor with impressive credentials during one of his many attempts to define creativity - his starting point is Satyricon in Starlight;

"It's kind of a dark thing. It's kind of like somebody brings you to a dark door. Will you enter that room or not?"

"But the old fellows got you into the room first," the Semitic man said. "Then they asked you if you wanted to go out or not."

"I don't know. There are rooms, dark rooms, that they didn't know anything about at all. Freud and these other -" (p.205)

The chamber is co-owned by Freud and the Symbolists, but despite its murk it is not called 'id'; indeed ownership is of little consequence, since various subplots establish that getting out is all that matters. Talliaferro is tricked into intruding on Mrs. Maurier in her cabin: proposal is the only honourable exit line. A mesh of connotations serve the event by investing the chamber and its furnishings with sexual meaning. Down the corridor Jenny and Pat discuss the state of their respective virginities, under a porthole suitably described as an "orifice". The twin "orifice" in Mrs. Maurier's room admits, "level as a lance", a "marble pencil" of moonlight (p.241),

and does so even as Mrs. Maurier struggles with androgynous "swelling". The "thin silver dust" of the marble pencil might evidence the seminal power of art, except that, not before time, Fairchild's plot sets aside the symbolic plot. Talliaferro intrudes upon the tastefully decorated cabin and leaves it a husband, having (nominally at least) relieved Mrs. Maurier of the need for symbolic substitutes.

Freudian trimmings decorate the Mandeville exit road, but the point remains the same. Exhausted by Pat's weight and the heat of the swamp David listens to his own heart:

Each beat seemed to be somewhere in his head ...
But remote, like a tramping of soldiers in red uniforms stepping endlessly across the door of a room where he was, where he crouched trying to look out of the door. (p.169)

The room, converted into a cage, becomes a cave as David forces himself forward:

Man walks on his hind legs; a man can take three steps, a monkey can take three steps, but there is water in a monkey's cage, in a pan. Three steps. All right. One. Two. Three. Gone. Gone. Gone. It's a red sound. Not behind your eyes. Sea. See. Sea. See. You're in a cave, you're in a cave of dark sound, the sound of the sea is outside the cave. Sea. See. See. See. Not when they keep stepping in front of the door. (pp.169-70)

Whatever the form, the door is what matters. "See" emerges from "Sea", as child emerges from womb, as man emerges from monkey, and as David and Pat will finally emerge from a swamp called Womb (p.139). As though to complicate the over-complicated, Wiseman makes it possible to re-read the whole incident as a Freudian version of "Babes in the Wood":

But you (Fairchild), straying trustfully about this park of dark and rootless trees which Dr. Ellis and your Germans have recently thrown open to the public - You'll always be a babe in the wood, you know. Bewildered, and slightly annoyed; (p.208)

Psychiatry is a darkened park through which Fairchild strays - a lost babe: Wiseman's analogy is tailor-made to transfer to the uprooted swamp-trees among which Pat and David wander. As the runaways to Europe stagger deeper into the swamp, they reapproach the womb and refute their developed sexuality. Pat chooses a female man. David chooses a boyish woman. These babes are lost until, passing from the jungle, they happen upon the wicked fairy, Swampman, who eventually directs them and in so doing insists that they reassume their sexual roles. David must protest his potency and Pat defend her honour against Swampman's innuendo. Even the journey's route is amenable to a Freudian map. Having discovered a faint road out of the swamp (id), they walk the wrong way (ego-inversion), before returning to the safety of the Nausikaa (super-ego), where nothing has changed: indeed the babes who became elopers become babes again and get home in time for dinner.

Read this way the story demonstrates the room's power and the difficulty of leaving it. Whatever its furnishing and wherever it is located, the problem recurs. The Symbolist room ("Hermaphroditus"), a Freudian cellar (Mosquitoes), a gothic chamber (Absalom, Absalom!) or an Edenic garden (Ike's "Long Summer" of a cow, The Hamlet), all have faulty or troublesome exits. The other escapes made in the novel are no more complete. By the second day Mosquitoes turns, for reader and passenger alike, on how soon the Nausikaa can dock and release her cargo. Meanwhile Fairchild tells stories about whether and in what form Al Jackson will quit the swamp, and Major Ayres plans the packaging of a laxative. Evacuation in each instance fails to occur. Even after the sculptor, the writer

and the critic have expounded the lesson of the two virgins, a fourth and unnamed author writes a parable which underlines his and their seizure at the threshold of the Symbolist room.

The anonymous transcript at the heart of chapter nine, the penultimate chapter, repeats the novel's confusion. An obscure parable by an unknown hand is interrupted by a babble of commentary from Gordon, Fairchild and Wiseman. Quotations from Mademoiselle de Maupin and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man are tossed around as though there were no such thing as an original thought. The jumble closes with Gordon in a brothel, Fairchild vomiting and Wiseman still quoting Gautier. Some stay against confusion can be found in the presence of a virgin at the centre of the story: she edits the interruptions and dictates the action. Identifying her is difficult because she metamorphoses from androgyne to slave, from prostitute to Lady Jane Grey, but is at least constant in her ability to keep the issue of Decadent symbology at the centre of our attention. Once acknowledged as a parable about a virgin, the anonymous typescript offers enciphered comment on Gordon's achievement as a sculptor. The code can be broken, though it should be noted that bad cryptogramic habits continue to attract Faulkner long after he has dispensed with the ideas that motivate them.

Three priests observe a beggar. (Celibacy and number link them to Gordon, Wiseman and Fairchild, three friends who cruise without sexual success.) The beggar dreams and moulds a crust of bread to the shape of a dreamed image. (His activity and indifference to the attentions of the rats suggest that, despite his medium, he too is a Symbolist artist.) The three priests move on and are replaced by three more, whose robes, "the colour of silence," display their allegiance to the

French tradition. (Mosquitoes, despite the number of its artists, is essentially concerned with ideas about Art rather than with who has them.) The subject of the dream is glimpsed - a virgin accompanied by Keatsian music. (The Grecian Urn gets in to complement the Symbolist death's-head. The Baptist according to Beardsley or Moreau is as paralysed as a Keatsian figure: each artist avoids the word "paralysis" by gracing his frozen profiles with infinite longings which are easily declared beautiful.) The beggar's dream is interrupted when a naked boy, smeared red, places a truncated ebony carving where the virgin stood. (The substitution is a double blow. It depicts Gordon's rejection of the androgynous imagination, and prefigures his abuse of the statue in the brothel. Also the transformation of virgin into black woman (p.279) sexualises her, both as Jeanne Duval and as black Southern female, traditionally misused.) The beggar stops moulding his bread. (The Symbolist artist is threatened with the loss of his central artefact.) The two dream images struggle for ascendancy; finally and briefly the torso of the virgin emerges, only to whirl away. (It is in keeping with Gordon's nostalgia for the virgin that his first statue should enjoy a transitory resurgence.) The priests establish that the beggar is dead and move on. (The three artists of Mosquitoes must quit the death's-head and its complicity with the virgin.) Rats reassume their investigation of the body's private parts. (The Decadents mythologised sexuality - rodents are less scrupulous. Faulkner is on the side of the rats. Poem XXIV substituted impotency for reverie; Faulkner does much the same thing by closing Mosquitoes with Talliaferro's sexual failure, rather than with an aesthetic idealisation of celibacy. The end of the novel is much clearer than the end of the typescript.)

The parable is interrupted just before the virgin's re-entrance. Gordon bursts into a brothel and with the help of a whore pre-empts the re-ascendency of his first status:

(A door opened in the wall. Gordon entered and before the door closed again they saw him in a narrow passageway lift a woman from the shadow and raise her against the mad stars, smothering her squeal against his tall kiss.)
(p.280)

The gesture mirrors one made with Pat and recaptures the pose of the statue, this time with a prostitute. Fairchild is less declamatory; he stays with the virgin but takes her from her pedestal and carries her towards history. His thoughts corrode the Symbolist model by stumbling across progressively less exemplary virgins. He starts impeccably from Dante's Beatrice, but declines through Iseult of the White Hands (Tristan's wife, presumably discontented with enforced abstinence), to the altogether less literary and problematically innocent Lady Jane Grey. It is only fitting that an account of Sherwood Anderson should close with him afflicted by epiphany and misquoting Joyce's justification of it:

(Genius) is that Passion Week of the heart, that instant of timeless beatitude which some never know, which some, I suppose, gain at will, which others gain through an outside agency like alcohol, like tonight - that passive state of the heart with which the mind, the brain, has nothing to do at all, in which the hackneyed accidents which make up this world - love and life and death and sex and sorrow - brought together by chance in perfect proportions, take on a kind of splendid and timeless beauty. (pp.280-1)

The words echo Stephen Dedalus' attempt to find "a new terminology" for artistic creation: the reader like Lynch or Wiseman may find his own thoughts more enterprising. "Beauty" is the object of both theoreticians. Fairchild's "passive state of the heart" derives from Stephen's "impersonalised artist" since it receives "an instant of timeless beatitude" as well proportioned and chancey as a Joycean epiphany. Virginity is the

summation of both men's theories. To Stephen the epiphanic imagination is a "virgin womb" - its products are indeed miraculous and some would say monstrous, since "integritas", "consonantia", "claritas" and "quidditas" deprive their inventions of temporal, spatial and psychological location.²⁵

Fairchild's aestheticism is conspicuously less pure; his list of exemplary virgins grows less exemplary as it extends, culminating in, "a red haired girl, an idiot, turning in a white dress beneath a wistaria covered trellis on a late sunny afternoon in May ..." (p.281). A red headed idiot is virginal from pressures unaesthetic and quite unlike those exerted by a literary tradition. Moreover this is Compson territory.

In The Sound and the Fury Faulkner depicts an idiot, often in a garden, struggling to shape moments into the history of a girl. Significantly the Benjy section developed from Faulkner's self-confessed inability to encapsulate the story in a single impression:

... I told the idiot's experience of that day, and that was incomprehensible, even I could not have told what was going on then, so I had to write another chapter ... (and so on, through the brothers) ... and then I had to write another section from the outside with an outsider, which was the writer, to tell what happened on that particular day. And that's how the book grew.²⁶

"Integritas" works only slightly better for Anderson. George Willard opposes it in Winesburg, Ohio. His very presence is an appeal for a narrative dimension. The grotesques carry their epiphanies to him in the hope that he, a reporter, will make them add up to more than a moment.

Perhaps understandably, Wiseman has not been listening. Misapplied Joyce is not much use to him in his attempts to reapply Gautier. The quotation that troubles him is D'Albert's:

Three things please me: gold, marble and purple, splendour, solidity and colour. My dreams are composed of them, and all my chimerical places are constructed of these materials. (p.133)

After several attempts he substitutes "form" for "splendour". A re-formulation which eases the translation of the dream into marble, and goes some way to solving the technical problems that trouble Gautier's hero:

The idea of perfection is so present with me, that I am constantly seized with a distaste for my work and prevented from carrying it on. (p.190)

Nonetheless "form" for "splendour" remains a verbal quibble. The Symbolist enclosure will be unbroken for as long as "form" remains as free of historical antecedent as la rêve itself. Wiseman has not only ignored his own account of the second virgin, but has also missed a rewrite of Gautier, thrown out by Fairchild at the first allusion to Mademoiselle de Maupin:

I love three things.
(He drew Fairchild onward, babbling in an ecstasy.)
A voice, a touch, a sound: life going on about you un-
seen in the close dark, beyond these walls, these bricks -
(p.278)

Fairchild celebrates walls, hands and inarticulacy in a rhetoric derived from Winesburg, Ohio (see "An Awakening"). He means little. Certainly Anderson did not realise the implications of an oral tradition. For Faulkner 'voice' guarantees more than integrity, and 'sound' is not just a matter of colour. In the Trilogy the anecdote is an index of the past; its oral retention links past to present, so that the story's changing transmission projects a future for the community. The Symbolists denied voice with their linguistic experiments; consequently the poets of the movement could not think of language as behaviour (sound, touch). Without a mouthpiece or a situation their language turns ahistorical; it cannot change or record change. By 1927 Faulkner was aware of some of this; certain

poems in A Green Bough resist the "disappearance of the elocutionary poet". However, since the editorial work which was to turn spasmodic resistance into argument did not occur until the early 30's, Wiseman's deaf ear is excusable.

Given that each member of the trinity has had to be excused (Gordon for nostalgia, Fairchild for confusion, Wiseman for Gautier), the authorship of the parabolic exposé is of more than academic interest. Clues are in short supply. An anonymous figure with a "leonine head" (p.254) types energetically in a room below Fairchild's, located in an alleyway off Jackson Square, an address which tempts biographical speculation: Faulkner stayed for two months in Anderson's Pontalba apartment on Jackson Square (Jan-Feb, 1925); later he lodged with Spratling in Orleans alley (March-June, 1925). Biography is not a safe court of appeal, particularly when Faulkner appears in Mosquitoes as a "funny ... little black man", hardly the neck for a "leonine" head.

Authorship of the typescript remains an enigma - one more element in what emerges as the theme of thwarted emergence. Faulkner is still not prepared to put his own name to a dismissal, albeit an encoded one, of Symbolist ideas. As a result Mosquitoes, for all its evidence, adds up to an incomplete and inconclusive document. Its literary figures wander restlessly through Decadent rooms, strike and drop Decadent postures; they finger the Symbolist stuff and note the exit, but do not take it. They, like the tradition that raised them, have nowhere to go.

Joyce extends and exploits Symbolist notions. In Ulysses Faulkner encounters an interpretation of his own early reading, and, orientated, moves through Joyce towards the major fiction.

1. William Faulkner, Soldiers' Pay (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1964), p.246. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
2. Mallarmé, Mallarmé ed. and trans., Anthony Hartley (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), pp.46-7. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
3. Addison C. Bross, "Soldiers' Pay and the Art of Aubrey Beardsley," American Quarterly, Vol. 19, No. 1. (Spring 1967), p.23.
4. Theophile Gautier, Mademoiselle de Maupin (Bone and Liverwright, New York, 1918), p.173. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
5. Oscar Wilde, Salomé (Elkin Mathews and John Lane, London, 1894), p.65. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
6. Walter Pater, The Renaissance (MacMillan, London, 1919), p.125.
7. William Faulkner, Flags in the Dust (Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1974), p.243. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
8. Frederick Jameson, Marxism and Form (Princeton U.P., New Jersey, 1971), pp.317-318.

9. A.E. Carter, The Idea of Decadence in French Literature (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1958), Ch. 3.
10. Arthur Symons, Confessions: A Study in Pathology (Cape, New York, 1930), p.1.
11. Baudelaire, "Les Bijoux", collected in Baudelaire: Selected Verse, trans, Francis Scarfe (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1961), p.42. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
12. William Faulkner, Sartoris (Signet, New York, 1964), p.60. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition. In future when quoting I shall refer to Sartoris as S and to Flags in the Dust as F.I.T.D.
13. Geoffrey Hartman, "Monsieur Text: I and II," Georgia Review, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Winter 1975), and Vol. 30, No. 1 (Spring 1976).
14. His hold is tenuous. Sanctuary offers a very different account of the decampment from Jefferson to Kinston. Marriage to Belle Carpenter (Flags in the Dust) and defeat in the Temple Drake case (Sanctuary), share at least one common factor - both represent the loss of voice in inter-textual limbo. In Flags in the Dust Horace "drowns", not in Belle but in his own persistent depiction of her flesh as a Symbolist sea. His voice, submerged in his own redundant literary habits, vanishes from Yoknapatawpha. At the close of Sanctuary, while the Jewish lawyer makes his case, Horace sits silent. He offers no counter claim

because Temple's defender has proved to him that words are legal ciphers, without moral value. The best case wins, and the fact that it is a total forgery persuades Horace that silence is his last and only resort.

15. For Mallarmé's use of glass and mirrors, see "Les Fenêtres" (p.17), and "Hérodiade" (Sc.2, p.42).
16. See Philippe Jullian, Dreamers of Decadence (Praeger, London, 1971), particularly Ch.6 whose title "The Erotic Chimera," I have borrowed. This chapter gives a full account of the category.
17. Collected in Poetry of the Nineties ed. R.K.R. Thornton (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.41.
18. William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying (Modern Library Editions, Random House, New York, 1946), pp.9-10.
19. Algernon Charles Swinburne, Poems and Ballads (John Camden Hotten, London, 1866), p.166.
20. A.J.L. Busst, "The Image of the Androgyne in the 19th Century," collected in Romantic Mythologies, ed. Ian Fletcher (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1967), p.43.
21. Sherwood Anderson may unwittingly have encouraged Faulkner's use of the hermaphrodite. In "The Book of the Grotesque," Winesburg, Ohio (1919), the old writer describes himself

as "pregnant" with a youth who is also a young woman. The androgynous nature of the writer and the work is re-emphasised in "The Man Who Became a Woman," The Triumph of the Egg (1921). Tom Means tries in his first piece of writing to describe his love for another man: becoming a writer involves becoming a woman, both in the story and in order to produce the story.

22. In 1933, writing of the circumstances under which he wrote The Sound and the Fury, Faulkner drew an analogy between Caddy and a vase:

I did not realize then that I was trying to manufacture the sister which I did not have and the daughter which I was to lose ... There is a story somewhere about an old Roman who kept at his bedside a Tyrrhenian vase which he loved and the rim of which he wore slowly away with kissing it. I had made myself a vase, but I suppose I knew all the time that I could not live forever inside of it. /"An Introduction to The Sound and the Fury," ed. James B. Meriwether, Southern Review, No. 4 (Oct. 1972), pp. 705-710/

23. J.W. Blassingame, Black New Orleans : 1860-1880 (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1973).
24. Wiseman speaking of Mrs. Maurier's marriage of economic necessity, claims:"You know how it is, how there comes a certain moment in the course of human events during which everything - public attention, circumstance, even destiny itself- is caught at the single possible instant, and the actions of certain people, for no reason at all, become of paramount interest and importance to the rest of the world?" (p.269)
25. For the aesthetic debate between Dedalus and Lynch see

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1966), pp.200-216.

26. William Faulkner, Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner, 1926-1962, ed. James B. Meriwether & Michael Millgate (Random House, New York, 1968), pp.146-47.

Chapter 3

William Faulkner on James Joyce:

He Do the Rednecks in Different Voices

I

The American publication of Ulysses was an extended and tortuous affair. The presence of the book or some part of it in Mississippi during the 1920's is a matter of some speculation. Together these two issues may be woven into a network of hypothesis, so that all that is needed to compound the mystery beyond solution are Faulkner's evasive statements about where, when and if he read the book or parts of the book.

In March 1918, The Little Review began publishing the sections of Ulysses in a sequential and relatively finished form. It is known that Phil Stone subscribed to the magazine. However, the postal authorities seized and burned the issues containing "Lestrygonians", "Scylla and Charybdis" and "Cyclops". In October 1920 confiscation of "Nausicaa" led to the prosecution of the editors, and the cessation of serial publication. Only in December 1933 did a New York court allow the book legal admittance to the United States. However, clandestine copies of the Paris printings of 1922 and 1923 were available, and during his months in New Orleans (December, 1924-July, 1925), Faulkner would have had access to Ulysses. The literary clique which gathered in the offices of The Double Dealer, among whom Faulkner moved, undoubtedly discussed Joyce, and Faulkner owned a copy of Ulysses from the 1924 printing. This he signed and dated. Scepticism is essential, since he was habitually careless over dates and the 1924 could have been a later and mistaken inscription.

In July 1925 Faulkner went, for six months, to Paris where Ulysses could be bought over the counter and its author seen in the cafés; "I knew Joyce, I knew of Joyce, and I would go to some effort to go to the café that he inhabited and look

at him."¹ Such effort may have been motivated by curiosity as much as reverence. Nonetheless, it seems probable that Faulkner had access to the whole of Telemachiad and to the early Bloom sections, before he left Oxford. In New Orleans the complete novel was available. Unfortunately, facts about ready availability do not prove extent and time of readership. About this Faulkner systematically contradicted both himself and the statements of others.

In answer to a question on Joyce which Henry Nash Smith asked in 1932, Faulkner replied:

You know ... sometimes I think there must be a sort of pollen of ideas floating in the air which fertilizes similarly minds here and there which have no direct contact. I had heard of Joyce, of course. Someone told me about what he was doing, and it is possible that I was influenced by what I heard.²

Subsequently he insisted that he wrote The Sound and the Fury before reading Ulysses, although knowing about it from excerpts and conversation with friends, and having previously read Dubliners and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. As though to multiply imponderables, Faulkner's wife said in 1931 that her husband made her read Ulysses twice while they were on their honeymoon.³ They were married in June 1929.

It seems that the date in question is not simply that of Faulkner's reading of Ulysses, but its relation to his completion of The Sound and the Fury, finished as a first draft by October 1928, at the galley stage by July 1929, and published in October 1929. Although no definite conclusion can be reached, Faulkner's tenderness on the subject suggests that he himself recognized his debt to Joyce, and feared that others might describe it more roundly as a dependency.

II

On board the Nausikaa a poet, a novelist and a critic discuss a collection of poems entitled Satyricon in Starlight. Conversation drifts inconclusively among the techniques of the Symbolist poets. "You say that substance doesn't matter in a poem" (dematerialization) ... "a cocktail of words" (reliance on connotation) ... "electricity" (synesthesia) ... "let it be grammatically incorrect" (the breakdown of syntax) ... "a kind of singing rhythm" (language aspiring to the purity of music). Always unresolved, and returned to, is the nature of the link between word and world. Why the drug store clerk writes. How "the symbol of desire" becomes "a flesh and blood creature". What made Ashur Banipal a book collector and a man of action. Or, in the terms of Faulkner's poetry, how could Decadent metaphors for "all kind(s) of dark perversion" be reconciled with the problems of every-day life in Yoknapatawpha? The Symbolist poet leaves, holding that the conversation is "not only silly but dull". No progress is made, but the regional novelist locates his problem:

Fairchild stared at the page under his hand. He said slowly, "It's a kind of dark thing. It's kind of like somebody brings you to a dark door. Will you enter the room or not?"

"But the old fellows got you into the room first," the Semitic man said. "Then they asked you if you wanted to go out or not."

"I don't know. There are rooms, dark rooms, that they didn't know anything about at all. Freud and these others -" ⁴

The text under discussion is "Hermaphroditus" - an imitation of Swinburne's account of a theme by Baudelaire: Mrs Wiseman's work is itself lifted from A Green Bough⁵. As literary dependencies multiply, so the language tires. The novelist's problem is that he needs new ways in which to talk about the poem. Joyce, learning far more from Mallarmé than from Dujardin,

is the critical interpreter of the Decadent texts. He applies that French linguistic tradition to a day in Dublin, and in so doing answers the questions that Faulkner raised inconclusively in his own poetry. The key to "the dark room" is the stream of consciousness technique, learned from the first six sections of Ulysses.

The common ground shared by Stephen Dedalus and Quentin Compson establishes "Telemachus" as Faulkner's point of departure. Two apprentice exiles worry over incestuous guilt, talk about and imitate their fathers, and view their past as "a nightmare from which [they are] trying to awake". There is something of the artist about Quentin and his prose at times reads like over-worked poetry:

the curtains leaning in on the twilight upon the
odour of the apple tree her head against the twilight
her arms behind her head kimono winged ⁶

or:

I saw the last light supine and tranquil upon tide-flats,
like pieces of a broken mirror (p.154)

The manner is that of a nineteenth century Decadent poet, and though Stephen's literary antecedents are more numerous, he too is of a symbolic turn of mind and postures with the confidence of Axel. Even as Stephen is Joyce's portrait of the young man as an artist, so Quentin is Faulkner's artist as a young man. Gordon's statue of the virgin and the glass hymens blown by Horace are reset as the hard, bright shape of Caddy in Quentin's head. So mounted, they cease to be the chimera of Moreau or Mallarmé, and become "a flesh and blood creature" whose desirability can be understood in terms of the external world.

However, Faulkner's major debt is to the technique rather than the material; in particular he reacted to a view of

character implicit in Joycean methodology. Joyce's pyrotechnics are often read in isolation from his content, with the result that Dublin, Stephen and Bloom are submerged among keys, metalanguages and mythic structures. Joyce collaborates: indeed, if one takes Ulysses primarily as a stylistic plot, the confident appraisal of character becomes increasingly difficult.

It is a commonplace that vocal patterns, whether spoken or thought, are among the basic materials with which novelists create a felt world of characters. In learning to recognize voices the reader discovers identities. Discovery takes place at more than the individual level. Labov and linguists working on a speech-act theory of discourse suggest that vocal orientation is a sensitive index of social orientation. Furthermore, the Marxist linguist Vološinov implies that interior language is indexical in a similar way. If, as he argues, there is no such thing as private property in language, the most idiosyncratic and secret of thoughts is simply "a miscarriage of social orientation":

The lowest, most fluid and quickly changing stratum (of inner-consciousness) consists of experiences of a momentary and accidental kind. To this stratum, consequently, belong all those vague and undeveloped experiences, thoughts and idle accidental words that flash across our minds. They are all of them cases of miscarriages of social orientations, novels without heroes, performances without audiences. They lack any sort of logic or unity.¹⁷

In recognizing a voice as it performs in a dialogue or underperforms during an interior monologue the reader is, at least potentially, perceiving a cultural milieu.

However, on June 16th 1904 between 11 a.m. and 12 noon on Sandymount Strand, Joyce blocks one of Stephen Dedalus's more significant utterances. That afternoon, in the bar of the Ormond Hotel, the speech of Leopold Bloom is impeded by the same hand. Joyce tends to impair our reception of his characters' voices; in so doing he limits access to their personal and representative identities. Current academic readers are frequently undisturbed, since their pleasure in the pursuit of allusion leads them to undervalue the place of speech in sustained characterization. It is, however, likely that anyone raised in a continuing oral tradition would be particularly sensitive to the curtailment of voice. "Proteus" records the inflicting of a vocal wound on a character not unlike Quentin Compson; but before measuring Faulkner's reaction to the obscure hurt, it is perhaps necessary to justify this reading.



As Stephen strolls along Sandymount Strand, his literary imagination peoples the beach with texts - some classical.

Homer had Menelaus grip the god of all change, Proteus, and in so doing gain an answer to his question. He learned that Ulysses was still alive, implying that Dublin's Telemachus may also discover his spiritual father. Stephen is on the shore to read "Signatures of all things" and to learn among the metamorphoses "the ineluctable modality of the visible"⁷ - that is, the core of the world, where "modality" derived from Modalism, relates to Sabellius' theory that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are manifestations of the same essence. He is looking for a Divine Signature with which to locate things and their names in a theologically organized universe. Adam is his model. The sea is the changing element that must be held, but it is also "the grey sweet mother" (Mulligan, p.7). Homer and Stephen's intention, as well as the objects in sight, all direct his gaze towards the family as that which contains the answer. Moreover, the chapter's colour is green which in Catholic iconography is the symbol of hope used for the sequences of five Sundays after Epiphany and Pentecost; and its art is Philology. The carefully laid signs indicate to the erudite reader that the word will descend.

Stephen spends much time riddling through literary catalogues in various languages, but is aware of the word-games that he plays, and constantly returns to the moment of guilt at which he refused to kneel by his mother's deathbed:

Passing now.

A side-eye at my Hamlet hat. If I were suddenly naked here as I sit? I am not. Across the sands of all the world, followed by the sun's flaming sword, to the west, trekking to evening lands. She trudges, schlepps, trains, drags, trascines her load. A tide westering, moondrawn, in her wake. Tides, myriadslanded, within her, blood not mine, oinopa ponton, a winedark sea. Behold the handmaid of the moon. In sleep the wet sign calls her hour, bids her rise. Bridebed, childbed, bed of death, ghostcandled. Omnis caro ad te veniet. He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss.

Here. Put a pin in that chap, will you? My tablets.

Mouth to her kiss. No. Must be two of em. Glue 'em well. Mouth to her mouth's kiss.

His lips lipped and mouthed fleshless lips of air: mouth to her womb. Oomb, allwombing tomb. His mouth moulded issuing breath, unspeached: ooeeahah: roar of cataractic planets, globed, blazing, roaring wayawayaway-awayawayaway. Paper. (p.53)

Two gypsies, who have stimulated Stephen's sexual and verbal imagination, are passing. He recognizes the absurd tilt of the literary hat that he has been wearing, and senses that difficult regions lie under it. However, since Joyce provides no tone for "If I were suddenly naked here as I sit?", the phrase can only be read inconclusively as a mixture of statements - 'Christ, why don't I stop playing around and see myself as I am?', 'Would they see the sign of my guilt, my sexuality, if I were naked?' or 'Would I in fact be guilty?'. All possible intonations are dismissed by "I am not" - a brevity that may be curt or languid, depending on the seriousness of the question. Stephen's dismissal of what might have been a moment of insight is short-lived, for the gypsy woman leads his eye to the sea and slows his playful tongue. He is no longer engaged in the selection of a suitable verb ("trudges, schlepps, trains, drags, trascines"), but in explicating his own character. "Tides, myriadislanded, within her, blood not mine, oinopa ponton, a winedark sea." She contains all the changes ("tides") all the exiles he could ever run to ("myriadislanded"). His attempt to deny the bond ("blood not mine"), by freeing the sea of its symbolic force and striking the posture of the poet who described just water, fails, for in translation Homer's phrase "oinopa ponton", becomes "winedark" and via Stephen's memory of Mulligan's mock-mass (p.7) returns Stephen to the secret communion of his own and May Dedalus' blood. An inflation of language that makes the romantic poet Divine as it displaces the Lord from the liturgy ("Behold the handmaid of the moon.") deserts

him as the stream of his consciousness flows towards its own sexual centre. "The wet sign" fuses ideas of tides drawn by the moon and of women summoned by the imagination. Transformed in this way, the wetness of the sea becomes the dampness of sex ("bridebed") and the waters of birth ("childbed"). Far from preventing the metamorphosis of the sea into May Dedalus, Stephen discovers himself standing by his mother's bed ("ghost_candled"). The introductory words to "The Requiem Mass" are heard, "Omnis caro ad te veniet", 'Unto Thee shall all flesh come', but Stephen has edited them, preferring not to hear the accusatory 'Oh thou that hearest prayer'. His mind's eye rests on the centre of his guilt - the moment at which he has refused to kneel. Subsequent thoughts would seem, therefore, to be crucial. "Pale vampire" has generally been taken as a reference to the god to whom all flesh must come. However, May Dedalus has already visited Stephen's dreams, perfumed with a sensuous decay, and had her embraces spurned:

In a dream, silently, she had come to him, her wasted body within its loose graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath bent over him with mute secret words, a faint odour of wetted ashes ... No mother. Let me be and let me live. (p.16)

The rejected kiss was fanged - since she who ^{has} received Death's vampiric embrace will exhibit His tastes. If May is the "vampire", the identity of "he" who comes shifts from Death to the Decadent artist fascinated by the presence of deathly women. Stephen, who has already been called a "chewer of corpses" (p.12) by Mulligan, plays Baudelaire submitting to Jeanne Duval, Gautier pleading with Nyssia, Flaubert lying beside the whore Marie and Swinburne prostrate before any number of fatal women. Kneeling, he receives his mother's embrace. He who refused to mourn weeps ("through storm his eyes"); he who sought to deny his blood ("blood not mine") mingles with hers ("His bat sails bloodying the sea") by responding to fascination ("mouth to her mouth's kiss").

Hugh Kenner⁸ argues that the vampire has a third identity. He is the father come to revenge himself on the son. Certainly Ulysses came by "sail" through "storm" to his Penelope, and is present not simply at the level of the mythic structure but in Stephen's imagination - he has just quoted Homer. But any son caught in such an act, on such a bed, would fear paternal vengeance. The father's allusive presence serves only to confirm the incestuous nature of the images in Stephen's head. Critical confusion over the identity of the "pale vampire" stems in part from the nature of pronouns; "he" shifts so radically that only the proper name for which it stands could identify it. Still more unsettling is the complete absence of tone - an absence which renders much of what follows ambiguous. To hear "pale vampire" would be to recognize immediately to whom it applied. At a more general level, to listen to Stephen's inflexions would be to know whether he is merely striking the postures of Decadent artists, or perceiving unspeakable truths through the veil and protection of their poetry. Working from the nature of the associative imagery we may assume, with some degree of conviction, that the latter is the case. But this remains an assumption to which Joyce's following paragraph offers no resolution. "Here!" could be a shock of recognition in the manner of Quentin's "Wait! Wait!" or it could be a triumphant 'Here. Now I have it. Now I understand.' Joyce gives no tone and we are required to construct one from the context. In a self-reflexive context this cannot safely be done. We feel that Stephen's "Here!" is right at the centre, but acknowledge that it could be played as a music-hall policeman, outraged at the proceedings, 'Here, here, here; what's goin' on here, then?'. "Put a pin in that chap will you?" seems to be Stephen laughing at what has gone before, but a note of hysteria would not be out of place,

and "My tablets" returns him to the Protean essence that must be held in words, even as Hamlet wrote agonizing truths in his head. Or is he play acting? "No" could be another dodge. It fails, for though he jokes tensely (?), "Glue 'em well", he cannot escape what is at the centre of his consciousness: "Mouth to her mouth's kiss", an incestuous couple locked in self-sucking unity. The image is hideous and Stephen quits it by turning his lips to new purpose; he becomes the Symbolist poet, mouthing words for their sounds to deny the significance of their content. The device does not fool him. "His lips lipped and mouthed fleshless lips of air" recalls Hamlet at his most riddling, "of the chameleon's dish I eat the air promise crammed" (Hamlet, Act III: Sc.2). Stephen stops playing the chameleon and goes back to the substance of his thoughts, now captured with more precision, "mouth to her womb." For a moment it seems as though Stephen has played Adam to some effect: he has traced "the signatures of all things" to the neck of the womb. By implication the word is about to become flesh, establishing a seminal presence behind language. The painful image of oral incest fuses a string of earlier references to Modalism and essence, Adam and signature, Pentacostal tongues and philology. His credentials primed, the Impregnator (be he the Father or the Son), sanctions a logocentric system in which words derive from Divine Signatures. However, Stephen's psychologically and linguistically central moment climaxes in a word game, rather than with insight. The sacred sign is profaned and the personal quest declared a nonsense:

Oomb, allwombing tomb. His mouth moulded assuming
breath, unspeached: ooeehah: roar of cataractic planets,
globed, blazing, roaring, wayawayawayawayawayaway.
Paper.

Against the stream of his character's systematic approach to self-knowledge through literary allusion, Joyce implies that

Stephen has perceived nothing and instead has fallen into the posture of the poet who, addressing the universe, calls for paper. It reveals much about Joyce's attitude to character that he is prepared to falsify what he has so carefully exposed. Symptomatically, the undoing of Stephen's inner coherence occurs even as the language system is denied a metaphysical extension. Character and language are decentred at one and the same time.

It might be argued that Stephen is simplifying. Unconcerned about what words and selves are made of, he utters cries which imitate roaring cosmologies. Once his alliterative impulse is satisfied, he writes down the result for future creative reference. If this is the case, his playfulness is misplaced. Interestingly, it is policed by two momentary authorial interventions⁹: according to E.R. Steinberg, "His lips" and "His mouth" are conventions indicating "a summary statement by an omniscient author" - if so, Joyce effectively opens Stephen's lips and moulds his exhalation, thereby compounding his character's evasions. Either reading, and both are disconcertingly possible, will make the same point.

The chapter which had implied a Protean moment reveals no secret and ends with the broadest of generalizations. Stephen as he lies "back at full stretch over the sharp rocks" (p.54), sleeping at noon on the shore, is his own Proteus - an insect stuck on a pin. The totality is the only word on character that Joyce is prepared to impart. The final paragraph makes his position plain:

He laid the dry snot picked from his nostril on a ledge of rock, carefully. For the rest let look who will. Behind. Perhaps there is someone. He turned his face over a shoulder, rere regardant. Moving through the air high spars of a threemaster, her sails brailed up on the cross trees, homing, upstream, silently moving, a silent ship. (p.56)

Our sense of this passage as omniscient, and an ending to the Telemachiad, gives to it a rhetorical force beyond Stephen's smiling recognition that he has been overdoing the artist. Thus, "For the rest look who will." and "Behind. Perhaps there is someone." are Joycean pointers at least as significant as the much-commented-on Rosehaven. Snot was considered in folk-lore and medieval science to be the precipitate of the brain. These associations, linked to Mulligan's description of mother-sea as "snotgreen" (p.11), become Joyce's comment on what Stephen has grasped in "Proteus". Having taken the sea into his head and conceived the essence in his brain, he had produced "a piece of dried snot." If there is "someone" behind all this, Joyce is not and will not be, looking for him.

Faced with this conclusion we may fairly ask where, if not in the pursuit of character, does the obvious vitality of Joyce's stream of consciousness technique lie? As has been noted, it is the systematic absence of tone, rather than a verbal ingenuity, that makes a confident understanding of Stephen impossible. Tone has its ambiguities; nonetheless speech, speaker and speech-act, without giving the game away, suggest ground rules for interpretation. Since man cannot talk or think in words without adopting a tone, we must conclude that Joyce is not interested in allowing us to hear it. In this way he limits his character's control over language. Tone, which makes each word we use peculiarly our own, the product of particular mood and circumstance, has been excluded - we should not be surprised, therefore, that when Stephen opens his mouth the wrong words come out. The word, rather than the character, is the dictating unit in Ulysses. When F.R. Leavis judged that Joyce was bored with characters, he missed the point: Joyce modifies character to end certain assumptions about its relation to language. He cannot afford

to find people/^{vocally}interesting, when to do so would be to compromise his stylistic plot. Unvoicing in this case becomes a drastic form of simplification, demanded by structural requirements. Before considering its implications for Faulkner, on the brink of writing what seems to be an experimental novel, it is necessary to establish that Stephen is not the only victim of the word. The analysis of "Proteus" might be objected to on the grounds that "wayawayawayawayawayaway", although out of place, is not beyond the whimsicality of Stephen's own language. However, Bloom, about whom there is nothing of the Symbolist poet, is the subject of another and curiously similar moment of omnisciently blocked insight.

"Sirens" is Bloom's "Proteus". In both chapters the central figure undergoes a crisis of sexual confidence. For Stephen this is the internal penetration of his relationship with May; for Bloom, predictably more direct, it is Blazé's physical penetration of Molly. In each case Joyce buries psychological significance under a mass of verbal association which fabricates his character's evasion of meaning.

Co-me, thou lost one!
Co-me thou dear one!

Alone. One love. One hope. One comfort me. Martha, chestnote, return.

-Come!

It soared, a bird, it held its flight, a swift pure cry, soar silver orb it leaped serene, speeding, sustained, to come, don't spin it out too long long breath he breath long life, soaring high, high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high in the effulgence symbolic, high, of the ethereal bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation everywhere all soaring all around about the all, the endlessnessnessness ...

-To me!

Siopold!
Consumed.

Come. Well sung. All clapped. She ought to. Come, To me, to him, to her, you too, me, us. (pp.274-275)

As Simon Dedalus sings "Martha" and Blazes Boylan approaches Eccles Street, Bloom disguises his sexual doubts in musical appreciation. However, the mask is thin, for the song is ecstatic and Bloom concentrates on the high sob of its ecstasy, "Come!". Sentimental evaluation hardly conceals orgasmic innuendo, as Bloom's thought strains after clearer statement. "Don't spin it out too long" is less a comment on Simon's vocal control than on Blazes' sexual power. "Symbolistic" confesses to the evasive use of the song, and implies a willingness to move beyond it. The final note carries Bloom to Molly's musical bed, where her far from "ethereal bosom" supports another. The blaze of reality ("vast irradiation") is denied with an affirmation of cosmic totality as word game, "endlessnessnessness". We have heard this before, but what in Stephen's mouth sounded more than unlikely, in Bloom's is impossible. The pattern continues. Stephen put pen to "Paper" and wrote a poem; Bloom composes the "Siopold". He links the names of the singer Simon, the writer Lionel and the listener Leopold, all of whom have been concentrating on Martha - though for Leopold, whose sound dominates the trinity, the point of focus has been Molly. Bloom's name game, like Stephen's "Paper", avoids a hideous and very different version of the three-in-one - Bloom, Molly and Blazes united in the sexual act. "Siopold" would not have been out of place in "Ithaca", where, indeed, "the anagrams" that he had "made on his name in youth" (p. 599) are listed, for by that stage in Ulysses a total split between word and voice has been established as a convention. But in "Sirens", and particularly after "nessnessness", it is a visual mannerism that draws the reader's attention away from the problem of the tone. At all levels the voice is routed. Words as units in a meaningful exchange break down into arbitrary phonemes. The activities of the vocal organs, whether singing or breathing, submit to the

dictates of the wrist - Stephen demands paper and Leopold composes a tongue twister that must be seen to be appreciated.

"She ought to. Come. To me, to him, to her, you too, me, us." fuses all possible variations on the triangle in emotional ambivalence rather than typography. The matrix remains unusable without the voice. "Ought" and the repeated "me" suggest aggrievement but might be anger; the sequence of pronouns could be painful or resigned; the pun, "you too, me" becoming "you to me" may be a sentimental vision of the wife's return to the husband ("us"), or the final note accepting Molly as "the cunt of the world" (p.61). The fact that this is a rising wave of applause that sweeps through the bar of the Ormond Hotel complicates tonal possibility beyond any ear - as Joyce intended. At the close of "Proteus" Joyce gave us the emblem of Stephen's selfhood in a piece of snot; at the end of "Sirens" he tells us that Bloom's epitaph is a fart. Significant identity is declared insignificant.

These two passages do not demonstrate the fullness of Joyce's attitude to the relationship between voice, self-image and social structure. Each of the eighteen sections of Ulysses offers a different style and, in so doing, a nominally different mode of experience. Not all of them impede the characterization of Stephen and Bloom through voice. After "Proteus", though rarely free from literary preoccupation, Stephen may be heard delivering Mr. Deasy's letter for editorial consideration. He debates the balance between rhetoric and nationalism ("Aeolus")

and the intersection of text and biography ("Scylla and Charibdis"), and among other things speaks Italian in "The Wandering Rocks". Bloom, less textual, or at least drawn to different kinds of text (advertising copy, newspapers and popular fiction) makes a post-"Sirens", yet briefly conventional, vocal appearance in "Cyclops". It might even be argued (though I shall later dispute it) that in closing with Molly, a vocalist, Joyce returns from obscure and bookish techniques to the simple pleasures of recording a single voice.

Nonetheless, the two analysed passages do show a significant antagonism towards utterance. Words can be made to do many things, and speech is merely one of them, but increasingly in Ulysses Joyce is preoccupied with non-vocal aspects of language. Faulkner is Joycean in so far as he adopts Joyce's technical and experimental confidence. Multiplication of style and viewpoint, portmanteau words, syntactical elaboration and compression, characterization by associative language and intertextual reference - all are present in The Sound and the Fury as a direct inheritance from Ulysses. However, there is little point in extending the list of technical innovations without the recognition that Faulkner uses it to a different end. Because Faulknerian language draws its motivation from speech, Joyce's devices are no longer Joycean in a Faulkner text. This distinction can best be approached by considering both men's attitude to the single word. In

the Joycean passages tone was conspicuously absent and the single word had a vitality greater than its particular syntax or emotional context. In order to realize that vitality, the reader was encouraged to separate the word from its speaker and to pursue it into the Western tradition and the context of Ulysses as a whole. Thus "winedark" carried him to Homer, back to "Telemachus" and forward to "Cyclops" and "Circe", while "Martha" took him to Italian opera, back to "Lotus Eaters" and forward once again to "Circe". Subjected to this kind of verbal pressure, character/^{tends to}become a literary event in which the words are more important than the man.

III

The Joycean unit is the word. Moreover, the word escapes the authority of any single man - author included. I can best illustrate what I mean by referring back to the "Proteus" passage. The modulating identity of the third person pronoun in "he comes" is complicated by the knowledge that the unnamed "pale vampire" acquired his amorous technique from Douglas Hyde's translation of the Connacht love song "My Grief on the Sea" ("mouth to her kiss").¹⁰ Unfortunately, phrases are not located by the discovery of their origins, since the informed reader is left with the problem of a user's attitude to his sources. Why choose this poem? Why cut it here? Close scrutiny calls Stephen's and Hyde's authority into question. Once the possibility of intertextuality is broached all words seem to summon echoes from deserted texts. "Pale", in the context of mothers and Swinburnian seas, recalls fatal women and prompts a nervous survey of Poems and Ballads for a proper name. I have described the effect of only two words; as far as I know, Hamlet, "The Gates of Paradise" (Blake) and "The Requiem Mass" are also

present in the text. My concern is not to locate them but to suggest that meaningful location is impossible. On these grounds, glossaries should be set aside in order to isolate the dominant effects of the intertextual procedure itself.

In "Proteus" and "Sirens" Joyce unvoiced Stephen and Bloom. Ulysses performs a similar service for its author. The book is so full of books that his voice loses its authority. Joycean puns are the most extreme expression of his self-effacing tonal abdication. Punning extends intertextual logic to the single word: "pale vampire" hinted that it belonged to several books but, as the reader checks, he grows aware that seemingly innocent words contain in their sounds several other words. For example, "wake" ("a tide westering, moon drawn, in her wake"), grows cancerous with language. A movement of water gives way to watching a corpse; this ceremonial wake may be an awakening, since the moon which governs the tidal clock moves towards the ghostly hour. Wakefulness might be less ominous, if the mid-day sea-change and the midnight sea-change were taken as elements in an endless cycle, through which the sun and moon pursue and "wake" one another. "Wake(s)" could be put in order of priority as a kind of plot, if only the possessive pronoun "her" ("her wake"), were identifiable. But it remains wilfully shifty, encompassing the gypsy, the midwife, the moon and May Dedalus. "Wake" is therefore a word too full of words to nominate. Bloom and Stephen share the pun. In "Sirens", Bloom makes two words out of "Alone", and by dividing the word sacrifices his and our power to put it together again. "Alone", given the proximity of "dear one" and "One love", is also "all one", a phrase which, as Blazes enters Molly and Bloom thinks about it, is troilistic (all in one), as well as resigned (all's one to her). Isolation and intimacy are set in an unresolvable

relation.

The pun, like the intertextual allusion, prohibits nomination. Superficially, however, it retains the voice: as a form which is heard more than seen, it seems to rely on articulation. The dependency is deceptive; puns require voices only to wound the vocalist. Their appeal to sound produces an echo which defeats vocal clarity and shifts language towards the vacancy of music. Effectively, a pun is a word with bad acoustics.

Although Faulkner borrows the portmanteau word from Joyce, he rarely takes puns. While verbal compression is a feature of Light in August, constructs like "pineywiney" or "womanshenegro" are not multivalent. Presented with "pineywiney", the reader reduces the word to its elements; "pine" and "wine" are simple, the double "y" captures the semi-alcoholic odour of the August heat so that the phoneme, instead of blurring, names a blur. "Womanshenegro" links three words in order to mimic collective utterance, thereby suggesting the habituality of Jefferson's thought on women, negroes and sexuality. Puns, as distinct from this kind of concision, are rarely heard in Yoknapatawpha. When they do occur their plurality is strictly controlled. For example, in The Sound and the Fury, as Quentin watches a carriage move along a road outside Boston, he recalls June in Mississippi:

The buggy was drawn by a white horse, his feet clopping in the thin dust; spidery wheels chattering thin and dry, moving up hill beneath a rippling shawl of leaves. Elm. No: ellum. Ellum.

On what on your school money they sold the pasture for so you could go to Harvard ... (p.114)

"Elm" becomes "Ellum", as a tree's name turns into the Latin for "Behold". Modulation from English noun to classical injunction is affected by Southern pronunciation: "elm" in the hill-country around Oxford Mississippi is pronounced "ellum".

Quentin controls his own lyricism with a pun whose transition describes a narrative line: "elm" therefore contains a double instruction - that he conjugate or organize language ("Ellum"), so that he may recognize the cost to home and family ("ellum") of one Harvard education.

The open-pun is generally more disruptive. Perhaps the single most noted Faulknerian example concerns a proper name. Caddy foreshortens Candace and is the noun for a man who carries a golfer's clubs: as the word sounds, Benjy bellows. Flem Snopes harnesses just this kind of insecurity when he puns once and to great effect in The Hamlet. During his first conversation with Jody he negotiates a job in the Varner commissary. As Faulkner's capitalist par-excellence, Flem works on credit and forges his collateral, in this instance gaining a store through an implied threat about an unburned barn, containing an as yet unmade crop. Flem can do more with less than anyone in Yoknapatawpha: it is therefore only fitting that he mark his first step on the economic ladder with a pun - "suption":

"I hear you run a store."

Varner stared at him. Now Varner's face was not bland. It was just completely still and completely intent. He reached to his shirt pocket and produced a cigar ... "Have a cigar," he said.

"I don't use them," the other said.

"Just chew, hah?" Varner said.

"I chew up a nickel now and then until the suption is out of it. But I ain't never lit a match to one yet."

"Sho now," Varner said. He looked at the cigar; he said quietly: "And I just hope^o God you and nobody you know ever will." He put the cigar back in his pocket. He expelled a loud hiss of breath. "All right," he said. "Next fall. When he has made his crop." He had never been certain just when the other had been looking at him and when not, but now he watched the other raise his arm and with his other hand pick something infinitesimal from the sleeve with infinitesimal care. Once more Varner expelled his breath through his nose. This time it was a sigh. "All right," he said. "Next week then. You'll give me that long, won't you? But you got to guarantee it." The other spat.

"Guarantee what?" he said. 11

Because the pun is a word making much of little, it might be described as the language of capitalism - particularly as its linguistic credit (multivalence) is gained at the expense of the substantiality of its source term (semantics). Indeed, a good pun inflates the word beyond reference. "Suption" is such a pun. Flem brings "suction", "assumption", "consumption" into one word: just as he upsets the economy of Frenchman's Bend, so he subverts language, producing a term which will not settle. "Suption" may be a piece of dialect, referring to a well-used wad of chewing tobacco, but it is also the key to an economic principle.

Only once does Faulkner make systematic use of puns which do not contribute to characterization. In Mosquitoes proper names are evasive enough to exemplify Umberto Eco's definition of the pun:

(a word in which) two, three or even ten different etymological roots are combined in such a way that a single word can set up a knot of different sub meanings, each of which in turn coincides and inter-relates with other local allusions, which are themselves open to new configurations and probabilities of interpretation.¹²

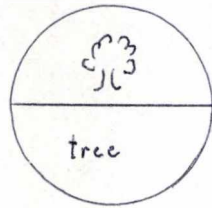
Fairchild is a pseudonym for Anderson; inter-related, the names set up several configurations. Is Fairchild a just portrait (a fair child and a son) of Anderson, or does the name game signify mockery? Any answer will be problematic, raising all manner of questions. Why does Tarver call himself Talliaferro? How come Pat and her brother Gus refer to one another as Josh? Where proper names fail to name, a man called Wiseman could be a fool. Such remarks are marginally less frivolous than they sound; they are in keeping with a title that names an insect which is subsequently and repeatedly heard, felt, but unidentified. Presumably, Faulkner's aim was to make a

titular joke about the way in which the Symbolists dematerialized their subjects. If so, the joke is thin but consistent, linking with other proper names to indicate the novel's interest in Decadent poetics. Even here the pun is not a Joycean invitation to associative freedom, or indeed a representative linguistic model; rather, it is a way of defining a particular kind of language-user and the effects of one linguistic theory.

Joyce's acoustics would improve if his puns could be confidently located within an utterance (any speaker, as he speaks, directs words - even puns - towards his meaning). Unvoiced words are signs in a circle, and the circle is a prison because utterance alone translates phonemes into behaviour. However, Joyce is interested in language not in language-users, and particularly in language as a secularized form. Robbed of a metaphysical extension, a word is liable to ring hollow. Perhaps this is why the verbal plurality of Ulysses sounds like an echo chamber. The problem is intensified by Joyce's refusal to allow man to sign, in the space left blank by the Divine Signatory. As a human tool or medium of exchange, a word is a material fact whose hollowness is notional. Cut off from social exchange this repletion drains, and phonemes may begin to seem arbitrary. Effectively, the word is constrained to mean nothing in particular. As its social meaning fades, so the materiality that weighed it down evaporates, leaving its phonemes to perform multivalent tricks. If Stephen had been concerned with the sea, either as a sailor or as a politically motivated exile, "wake" would have meant the smooth, swirling track of water left behind a moving ship. Without a semantic load of brine or miles its phonemes are free to multiply.

Ferdinand de Saussure achieves in linguistics what Joyce does in fiction. The Swiss linguist's verbal model is produced

by the abstraction of language from speech and his lectures contain a diagram which usefully summarizes the Joycean language plot:



This is one of the most important and disturbing figures in Saussure's Course in General Linguistics; "The linguistic sign unites not only a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image"¹³ The concept he called "signified" and the sound image "signifier", adding:

The bond between the signified and the signifier is arbitrary. Since I mean by the sign the whole that results from the associating of the signified with the signifier. I can simply say the linguistic sign is arbitrary. (p.67)

The concept "tree" is not linked by any inner relationship to the succession of phonemes which constitute its signifier. That it could be equally well presented by any other sequence is proved by differences among languages, indeed by the very existence of those languages. Two things worry me: the circle is excessively tidy - the signified being absorbed too easily by the signifier (the extra-linguistic referent is a complex relation of the economic, the social and the natural). Furthermore, the relation of "timber" to "municipal object" to "botany" is constantly changing, as trees are spoken of in a changing cultural environment. All this cannot be easily encircled. Saussure simplifies trees; he takes them out of the world into a linguistic model which rarely permits them to be seen again. The collapse of the signified into the signifier, called by Barthes the "complicity" of the signifier with the signified, is a linguistic realization of Mallarmé's claim "Le monde existe pour aboutir à un livre." Certainly, having read

Ulysses, one might be forgiven for believing that Dublin existed on June 16th 1904 for solely literary purposes. However, the ease with which its streets become a book is deceptive. Barthes' "complicity" should be renamed as a duplicity that alters both signifieds and novels: it has induced a view of language as form, and encouraged the reading of novels as signs in a circle. Ulysses is an encircled novel which has a habit of burying its materials within the circumference of its own intertextuality.

It might be objected that although Ulysses is a wordy book, it is also a book full of things, as scrupulous in its naturalism as Dubliners. Joyce was a great frequenter of lists (witness his request to Frank Budgen for booksellers' catalogues, along with catalogues from Whitley's of Harrods and a Tottenham Court Road furnisher). Richard M. Kain centres his case for the "documentary naturalism" of Ulysses on its assimilation of actuality from the columns of Freeman's Journal and the Evening Telegraph (June 16th 1904). The details are correct; from the ships that dock, to misspellings in the reports of the Ascot Meeting, the fiction notes the facts. But such eclectic realism is awkward in that as the random evidence of index, directory, advertisement and list agglomerates, so one's sense of a shared criteria for selection diminishes. It seems as though Joyce imitates the procedures of naturalism in the absence of the unstated naturalistic premise that there is an empirical, describable and common world out there to be collected.

For Bloom the problem remains pragmatic; he constantly tests and exalts in the texture, quantity, quality of "things". From kidneys to club-feet the materialities of Dublin collide with a realist's perceptive machinery: the response may at times be strained but for Bloom, at least, reality has not lost its flavour:

Where was the chap I saw in that picture somewhere? Ah, in the dead sea, floating on his back, reading a book with a parasol open. Couldn't sink if you tried: so thick with salt. Because the weight of the water, no, the weight of the body in the water is equal to the weight of the. Or is it the volume is equal to the weight? It's a law something like that. Vance in High school cracking his fingerjoints, teaching. The college curriculum. ("The Lotus Eaters", p.73)

Archimedes' principle depends for its validity on a moment in a schoolroom when Vance cracked his fingers: general law and insignificant biography intersect, to the greater glory of both. But the developing technical complexity of Ulysses tests such mutualities. The links between Dublin-objects and the beliefs that give them meaning are strained. As a result, Joyce appears to document June 16th 1904, as it might have happened, but does so in a way that foregrounds documentation rather than history. Events become incidents whose details turn into minutiae: and as literary effects grow more studied, minutiae (being printed matter) become matter for print. "Ithaca's" catalogues are illuminating. The section lists an enormous number of domestic articles, whose solidity remains unstable because of the tenuous relationship between the articles and their names.

The materials of the world, from Barrington's lemonflavoured Soap to wives, are valued by their varied social uses, and usage depends upon language as a vehicle of distribution. If the language user loses confidence over the collectivity of exchange, his power over materiality diminishes. Disinterest is likely to be the final stage in a gradual process; when and if it happens Dublin will of course still stand, but with less and less solidity for the Joycean. When Bloom climbs the area railing and breaks into the scullery of number 7 Eccles Street, Joyce records distances and dispositions with a naturalist's eye:

A stratagem. Resting his feet on the dwarf wall, he climbed over the area railings, compressed his hat on his head, grasped two points at the lower union of rails and stiles, lowered his body gradually by its length of five feet nine inches and a half to within two feet ten inches of the area pavement, and allowed his body to move freely in space by separating himself from the railings and crouching in preparation for the impact of the fall.

Did he fall?

By his body's known weight of eleven stone and four pounds in avoirdupois measure, as certified by the graduated machine for periodical selfweighing in the premises of Francis Froedman, pharmaceutical chemist of 19 Frederick street, north, on the last feast of the Ascension, to wit, the twelfth day of May of the bissextile year one thousand nine hundred and four of the christian era (jewish era five thousand six hundred and twentytwo), golden number 5, epact 13, solar cycle 9, dominical letters CB, Roman indication 2, Julian period 6617, MXMIV. (pp.588-589)

So fine is the attention paid to inches, pounds and calendar dates that we do not see Bloom's body fall. Too much measurement is provided for a confident visual measure to be taken. The question, "Did he fall?", is Joyce's joke on any reader who might by "Ithaca" still be looking for Bloom or Bloom's city. Instead of a Dublin area, Joyce has given a plethora of mathematical codes, each of which is a self-referential language whose system is closed and semantically pure. The moment exemplifies ^{an inclination in} Ulysses as a whole.

Plurality and semantic evacuation may stem from the pluralist's uncertain relation to the institutions which circulate the materials of his particular culture. Joyce, as a mobile exile and linguistic demythologizer, is a candidate for insecurity. Recent criticism has elevated his retreat from voice into a democratic principle. Phillippe Sollers calls Finnegans Wake "the most formidable anti-fascist book produced between the two wars"¹⁴. His reasoning would seem to be that the Wake means the impossibility of possessing meaning, and that this is a political declaration. To read it is to experience, through the allusions of its puns, an end to all frontiers and barriers. Textual openness is equated with political openness. Given the representative status of the pun in Ulysses, it would be easy to transfer Sollers' claims to the earlier work. More conservatively, but with better sense, Brian Wicker argues for Joyce "the great democrat"¹⁵ on the grounds that his assault on "a neurotically

religious culture" (p.136) liberates objects from "unseen presences" (p.143) and extinguishes the "egocentric narrative personality" (p.149). Both critics ignore the effect of the text. Although Joyce shows little interest in the referential and distributive facets of language; his openness is an authoritarian deception. If I were seeking a political analogy for Ulysses, I would offer the example of a false coup in which a constituted power performs its own overthrow, thereby demonstrating to the populace their need for its authority. The goal is reinstatement. The net result of empty transcendence, voicelessness and verbal skid is not Sollers' "transnationalism" or Wickers' "unblinkered individual liberation": indeed, it is not freedom at all unless freedom can be equated with anxiety. Lost in an intertextual maze, the Ulysses reader may well long for omniscience to emerge from indifference, nails pared, ready to reassume authority.

Joyce delegates. In handing Stuart Gilbert a faulty key to Ulysses, consisting of several casually mentioned relevant texts, he instigated such works as Gilbert's own James Joyce's Ulysses and Ellman's Ulysses On The Liffey. The keys are legion, and their point seems at times to be not what sections of the maze they unlock, but what gratifications they offer the Joycean. Joyce and his industry estrange readers from language and delight in making everyday words sound foreign. Confronted with "wake" or "alone", I cannot confidently utter them because decoding has corroded their simple status.

I said softly to myself the word paralysis. It had always sounded strangely in my ears, like the word gnomon in the Euclid and the word simony in the Catechism. But now it sounded to me like the name of some maleficent and sinful being. It filled me with fear, and yet I longed to be nearer to it and look upon its deadly work. ¹⁶

Mystery is a means to power and as such has always been protected and handed down. The small boy in "The Sisters" longs to "look upon the deadly work" of ancient and holy words in order to declare his difference from Old Cotter and the Dublin of his aunt and uncle. "Maleficent" is slipped in, as though it were the most natural of terms, in order to mark his progress towards a linguistic elite. The boy's anonymity is nominal, and it would seem that from the first page of his first prose work, Joyce sought the authority of the philologist. The Marxist linguist Vološinov offers a relevant observation as he answers his own question "What is a philologist?".

Despite the vast difference, cultural and historical, from ancient Hindu priests to the modern European scholar of language, the philologist has always and everywhere been a decipherer of the alien "secret" scripts and words, and a teacher, a disseminator of what has been deciphered and handed down by tradition.¹⁷

The anxious common reader, faced with the problem of alien words, can gain peace if he accepts the teachings of those studied in the mystery. Although Joyce remains an anonymous instructor, his initial delegation of the role to Gilbert et al suggests that he wished to reassume power by proxy over the linguistic openness of his text. And, more importantly, that the experience of that openness was a prelude to the passive reception of meaning.

The unit of Joyce's fiction is the word. For Faulkner, even at his most linguistically experimental, the unit remains that of character. The distinction can be clearly made by considering the mechanical responses required by the final paragraph of Absalom, Absalom!:

'I don't hate it,' Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; 'I don't hate it,' he said. I don't hate it he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark: I don't, I don't! I don't hate it!
I don't hate it! 18

The novel is Faulkner's most syntactically devious and at one level is about language and its relation to historical event. The reader, if he is to understand the meaning of Quentin's statements, must play a Joycean game - he searches among page references for the origin of individual words. For example, he may check page 297 to discover that "I don't hate it!" develops from "I don't know," which in turn is formed by Mr. Compson's remark on page 83 "We are not supposed to know." He will probably turn back to the first page of the novel to find the origin of "iron" in Rosa's "iron shinbone", thereby recalling that Rosa demonstrated an "iron determination" on page 299, and that as she approached Stephen's Hundred she too "panted". Almost undoubtedly he will use the Genealogy to discover what happened to Quentin and Shreve, and flicking back to various moments, find them considerably altered by a knowledge of Quentin's sudden death and Shreve's surgical career. The reader of Ulysses is a detective and a bibliophile surrounded by word indices, the notations in the margins of his own text, maps of Dublin, and Joyce's schemata. The reader of Absalom, Absalom! is a detective surrounded by voices. He too checks page references, writes in the margin and considers charts, but his jots are made to retain a sequence of events and his thumbing through is to remind him of where he has heard that tone or particular inflexion before. In Joyce we have to discuss terminology and the intertext; in Faulkner we listen to vocabulary and see the rooms where conversations occur. Faulkner's determination to make us hear that language talks is clear from the outset of The Sound and the Fury. The novel starts from a linguistically Joycean standpoint. Benjy is an idiot who cannot form words. Quentin is dead. Language could not, apparently, be more empty than in these mouths, and yet both characters are still "trying to say".

Obviously, The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying, and Absalom, Absalom! do contain much that none would say and few would be acrobatic enough to think, but in each of them Faulkner retains an impression of the individual rhythms of a speaking voice - whether it be Rosa's rush or Mr. Compson's teeter on the brink of epigram. Thus, just as Quentin's last words are read for nuances of voice (which the ear has been trained to hear by the constant shuffling of interdependent narrators), so any of the sections of As I Lay Dying, though far from being phonographic records of idiom, could be identified without their names. Cash's solid uncertainty, Darl's flow and Vardaman's panic are obvious, but so too is Tull's constant and quiet surprise, or Armstid's homespun and henpecked aphorism.¹⁹

Faulkner's determined retention of the tone of a voice or a thought survives even his most internal use of the stream of consciousness. The Quentin section of The Sound and the Fury is a carefully modulated progression of tones. The movement through poetic excess, adjective free dialogue, elegiac calm and scientifically organized conversation to the point of clinical departure - is irregular but available and vital to an understanding of Quentin. Generally, the stream of consciousness technique excludes the omnipresent spokesman and so makes difficult the provision of sufficiently precise clues to tone. Faulkner avoids the ambivalence of "Proteus" or "Sirens", by regularly interrupting the stream with significant action (the Gerald Bland and Dalton Ames fights), dialogue (the sequence in Mrs. Bland's car), direct questioning (Shreve and the Sheriff), and clear transitions between formative moments in time. These devices, coupled with the use of italic print to mark imaginative movement away from June 2nd 1910, make the tone of Quentin's thought, and therefore his motives, available to the reader.

The idea of the vernacular or 'voice' as the last place to which the subject can go and be dominant, has been variously used. Beckett expresses the exhaustion of the ego decomposing in the Saussurian model - with no word his own he complains "I shall speak of me when I speak no more".²⁰ Eliot, worried by fragmentation in "The Waste Land" tried to turn his poem into a monologue. First he wanted "Gerontion", "thoughts of one dry brain in one dry season" as a preface. Pound disapproved, so Eliot slipped Tiresias into the Notes:

Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a character, is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias sees in fact is the substance of the poem.²¹

Whatever Eliot may say, and he says confusion, Tiresias is certainly no "character", hardly a "person_uage" and doesn't get to see very much. Eliot tried to preserve "substance" by restoring the "subject". It is the nostalgic gesture of a man who admired Browning, but it doesn't work. The narrative of "The Waste Land" is a perfect example of Saussure's dictum:

Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas or sounds that existed before the linguistic system. (p.120)

The bits and pieces of "The Waste Land" do not refer back to anything "behind" or "beyond" themselves; their meaning, along with the meaning of each line and each word, cannot be grouped outside "the play of signifying relations that constitutes language". The voice of Tiresias has very little chance against the play of so many pieces taking their meaning from differences within the system.

The linguistic philosopher, Husserl, substantiates Eliot's nostalgia and Beckett's complaint, by offering reasons for why the voice should be regarded as retaining the power to individuate.

Speech for him heals the signifier/signified division, by dissolving the arbitrary stain of print into something flexible. To hear oneself speak is to reduce even the inward surfaces of the body; it dispenses with the inner/outer division and diminishes the sense of using something on loan from a social institution - the words of that institution become my words, alive in the radius of my breath. Husserl's repossession of 'langue' by 'parole' might be extended as follows - speech is a situational act in which inflexion, gesture and habit personalize and affirm the subject's mastery over the institution. This seems to me an extreme position, since it sets individual creativity at the centre of the speech act. Linguistic subjectivism does not account for the extent to which language is an inheritance, linked to other modes of social exchange. To stop here would be to imply that Modernism's linguistic problems could be solved by a healthy return to the dialect novel: it is doubtful whether the decentred Joycean word would revive on exposure to local-vocal-colour.

However, Faulkner, raised in an oral culture, is more than vocally picturesque. He is particularly sensitive to the ideological implications of speech. Words that are habitually uttered avoid the self-reflexive traps of the closed text: they grip the referent strongly because semantically charged by the social organs that they serve. Centred by inter-personal use, everyday language contains those commonplaces which the community has declared common. Such declarations are weighty and can at times be oppressive (take for example the word "nigger" as used in Light in August). Linguistic categories, like the larger social categories which distribute them, depend upon the "self-evident" and the "implicit": without "received knowledge" or "common sense rules" language could not work, since every syllable would be open

to debate and nothing would get said or done. A language community is therefore, of necessity, a system of naturalized collusion and constraint. Membership involves acceptance of a semantic weight (ideological and actual), which is neither "innocent" nor "true" - which is simply obligatory. Faulkner is a member, "I listen to the voices, and when I put down what the voices say, it's right."²² The moral rightness of voices in small town Mississippi is, as with communication anywhere, debatable. The effect of semantic presence on Faulknerian language is, I believe, less so.

It is important that the linked terms, "semantics" and "community", are not considered statically. Much has been written about community and Yoknapatawpha; a great deal of it reads like an apology or a defence of Arcadia because Jefferson is considered to be timeless. Cleanth Brooks is a persistent offender:

The little town is old fashioned and backward looking. It is suspicious of any outsiders who would disturb its life, and when it cannot expel the alien, it tries to wall him off in a kind of cultural cyst as bees enclose with waxen walls a beetle or wasp that has got inside the hive.²³

The activities of the town in Light in August strike me as being less benevolent than the activities of bees. However, my point is that even in "old fashioned" communities people do not "know who they are and where they belong" (XVIII) as of a timeless right; they do so because they engage in social exchanges which substantiate or qualify their belonging. Communal identities are collaborative and as such must issue from a debate, whose nature is most apparent in vocal acts.

People are living in the middle of their cosmology, down in amongst it; they are energetically manipulating it; evading its complications in their own lives if they can, but using it for hitting each other and forcing one another to conform to something they have in mind ... rituals and belief change. They are extremely plastic.²⁴

Debate heats up in dissonant times when terms harden and categories stand to be counted. Nonetheless, any fiction seriously

based on "what the voices say", will hear a continuity in change because committed to some form of the question "how does actual existence determine the sign, (and how) does the sign reflect and refract existence in its process of generation?".

Light in August is a thriller about linguistic obsession, in which the villain is the word "nigger". As used in Mississippi during the 30's, the term meant any man having more than one eighth black blood. Blood is not black. The fraction is arbitrary.²⁵ And yet a colour adjective and a percentage add up to the truth contained in the word "nigger". Racial demarcation supports and is supported by all manner of social categories so that "nigger" is a part of a network of oppositions - black/white: male/female: profane/sacred - through which the system identifies itself. Critics commonly see Joe as the system's victim. Indeed, Kazin's article elevated his victimization to archetypal status:

From the moment Joe Christmas appears, he is seen as what others say about him, he is only a thought in other people's minds ... nothing but the man things are done to ... Joe Christmas is the most solitary character in American fiction, the most extreme phase conceivable of American loneliness. He is never seen full face but always as a silhouette, a dark shadow.²⁶

Deterministic accounts of the novel have exhausted the synonyms for "victim". Cleanth Brooks offers a useful corrective, when he observes that Joe has too much individuality, "he is the outlaw, the stranger who represents only himself." (XVIII): the problem with this reading is that it slots the character into a manageable French type, "l'étranger". Joe is more disturbing than either victim or existential hero. The victim is in fact a vicious victimizer, who conducts his life as though it were a campaign to bring society up short against its own necessary linguistic strictures. Existential quietism plays no part in his behaviour.

The key to his plot is "nigger". In Joe's case the black/white opposition, which gives the term its substance, is non-operative. The presence of his black blood depends upon

conspicuously absent information: the word of a decamped circus owner and the ravings of a crazy grandfather highlight the extent to which this term's "truth" is a theoretical fiction persuasively stated. Joe reacts badly to all forms of persuasion, and yet the expletive "nigger" is his word. Jefferson would have accepted him as a Mexican or a foreigner - he chose to inform Brown about his black blood, thereby determining the pattern of his own death. Brown joins a list of prostitutes and whites-in-bars whom Joe has played the "nigger" trick on, in order to provoke antagonism. Delinquency is central to his self-image. Olga Vickery is right:

The irony in Joe's position is that what seems to be a choice is in reality a delusion: Negro or white, to choose one is to affirm the existence of the other. His awareness of the dichotomy makes him take up the role of antagonist in all situations.²⁷

She does not go far enough. Given the untraceability of Joe's black blood, his racial status, described by Vickery as swinging between the positive terms black and white, is in fact based upon a relationship having no positive terms. Saussure seems oddly appropriate because in Joe's case, as in language, "there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up, but in language there are only differences without positive terms." (p. 120)

Just as Saussure's model had a debilitating effect on the confidence with which linguistics approached semantics, so Joe's manipulation of a white skin and a black word debilitates Jefferson's confidence about its distribution of meaning. Consequently, Faulkner's irony is more descriptive than Vickery allows. Joe's presence throws the categories of a racial community against one another: his position is not either/or but neither and both. Standing in the middle ground between terms, he calls the bluff of all terms. Language distributes power, even as it pretends to innocent communication - Joe is not deceived;

he hears the voices in the words and rides their weight like blows:

Then it seemed to him, sitting on the cot in the dark room, that he was hearing a myriad sounds of no greater volume - voices, murmurs, whispers: of trees, darkness, earth; people: his own voice; other voices evocative of names and times and places - which he had been conscious of all his life without knowing it, which were his life ...²⁸

Joe knows it: at very many levels he is a linguistic inco-
clast, for whom Mallarmé's dictum "to name is to kill" is a patho-
logical truth. His earliest memory is linguistically delinquent.
In the dietician's room, aged five, he resisted the first word
to stamp his consciousness. What is interesting about the episode
is not its vaguely comic Freudian decoration (spermacetic tooth
paste and uterine pink undies), but the fact that Joe gives
birth to himself. He crawls into the womb-cupboard where, "like a
chemist in his laboratory" (p.93), he impregnates himself with
toothpaste and emerges head first through the broken waters of his
own vomit, thinking "Well, here I am." (p.93). A disputed
christening occurs. Joe proposes the assertively anonymous first
person pronoun. The dietician prefers "You little nigger bastard!".
From this point on Joe resists words. Proper names, categories,
texts and creeds fall before him, and anyone who proffers a book,
from Presbyterian catechism to Peebles' legal tomes, is murderously
treated. Nor are the unspoken volumes implicit in commonplaces
exempt. Take for example, "womanfilth": the term and its assumptions
are common among Fundamentalist groups. McEachern and Hines set
their wives aside. Joe's choice of female companionship - Bobbie
(a prostitute) and Joanna Burden (a temporary nymphomaniac) - seems
to attest his acceptance of "womanfilth", source text Genesis.
However, he remains disconcertingly preoccupied with the filth
under his grandfather's curses. "Dirty" sex intrigues him and
marginality typifies his liaisons. ^{Joe,} to Bobbie, is the regular
trick of a whore with a masculine name. Joanna's initial surrenders
are "man like" (p.176); later she delights in perversity and tastes

the dirt in talking dirty: "She had an avidity for the forbidden wordsymbols; an insatiable appetite for the sound of them on his tongue" (p.194). He blames her, but dirty words and dirt itself are central to his cravings - as an adolescent he killed a sheep and cut out its womb to test a joke about menstrual blood. His sexual initiation occurred, at his own instigation, in the very place where, seven days earlier, he had vomited at a vision of "suavely shaped urns", emitting "something liquid, death coloured and foul" (p.143); his sickness was caused by thinking about menstruation.

Joe's predilection is more than perverse: it is iconoclastic. Dirt, since Lord Chesterfield, has been seen as matter out of place. Frazer's one volume edition of The Golden Bough elaborates on the definition, with special reference to "that awful state" of menstruation. He details how, from the Kolosh Indians of Alaska to the Maccisis of British Guana, from the Encounter Bay tribe of South Australia to the pages of Pliny's Natural History, contact with menstrual blood induces varying degrees of fatality, ranging from personal death, through crop failure to cosmic blight. "Touch" is the operative word. Faulkner knew these pages²⁹, and yet allows Joe to smear womb-blood on his hands and to make love in a menstrually fouled place. From his first appearance as a shadow in the wrong corridor, Joe has touched what is misplaced³⁰ and as a result seems physically dirty - shaded, "yellow", "parchment coloured" - not because he is racially displaced, but because he handles those forbidden areas around which social categories cluster. Mary Douglas glosses the disruptive power available to the dirty man:

If we can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from out notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place. This is a very suggestive approach. It implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt, then,

is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is a system. Dirt is the byproduct of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. The idea of dirt takes us straight into the field of symbolism.³¹

"Womanfilth" stands at the centre of the Calvinist imagination. Southern Fundamentalist ideas on Original Sin, Knowledge and Sexuality are inextricably tied to the symbol of Woman. A generalized rubric might read: Eve introduced sexual and cognitive knowledge into the world, and her fertile sisters repeat the offence by betraying mankind into the sin of flesh. According to this story, as the perpetuator of carnal and intellectual knowledge, the female is dirty. She is the "forbidden" around which many generations of Hines and McEacherns have structured their imaginations. Joe, by testing that "dirt", assumes power over words, symbols, concepts - indeed, the entire cognitive system of one kind of mind, a mind prevalent in Yoknapatawpha. As Mary Douglas puts it, thinking about dirt "runs against our strongest mental habits".

Dirt is a private, though important, strand in Joe's comprehensive assault on the mental habits of Jefferson. More public is his calculated behaviour after the killing of Joanna Burden. Having set himself up for a "nigger", he refuses to run far or fast enough. Chester Himes once observed:

A white woman yelling, "Rape", and a Negro caught locked in the room. The whole structure of American thought was against me ...³²

A considerable portion of that "structure" is Joe's quarry as he weaves false trails around Jefferson, turns pursuer into pursued and finally surrenders in Mottstown against all the rules of surrender:

And then he walked the streets in broad daylight, like he owned the town, walking back and forth with people passing him a dozen times and not knowing it, until Halliday saw him and ran up and grabbed him and said, 'Aint your name Christmas?' and the nigger said that it was. He never denied it. He never did anything. He

never acted like either a nigger or a white man. That was it. That was what made the folks so mad. For him to be a murderer and all dressed up and walking the town like he dared them to touch him, when he ought to have been skulking and hiding in the woods, muddy and dirty and running. It was like he never knew he was a murderer, let alone a nigger too. (p.263)

This was merely a preface: in Jefferson, faced with a life sentence - named, numbered, categorized - Joe runs at the wrong time and dies on the awkward margins of the town's consciousness. "They are not to lose it" (p.349), is a modest comment on a set of inversions which culminate in a travesty of the lynch ritual. Lynching is a collaboration which should affirm many sets of categories by putting a "nigger" in his place. On this occasion it fails because the castrated black turns white. Cleanth Brooks rightly points out that one man, be he Percy Grimm, does not constitute a lynch mob, but to shift from this to the more general claim that Jefferson is incapable of lynching, is to ignore the text for the sake of the South. At first utterance, "nigger" generates a lynch mentality:

Among them (the people) the casual Yankees and the poor whites and even the Southerners who had lived for a while in the north, who believed aloud that it was an anonymous negro crime committed not by a negro but by Negro and who knew, believed and hoped that she had been ravished too: at least once before her throat was cut and at least once afterward. (p.216)

Faulkner's account is defensive, stipulating that Yankees instigate the power, remorseless as "Fate", released by the equation "nigger" = "rape" = "lynch". His point remains that, whoever started it, Jefferson has no right to the final term. "Lynch" is univocal, and on this showing the townsfolk are less than unanimous. Joe's subsequent behaviour exposes the inappropriateness of racial expletive along with the conservatism of the collective consciousness which employs it. Joe is a pressure point who establishes that rituals and beliefs change, even in

apparently static communities. Thanks to him, "lynch" no longer covers what happens in Hightower's kitchen. Semantic weights have changed so much that the word tastes differently on the collective tongue and Grimm commits "murder" - Joe is murdered by the agent of a failing word.

They are not to lose it, in what ever peaceful valleys, beside whatever placid and reassuring streams of old age, in the mirroring faces of whatever children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes. It will be there ... (pp.349-350)

Jefferson will "lose it". Faulkner's Arcadian touch indicates how far the town will go to blind itself to Joe's lesson, especially when the twin institutions of Law and Education stand firm behind presently constituted categories. Gavin Stevens and a professorial friend discuss the niceties of Joe's death in black and white terms. Stevens works out what percentage of the action was negroid, what fraction caucasian. Their debate restores those demarcations which make "nigger" meaningful. Faulkner records the conversation before letting readers into the kitchen. Moral? What is seen is soon forgotten.

Arguably, Joe's dissolution of language is as radical and finally irrelevant as Mallarmé's. Any "volatile dispersion" of words, poetic or pathological, will have minimal effect unless translated into language such as men do use. Mallarmé's "Crise de Vers" could be construed as a political statement: the poet desires "an exquisite and fundamental crisis"³³ because he recognizes that outside literature words operate like "currency". Signs in late nineteenth century France packaged their signifieds for profit, or as he puts it "(speech) has no connection with things except commercially" (p.171). Viewed from this angle, "delicious approximation", music, silence, the white page, indeed the entire aesthetic is politically motivated. Dematerialization ought to be revolutionary in a materialist culture, whose contractual

functions depend upon a substantial linguistic atmosphere. Swinburne vulgarized it; Valéry refined it, but no one translated linguistic dissolution for the streets.

Faulkner's sense that words are an arena in which a continuing debate reallocates semantic weight, enables him to collectivize Joe's disruptive voice, so that what might be called the house-style of Light in August is an exercise in accommodating the tentative, ground rules by Joe Christmas. The novel's structure and narrative voice reflects and expands upon Joe's habitually inarticulate consciousness. Interrupted stories told through a variety of print surfaces and speech levels emphasise textual layers while heightening their divergence. The third person narrator frequently slips into first person narration, often doing so with an implicit proviso or an explicit "perhaps". As a result the reader is left with a disabled sense of identification: "he" sets the character apart even as it suggests omniscient knowledge, while "I" makes Joe dramatically present as that which has no name. Where presence and absence persistently vacillate, casual observation is likely to become problematic. The text records the process of recording, as though it were a delicately carved object - as much concentration being accorded to a hand on a door knob, as to the eyes of a lynch victim:

But when he put his hand upon it, it would not open. Perhaps for the moment neither hand nor believing would believe; he seemed to stand there, quiet, not yet thinking, watching his hand shaking the door, hearing the sound of the bolt on the inside. (p.178)

The passage is typical in its reliance on the accepted lexicon of cognition ("know", "believe", "think", "remember"). However, the novel employs an equally lengthy list of approximates: for every "know" there is a "perhaps", for every "think" a "likely", for every "tell" a "maybe". The vocabulary of approximation has

its modifiers "almost", "apparently", "if", "seems"; indeed, so regular is the format that the tentative turns into a reflex response. Faulkner discovered "perhaps" in Joe's consciousness, and with it a means to dramatize the linguistic theory: "sign cognition is the cognition of the absent." (H.H. Price). As Jefferson pursues the shaky logic of racial expletive, the reader is confronted with how readily seemingly incidental remarks appropriate semantic presences to which they have no right:

He did not look like a professional hobo in his professional rags, but there was something definitely rootless about him, as though no town nor city was his, no street, no walls, no square of earth his home. And that he carried his knowledge with him always as though it were a banner, with a quality ruthless, lonely and almost proud. 'As if', as the men said later, 'he was just down on his luck for a time, and that he didn't intend to stay down on it and didn't give a damn much how he rose up.' (p.25)

The separation of "As if" foregrounds the submerged lexicon of approximation, generally left tacit in the act of naming. The reader hears "like", "something", "something definitely", "as though", "almost", and as he lists may recognize that whereas Faulkner defines "home" by what it is not; the men in the timber yard move from tentative to "not give a damn" definition. These are the voices with no time for "perhaps", who will gather at the scene of the crime and in the barber shop, to tell the story of a "nigger". In Light in August to "know" or "believe" too well is dubious, and to "tell" loudly is vicious. Yet a degree of unanimity is essential to communication, in that communities depend upon shared meanings. If Joe and the omniscient-style-according-to-Joe teach nomination as debate, they also carry the novel towards the dangers of the Symbolist text. Like Ulysses itself, Joe's language plot is an approach to silence. Even the seemingly innocent substance of proper nouns evaporates as the character names of the novel collapse and fold into one another.³⁴

Half of one upright of a single letter divides "Burch" from "Bunch". Two generations of Burdens and Hightowers are confusingly unnamed and similarly employed. "Joe" and "Joanna" twin. Why does Mrs. Hightower write her name, rip it up and leave the pieces as a suicide note in the waste-paper basket of a Memphis hotel room? How will Lena name her nameless child, referred to by Mrs. Hines as Joe? Symbolist theory could be appealed to, were it not that the lives around Joe translate him into social terms and stabilize the querulous surface of the text. I have space to detail only one example.

Everyone in Light in August knows the power of words, from McEachern with his voice like a text, to Brown with his "nigger"; yet few perceive the consequence of speech. Byron Bunch's story is the education of a voice. Initially Bunch is a diminutive mouthpiece of the town. Work as a timber hand involves playing straight-man to the foreman's comic: Bunch does the lead-ins; Mooney has the punch-lines. Both men live comfortably within the terms vouched safe by the collective voice:

And when Mooney, the foreman, saw the new hand, Byron believed that he and Mooney had the same thought. Mooney said: 'Well, Simms is safe from hiring anything at all when he put that fellow on. He never even hired a whole pair of pants.'

'That's so,' Byron said. 'He puts me in mind of one of these cars running along the street with a radio in it. You can't make out what it is saying and the car ain't going anywhere in particular and when you look at it close you see that there ain't even anybody in it.'

'Yes,' Mooney said. 'He puts me in mind of a horse. Not a mean horse. Just a worthless horse. Looks fine in the pasture, but it's always down in the spring bottom when anybody comes to the gate with a bridle. Runs fast, all right, but it's always got a sore hoof when hitching-up time comes.'

'But I reckon maybe the mares like him,' Byron said.

'Sho,' Mooney said. 'I don't reckon he'd do even a mare any permanent harm.' (pp.29-30)

The men in the planer-shed are representatives of Jefferson who "know" by concensus: agreement is reached through a number of formal patterns - "I would have thought ... What makes you think?"

(p.31), "I reckon ... I reckon" (p.31), "one said ... the other said" (p.34). Empathy is unquestioned because over the years these men have learned to hear and exclude a difference, almost before it arises. Their language, as that which is "always remarked" (p.33), has become a reservoir of "byword(s)" (p.36), guaranteeing stability through numerous aphorisms, well-worn jokes and slightly modified metaphors. Bunch serves a seven year apprenticeship to this voice and so, despite his aberrant friendship with Hightower, is part of the town's tales.

Lena Grove's appearance in the timber yard changes his name. Bunch, the collective man, becomes Byron the artist, who will quit lodgings and mental habit in order to sustain a lie. It is, however, Doc and Mrs. Hines who teach him that stories are left alone only at great risk. By taking responsibility for their tale, Byron learns to raise his voice within the collective voice. Chapter sixteen carefully details the extent of his undertaking.

The Hines are the "puppet(s)" (p.277) of a story that has long ceased to be theirs and has instead become them. Their versions of Joe break across one another, yet neither Doc's back-country sermon nor his wife's domestic account, attends to or modifies its counterpart. Mechanical analogy pursues the telling and casts speakers as ventriloquist's dummies dependent upon a voice "in the next room" (p.285). That voice is easily identified:

He (Byron) ceases. At once the woman begins to speak, as though she has been waiting with rigid impatience for Byron to cease. She speaks in the same dead, level tone: the two voices in monotonous strophe and antistrophe: two bodiless voices recounting dreamily something performed in a region without dimension by people without blood ... (pp.282-283)

This is quite simply horrifying: communal categories (theological and racial) have atrophied the story and, like succubi, drained its tellers. The original vitality of Greek choruses, who argued through a delicate counterpoise of "strophe and anti-strophe", has deteriorated to metronomic mechanics. In the last analysis men like Mooney and Bunch are responsible. However, Byron has heard the story before, and by bringing the couple to Hightower's house is departing from his customary role as prompter. He does encourage Mrs. Hines to her repeat performance, but as an editor and vocal instructor. Mrs. Hines "waits", "rigid" and impatient as her story is woven into a new plot, which if it works will change the official version of Joe Christmas and Hightower. Mrs. Hines has been primed and is understandably nervous. The Minister's "Ah Byron, Byron. What a dramatist you would have made." (p.293) is more pertinent than he guesses, since Mooney's straight-man has just done a re-write which will instigate a shift among the various parts of Light in August. The crucial twist is:

You could say that he was here with you that night.
Every night when Brown said he watched him go up to
the big house and go in it. (pp.293-294)

Many readers have seen Byron as a little man who returns Hightower to life and, almost in spite of himself, endures. In fact what Byron is suggesting is that Hightower confess to an extended homosexual liaison. He knows that the confession would be credible because, recalling how the Klan beat Hightower's black, male cook and how the town took Joanna's murder, he understands the workings of the collective sexual imagination. Effectively, Byron predicts Grimm's vicious complaint, "Has every preacher and old maid in Jefferson taken their pants down to the yellowbellied son of a bitch?" (p.349). The plot exhibits conservative iconoclasm as it redirects shared categories to

personal ends; and, since Byron is doing the replotting, one cannot but wonder at his part. With Joe innocent, who will the town "crucify"? Brown is the obvious candidate. In which case, who will replace Burch as Lena's suitor? Bunch fits.

Read this way, the strands of Light in August add up to a very different novel. I am not arguing that Bunch should be taken as the hero of his own Byronic melodrama, I am merely countering the view that he is a fumbling and attractive no-name. Like Ratliff he is a fabulous tale-teller who, at various times and in various versions, casts Lena as a virgin, Hightower as a midwife, an eight-month-old embryo as non-existent and himself as both Burch and Burch's murderer. His skill, like Joe's (though of a different order of intensity), depends upon a belief that what the voices say can be changed; or, to adapt his own words, that "public talking makes truth" only while it is suffered to do so.

His plot fails. Joe is murdered. Lena seems committed to Burch. Byron leaves town. But, being lost for words, he approaches Joe's middle-ground where no category is adequately present or absent. Faulkner catches the energy of this interstate, when he describes Byron's decision to go back to Lena and explain:

It is as though he has already and long since outstripped himself, already waiting at the cabin until he can catch up and enter. And then I will stand there and I will ... He tries it again. Then I will stand there and I will ... But he can get no further than that. He is in the road again now, approaching a wagon homeward bound from town. It is about six o'clock. He does not give up, however. Even if I cant seem to get any further than that: when I will open the door and come in and stand there. And then I will, look at her. Look at her. Look at her - The voice speaks again:

'- excitement, I reckon.' (p.332)

The wagon driver is right, although he is referring to "That nigger, Christmas". Byron's missing word is "excitement". Much of the excitement of Light in August rises from experiencing language as a debated area, in which voices filled with power,

dispute the meaning of "community". At the risk of sounding schematic, the novel might be drawn as a graph describing various levels of receptivity to given language. My poles of opposition would be the brutal and calculated inarticulacy of Joe Christmas and Lena Grove's blissful stupidity. Byron's position fluctuates and Lena's baby poses problems. Nameless, but briefly named for Joe, it carries his theme from iconoclasm to happiness, in a way exemplified by Blake's "Infant Joy":

I have no name
I am but two days old. -
What shall I call thee?
I happy am
Joy is my name, -
Sweet joy befall thee!³⁵

Of course, it won't - as the questioner well knows. The energy of that which cannot be categorized (whether vicious or innocent), is eventually anti-social: but unless its power can be accommodated into language such as men do use, language will decay.

I hope that my reading of Light in August as an account of transition in a language community, registers the delicacy with which Faulkner apportions individual and collective roles within the production of language. He is a writer who listened and developed a remarkable ear for tone. Tone has its own duplicities which, because they frequently arise from social variations, transform listening into an ideological event. To hear Joyce's recorded voice reading Finnegans Wake is to be lost in a vocal kaleidoscope, behind which there is no discernible social structure. Byron Bunch stutters, but does so because to Faulkner's ear speech is an often awkward alliance between several voices.

The interweaving anecdotes of the Trilogy stutter at a different level, thereby offering an account of language as a historical struggle between spoken and written forms.

IV

Much of what I am about to say sounds like epigrammatic notation, even to me. For this I apologize - offering as an excuse the need to deal briefly with the Trilogy as a language plot. If I can establish that Faulkner treated voice itself thematically, over an extended period, I can argue with greater confidence for his sensitivity to the historical and social dimensions of utterance.

Lévi-Strauss claims that writing emerged to meet a storage need.³⁶ Written script preserves and distributes information more effectively than the spoken word. Locating its origins immediately after the neolithic revolution, the French anthropologist sees its growth as co-terminous with hierarchic social forms: the oral, depending upon face-to-face exchange, is generally less divisive. I am not concerned with the account's precise historicity, but with its usefulness as a way into Frenchman's Bend. The Trilogy could be read as a confrontation between power systems, embodied in the spoken and the written. Ratliff, curator of "mouthwords", opposes two literate and powerful men - Flem Snopes and Gavin Stevens.

Flem is the cash-nexus; little more than a highly numerate system for the amassing of wealth. His script is tabulated ("lettered" would be too literary a term). As the Trilogy progresses, Snopes gains control over a number of figurative systems (commissary price list, cotton-ginning book, bank-accounts). Proliferating numeracy supplants literacy, so that he who at first said little says less. Increasingly Flem's language is money; it is interesting that he should also be a conspicuous forger. In The Hamlet he uses false credit-notes, to the sum of \$10, against the name of an idiot. Small forgeries position him

for his successful salting of The Old Frenchman's Place with counterfeit money. The trick land deal takes him to the town, where he assumes the Presidency of De Spain's bank by calling in the collateral of his wife's sexuality. Throughout The Mansion he capitalizes on his position by investing in the filial affection of a daughter who is not his child. Each transaction is a forgery because it seizes power over emotionally complex materials by playing them as percentages. Faulkner's larger point is that money itself is a forgery, which Ratliff opposes by telling stories about Snopes' financial deals. Anecdote translates the false language of economic transaction back into store-front talk. "Centaur in Brass" (The Town, Ch. 1), converts \$218 and 52 cents' worth of brass, back into a manipulation of job insecurity. "Mule in the Yard" (The Town, Ch. 16), translates \$8,000 compensation, one train timetable and a gun shot as a warning about what happens when capital depreciates.³⁷

Ratliff re-voices Flem's figures. Similarly, he is Gavin Stevens' dialect teacher. Stevens is a lawyer and a scholar, employed to sustain legal institutions and tacitly to buttress the educational system. His perception is primarily textual: that is to say, he sees an embezzlement of brass as a question of legal precedent, and substitutes Wagner for Varner in Eula Varner Snopes. Ratliff encourages him to listen before talking, and counters his habitual monologue with dialogue.

Ratliff confronts economic and literary scripts. His semi-heroic status in the Yoknapatawpha canon should not, however, obscure the extreme Utopianism of Faulkner's vocal nostalgia. His county is not an oral region. Unlike nineteenth century Greece or A.B. Lord's Yugoslavia, it has writing, albeit as a specialism. Written or printed signs are for the most part in

the hands of professional figures: Flem distributes money and Stevens administers the law. It is true that Ratliff can write but he is known as the bearer of spoken messages. Indeed, Frenchman's Bend as opposed to Jefferson, depends almost entirely on "mouth-words"³⁸ - word of mouth establishes tenancy before contracts are drawn up; the commissary system involves little or no transference of monies, while barter (the chief means of economic exchange), "swaps" objects in a face-to-face deal. A "peasant('s)" innocence of the written sign may expose him to those who possess it: Flem controls Frenchman's Bend because he keeps the Varner books.

It seems to me that a thematic account of The Hamlet as a divisive intrusion by writing into an oral community, is historically plausible - given that the Bend is a small and semi-literate closed-society. However, Faulkner's adherence to a dialect character and to the curative value of spoken exchange is anachronistic in the increasingly mobile and literate world of Jefferson. Although the preservation of oral value has important consequences for Faulknerian language, it is not an adequate answer to Snopesian economics. Faulkner is naive to suggest, as he does in The Town and The Mansion, that dialogue will preserve "humanness". Dialogue and a meaningful collective voice depend upon a coherent and hierarchic community: only where linguistic differences are stable and translated through shared social institutions can "we/Jefferson" be more than polemical. The Mansion presumes that a District Attorney, a country sewing-machine agent, a Communist and a naval officer might usefully collaborate. The claim is a specious throw-back to a static community in which inflexion still carried common meaning.

The Town and The Mansion rely upon an increasingly silent and immobile Ratliff, to correct the literary excesses of Gavin Stevens and to counter the economic rapaciousness of Flem Snopes. He is also responsible for Chick's vocal education. Yet The Town allows him 8% of the text and The Mansion effectively retires him.³⁹ Chick continues to visit the house of his old language instructor, where two precious objects stand on a waxed table - the Allanovna neck-tie "under a glass bell", and Barton Kohl's abstract sculpture. Despite Chick's dedication to Linda, Ratliff ascribes them to Eula. Either way, they are named for the female force which instigated so many stories. Quite properly the icons are evanescent. The neck-tie changes colour in the changing light and names for the nameless statue are forever altering: these objects stand to Ratliff as Ratliff stands to Faulkner. The sewing-machine agent reminds his author of the vital mobility of speech acts. Unfortunately the tie and the statue are limited memorabilia, lacking access to those forces that modify utterance. An unworn fashion piece and an abstract artefact derive from the aesthetic traditions of a monied leisure class which prides itself in its exclusiveness. Nonetheless, they stand as better epigraphs for the Trilogy than Faulkner knows. Ratliff's vocal exhaustion renders two thirds of the work a lament for a world in which voices are not displaced and anachronistic. The Hamlet too is elegiac in that even Frenchman's Bend has its Snopes. It is, however, fair to say that the first is the best of the Trilogy, because Faulkner failed to translate his original value source (Ratliff/voice) to fit the altered historical circumstances of Jefferson between the wars. The oral is for Faulkner a conservative mode. Huckleberry Finn sets up a battle between dictions: the reader hears Huck's idiom overthrow Tom's literary phrasing -

as a result the marginal world of Pap, Nigger Jim and an orphan takes brief possession of the shore. Accent becomes radical. The Trilogy reverses Twain's political implications as vernacular language counters financial liquidity. Ratliff's dialect embodies social stasis, constraining the transformational force of Flem's silent monetary language.

Hopefully, my thematic claims indicate the width of Faulkner's approach to utterance. More is involved than a mimetic gift for "nubs", "points", "snappers" and any number of technical tricks heard on the store front.⁴⁰ More indeed than a place in the Southern rhetorical tradition. The prime value of the oral to Faulkner is that it locates language in a community and converts each word into a collaborative act:

I wasn't born yet so it was Cousin Gowan who was there and big enough to see and remember and tell me afterward when I was big enough for it to make sense. That is, it was Cousin Gowan plus Uncle Gavin or maybe Uncle Gavin rather plus Cousin Gowan. He - Cousin Gowan - was thirteen. His grandfather was Grandfather's brother, so by the time it got down to us, he and I didn't know what cousin to each other we were. So he just called all of us except Grandfather "cousin" and all of us except Grandfather called him "cousin" and let it go at that.

They lived in Washington, where his father worked for the State Department, and all of a sudden the State Department sent his father to China or India or some far place, to be gone two years; and his mother was going too, so they sent Gowan down to stay with us and go to school in Jefferson until they got back. "Us" was Grandfather and Mother and Father and Uncle Gavin then. So this is what Gowan knew about it until I got born and big enough to know about it too. So when I say "we" and "we thought" what I mean is Jefferson and what Jefferson thought.⁴¹

The opening paragraphs of The Town are better read aloud than in silence. The articulated voice picks up the rhythm and distributes stress, while the inner voice is liable to stumble over grammatical nicety, and to pursue blood relationships which will in good time be made plain. Furthermore, the spoken phrase presumes a listener - like Charles Mallison it works from the assumption that language is basically dialogue. The Town is a

course in dialogue. Its monologues talk not only to one another but to the reader who is required to contribute to the collective pronoun. He does so by listening; to listen is to discover an ear for accent. Words are multi-accented, and to hear them as such is to recognize inflexion as an arena of social conflict. Charles Mallison hears "Centaur in Brass" from Cousin Gowan: Gowan's is a thirteen-year-old voice which, because it has scarcely formed, is for the most part a monitor. Vocal anonymity reflects his acceptance of social relations as they exist between the voices reported. The story climaxes when Tom Tom attempts to stab Turl for interfering with his wife:

"Tom Tom must a made his jump jest exactly when Turl whirled to run, Turl jumping out of the house into the moonlight again with Tom Tom and the butcher knife riding on his back so that they looked jest like- what do you call them double-jointed half-horse fellers in the old picture books?"

"Centaur," Gowan said.

"- looking jest like a centawyer running on its hind legs and trying to ketch up with itself with a butcher knife about a yard long in one of its extry front hoofs until they run out of the moonlight again into the woods. Yes sir, Turl aint even half as big as Tom Tom, but he sho toted him. If you'd a ever bobbled once, that butcher knife would a caught you whether Tom Tom did or not, wouldn't it?"

"Tom Tom a big buck man," Turl said. "Make three of me. But I toted him. I had to. And whenever I would fling my eye back and see the moon shining on that butcher knife I could a picked up two more like him without even slowing down." Turl said how at first he just ran; it was only after he found himself - or themself - among the trees that he thought about trying to rake Tom Tom off against the trunk of one. (pp.26-27)

Gowan contributes "centaur", a word outside the vocabulary of power-plant operatives. Harker appropriates the offering, through re-enunciation, to his own social group. Turl, the black fireman, accepts that his and Tom Tom's story will be told by a white voice, whose inflexions they will mimic ("But I toted him"). Gowan listens to the anecdote and tries to catch its idiom ("it was only after he found himself - or themself - among the trees"), because to learn the right voice for the story is to

find oneself among the ties that sway its audience. Gowan's version, understandably, makes no attempt to shift dominant assumptions, and Charles retells the story so that he can hear how an extension of himself sounded before he was born. The anecdote is an exercise in a spoken tradition, performed silently to teach him his place in Jefferson.

Listening and imitating are two of the more important activities in The Town. Frequently one is required to hear silence:

Between the voice and the face there were always two Ratliffs: the second one offering you a fair and open chance to divine what the first one really meant by what it was saying, provided you were smart enough. But this time the second Ratliff was trying to tell me something which for whatever reason the other could not say in words. (p.150)

Ratliff's face is full of non-linguistic signs - poker faces, habits of store front discourse, barter skills - each a form of social dialogue, available to the listener only if he crosses the regional and economic thresholds through which modes of silence develop into language. Ratliff's pause is not a Symbolist blank: Decadents appeal to typographic space or to music, in order to create an enigma which points linguistic deficiency. The Town has its semi-blank pages, headed by the remarks "Because he missed it. He missed it completely." (p.153), and "And still I couldn't tell him." (p.177). Ratliff refuses to tell Stevens because he knows that only listening will teach Lawyer to translate Flem Snopes.

Ratliff's blank pages appeal for an adequate language; the appeal is important because in Faulkner's ears accent reflects the distribution of power. Without this understanding, Ratliff's cultivation of Stevens might seem motiveless, and the elocution lessons which punctuate the novel would be merely picturesque. As it is, multi-accentuality is central to The Town. During the second half of the novel Ratliff periodically substitutes

"dragged" for "drug", "himself" for "hiself" and "grew" for "growed". His improvements are motivated by a need for a second voice. Dialect is limited; it derives from a particular regional past and depends upon assumptions which may be at odds with majority religious, social or market beliefs. Stevens has two voices; however, the ease with which he translates "dragged" into "drug" suggests that his imagination is engaged only at a formal level. A translator who translates the Old Testament back into Ancient Greek is liable to consider translation scholastically. For Ratliff the gap between "drug" and "dragged" poses active political problems: as a countryman his need for an official voice with which to counter Flem Snopes, makes an alliance with the Attorney obligatory. His urgency of reaction to Lawyer's misapprehensions reflects his sense of political displacement. Ratliff can learn "dragged", but his voice cannot distribute Jefferson as it distributed Frenchman's Bend. Therefore, he re-educates Stevens as his political arm, and, when the collaboration fails (with Eula's death), it is symptomatic that he should express bitterness by parodying his own dialect. Voice is at the centre of the endeavour; it is necessarily selected for abuse:

it (Flem's new house) was going to have colyums across the front now, I mean the extry big ones so even a feller that never seen colyums before wouldn't have no doubt a-tall what they was, like in the photographs where the Confedrit sweetheart in a hoop skirt and a magnolia is saying good-bye to her Confedrit beau jest before he rides off to finish tending to general grant) ... (p.352)

Ratliff marks the failure of collective utterance with a burlesque on accent - itself a preface to his increasing silence during The Mansion.

Vocal collaboration does, however, occur at other levels, most notably with the reader who, as he listens and imitates, grows aware of tonal nuance. The presence of an increasingly

trained ear allows Faulkner irony, which rests in speech and can be heard. Irony is an oblique device somewhat akin to opening a dialogue. I suspect that, asked to define the term, many would reply, 'It's when somebody says one thing, and means something else.' The commonplace accurately pin-points the extent to which irony is an inflexion: by learning it the reader (imitator/listener) familiarizes himself with the ironist's angle. Eventually the angle, because it is a moral opinion, begs questions and invites allegiance. A dialogue opens, through which reading fiction turns into a social act, or at least into a debate about action.

Parody, the Joycean mode, is based on texts and exists only where the literary works in question are held in common by author and reader alike. It assumes that each word is a fiction, having a literary tradition which both fosters and imprisons it: qualification-and-judgement, where it occurs, is literary. Joyce would consider the social assumption of irony, implicit in hearing a tone and making a man answerable to his voice, outmoded. For him the formulation of an ironic viewpoint is simply another textual layer, liable only to the ramifications of language. Stephen in "Proteus" and Bloom in "Sirens" are fictions rather than characters, and are unavailable for ironic judgement: critics who discuss whether or not they are ironically perceived have mistaken their terms. The clues offered by Joyce are literary, and judgement is to be achieved primarily by comparing texts. The lines that Stephen writes can be assessed by setting them against notions of, or examples from, fin-de-siècle poetry. Bloom's prose poem is to be evaluated in relation to concepts of sentimentality in popular art, and more particularly in the Dublin operatic revival of the 1900's. These are not exceptional examples; Joyce's word is so literary in its

orientation that, from the obvious level of "Oxen of the Sun" to the more minor of Stephen or Bloom's thoughts, Ulysses is a masterwork of parody almost totally devoid of irony.

Parody depends upon intertextual contrivance and insists that a word can no longer mean what it says. Arguably, the multiplication of parodies during the second half of Ulysses indicates Joyce's growing uncertainty about any single perspective on the world. Irony does not guarantee such a perspective, but by locating the author's doubts in the realm of utterance, it ensures that debate will extend beyond textuality.

A test case for the distinction that I am trying to draw is the cow's story, as told in The Hamlet. On the surface Faulkner's rhetoric is extremely literary, many of his figures derive from the courtly-love tradition. Critics are divided on whether the intent is parodic, self-parodic, non-parodic. Frederick Hoffman talks of "one of the most elaborate parodies in literature of the romantic view of nature's bounty and beauty"; Irving Howe argues that "the parody by its very excess parodies itself." and T.Y. Greet suggests that "the style elevates the lovers into symbols, encouraging the readers to seek in myth and legend for its rationale."⁴² What is not stressed is that the episode is very much a stylistic insert, located to raise rhetorical problems. Divergent languages, occurring in close proximity, beg questions. How does Juno equate with a cow? Is Houston's "Git on home you damn whore." (p.175) addressed to a goddess or a beast? Does "raw corn", "silage" and "pig swill" (p.185) preclude "frond", "swale" (p.186) and "shaggy pelt of earth" (p.184)? The rhetoric will not settle, and one is always aware that different ways of telling might emerge: Faulkner himself wrote a version which set the cow firmly in a tall and dirty tradition.⁴³ If the reader is alert to tonal

complexity, the affair of the cow is an affair of rhetoric, begging the question "How would you tell the one about the idiot in love with a cow?" To stress bestiality is to line up at the loose plank in the barn wall and pay the Snopes. Over-compensate on the courtly-love and you submit passively to one rhetorical element, producing a literary text. If the whole thing were done as a mythic liaison between Zeus and Io, no one in Frenchman's Bend would listen. The problem is not one of Joycean multivalence, since potential inflexion is limited by audience pressure. How a story is told must relate the teller to his community; this is particularly the case where a story alludes to leading citizens. When Faulkner told it tall he called the animal Beula, linking a stock beast to bovine Eula Varner and incidentally ensuring that any repeat performance of "the one about the cow" would express an attitude towards Eula's mammalian gifts. Inflexion will identify bovine fertility as a social construct, a metaphysical fact or a male joke: Faulkner's initial description of Eula indicates the size of the problem:

She was the last of the sixteen children, the baby, though she had overtaken and passed her mother in height in her tenth year. Now, though not yet thirteen years old, she was already bigger than most grown women and even her breasts were no longer the little, hard, fiercely-pointed cones of puberty or even maidenhood. On the contrary, her entire appearance suggested some symbology out of the Old Dionysic times - honey in sunlight and bursting grapes, the writhen bleeding of the crushed fecundated vine beneath the hard rapacious trampling goat-hoof. She seemed to be not a living integer of her contemporary scene, but rather to exist in a teeming vacuum in which her days followed one another as though behind sound-proof glass, where she seemed to listen in sullen bemusement, with a weary wisdom heired of all mammalian maturity, to the enlarging of her own organs.

Like her father, she was incorrigibly lazy, though what was in him a constant bustling cheerful idleness was in her an actual force impregnable and even ruthless. She simply did not move at all of her own volition, save to and from the table and to and from bed. She was late in learning to walk. She had the first and only perambulator the countryside had ever seen, a clumsy expensive thing almost as large as a dog-cart. She remained in it long after she had grown too large to straighten her legs out. When she reached the stage where it almost took the strength of a grown man to lift her out of it, she was graduated from

it by force. Then she began to sit in chairs. (p.95)

How is one to balance grotesquerie, naturalism and mythic allusion while not missing out on snappers like "Then she began to sit in chairs"? Any solution will constitute a view of Eula and of the different kinds of talk about her. However, places on the porch are precarious and voices grow self-conscious as the shared values of the oral community dissolve. The Hamlet maintains the public places in which collective speech is possible; because of this it differs from the books that follow. Faulkner's power does not diminish; he simply recognizes that the transition from hamlet to town is a transition in value. In *The Bend land*, women and words shared an assumed metaphysical base. The base vanishes in *Jefferson*. Land is scarcely mentioned. Eula is a housewife. Words are decentred. Loss shakes the language system and self-consciousness permeates the community.

Nonetheless, negotiation between voices continues to have considerable implications for Faulkner's view of language. In fictions where words are consistently (if unsuccessfully) a collective activity, the consciousness of the language-user is collectivized: inner/outer dualism corrodes and public and private become matters of degree. Words continue to have their privacies but in Faulkner at least their inclination is to move into the open. Very often an impeded utterance will result in moral ambivalence; "The Long Summer" offers a sustained example. Eula Varner's departure for Texas takes the heart out of the hamlet (or more correctly its "centre", "centrix", "matrix"). The store front has long operated on the strength of Eula's corsets, her cast iron perambulator and McCarron's broken arm: with her gone, subjects are in short supply. The lesser Snopes are worth an anecdote or two, but plainly a treasured source has

been stolen in a theft which involved a word:

- a lean, loose-jointed, cotton-socked, shrewd, ruthless old man, the splendid girl with her beautiful masklike face, the froglike creature which barely reached her shoulder, cashing a check, buying a license, taking a train - a word, a single will to believe born of envy and old deathless regret, murmured from cabin to cabin above the washing pots and the sewing, from wagon to horseman in roads and lanes or from rider to halted plow in field furrows; the word, the dream and wish of all male under the sun capable of harm - the young who only dreamed yet of the ruins they were still incapable of; the sick and maimed sweating in sleepless beds, impotent for the harm they willed to do; the old, now glandless earth-creeping, the very buds and blossoms, the garlands of whose yellowed triumphs had long fallen into the profitless dust, embalmed now and no more dead to the living world if they were sealed in buried vaults, behind the impregnable matronly calico of others' grandchildren's grandmothers - the word, with its implications of lost triumphs and defeats of unimaginable splendor and which the best: to have that word, that dream and hope for future, or to have had need to flee that word and dream, for past. (pp.147-148)

The word (Eula, Eulanus, Joy) remains unsaid because a "frog-like" man has taken the hamlet's will to believe. Linguistic motive has gone to Texas. Symptomatically, the sentence which says as much cannot nominate and loses itself in Symbolist contrivance. Ratliff seems to wane during the long summer of Eula's absence; his premonition is a private sentence, composed at Jefferson station on the Monday of her departure. To this, in the space of three months and fifteen pages, Ratliff adds puns, parodies, one silent story and a second which his audience cannot understand. Joycean traits proliferate in direct proportion to decay, and, as the carrier of messages ceases to listen or to care whether others hear, language declines. The clearest evidence of disease is Ratliff's parody of the platitudinous I.O.:

Snopes can come and Snopes can go, but Will Varner looks like he is fixing to snopes forever. Or Varner will Snopes forever - take your pick. What is it the fellow says? off with the old and on with the new; the old job at the old stand, maybe a new fellow doing the jobbing but it's the same old stern getting reamed out?" Bookwright was looking at him.

"If you would stand closer to the door, he could hear you a heap better," he said.

"Sholy," Ratliff said. "Big ears have little pitchers, the world beats a track to the rich man's hog-pen but it aint every family has a new lawyer, not to mention a

prophet. Waste not want not, except that a full waist dont need no prophet to prophesy a profit and just whose." Now they were all watching him - the smooth, impenetrable face with something about the eyes and the lines beside the mouth which they could not read.

"Look here," Bookwright said. "What's the matter with you?" (p.162)

"Profit", "will" and "waste" are crucial terms for any understanding of Flem's motives. The nature of "the profit" and the role of Varner's "will" in it are hypothetical until the end of The Town, but "waste" is plain enough. Ratliff cannot bear to name it, turning instead to verbal ingenuity which heralds a cumulative slide into linguistic and moral dissolution. Key words are thrown away. Proverbs (boxes of traditional wisdom, important to social discourse) are emptied into meaningless sound. Bookwright's diagnosis is ignored as Ratliff launches his obscurantist account of how Flem Snopes sells lard to a negress. The point about this description, and the subsequent vision of Flem's trade with the Devil, is that neither is an anecdote. One is secret, the other is silent - "nobody could have told whether he was actually talking to the men behind him or not, if he was talking to anyone or not..." (p.164). The commissary description and the silent parable contain vital information about Snopesian economics; information which might well have aided Bookwright and Armstid and Quick in their negotiations for the Old Frenchman's place. Ratliff withholds it from them and, more fatally, from himself.

In the parable Flem dupes the Prince of Darkness and becomes a faustian hero, whose indifference to the sacred tenets takes on a metaphysical dimension. Flem is evil. But any account that stops here does no justice to Ratliff's conspiratorial plot. How Flem did it continues to rankle long after the story has been read. Flem plays Faustus, therefore the stages of the exchange are conventional and can up to a point be traced. It

is for this point that the parable was written. Once we are aware that Flem is merely playing Faustus, we approach a terror beyond metaphysics. Ratliff's horror and our's is that we still do not know how Flem did it, and can no longer identify the nature of his game. It is small solace that Satan is no better off. He has read Faustus too and expects a certain kind of deal: for one soul he will offer "the gratifications", and if these fail - "the vanities" (p.151). Given that rules exist among the damned, as among thieves, the barter will be honoured. However, Flem's attempts to redeem his part of the arrangement reveals that the "security" he offered (one soul), has evaporated, leaving "a dried up smear under (the) edge" of its asbestos container (p.150). Nothing short of the deeds to Hell will compensate him for his empty deposit box. Furthermore, he feels that dispute is unnecessary, since he at least is not engaged in barter: rather he is subverting barter with a demand for absolute credit based on no collateral. It is not metaphysics that bring the Devil to his knees, but a different kind of economics. Flem proposes an economy based on forgery (a soul that does not exist). Since Satan speaks with a Southern accent he is presumably aware of the enormity of the proposal for Mississippi's single crop economy.

Money in The Hamlet is rare; the "peasant's" dollar is cotton. Under a commissary system the staple crop is adopted as the medium of exchange.⁴⁴ Consequently goods are purchased at the store, not in dollars and cents, but in expectations against seed in the ground and labour over that seed. Barter, the second most common mode of exchange, reinforces the materiality of Bend economics. Face to face distribution of objects is the norm, and although deviousness often accompanies such deals, the sewing machines, goats, horses, mules and notes remain more

or less in plain sight. I do not mean to suggest that Flem introduces credit and usury into a barter system: credit is a fact of the commissary and Will Varner is named as a usurer on the third page of the novel. Different kinds of exchange will co-exist in all economies. Nonetheless, Flem does instigate an enormous and furtive extension of the monetary credit system, with the result that he who took the "value" out of language, extracts the "materiality" from money. Ratliff calls it "working the top and bottom both at the same time." (p.71); whatever its name, Flem is manifestly "owed" on all sides. To adopt the terminology of Raymond Firth, it may be assumed that a Snopes loan is an "economic" rather than a "social" arrangement. That is to say, when the commissary lends seed-cotton, agricultural equipment and basic goods against labour, it establishes a spoken tie by means of a spoken contract. Pushed to its extreme, this is a form of reciprocal borrowing through which the tenant gains a livelihood and the owner preserves his land's life. Faulkner does not idealize the Southern land owner; Mink Snopes is allowed a scrupulous and painful poverty, but Varner's usury is located between benevolent aspects of wealth - "He was a farmer, a usurer, a veterinarian;" (p.5). Such a man makes "social loans" involving security, on the basis of personal knowledge.⁴⁵ Flem lends to aggravate a need: the black who knows that \$5 is available for Saturday night at the simple expense of ten cents a week for an eternity called two years, will borrow again. Ratliff calls this "evil" rather than "economics" because he cannot see how it is done; he merely knows that Flem has a way with stains which makes money. Ike's idiocy gave Flem a saving edge in the goat deal. Eula's sexuality is his ladder to the Bank Presidency. The illegitimacy of his "daughter" buys him a mansion. The speculative stain appals

Ratliff, driving him to private nightmares in which infinite credit derives from absence.⁴⁶ Not until he resides in Jefferson does Ratliff appreciate the redundancy of his idiom. As with other lexicons, Faulkner insists that the reader discover anachronism for himself, in a process of retelling. There is however clear evidence that "Flem in Hell", told as it stands, eased the path to the Old Frenchman's place deal. Had Ratliff told it right he might have saved his share in a side-street lunch-room in Jefferson and deprived Snopes of a toe-hold in the town. A story about credit, rather than a private and obscure allegory, could possibly have supplied necessary economic instruction. A box deposited under Flem's name in Hell should have warned Ratliff to mistrust any box under that name. At the very least, had the story been common property, the diggers might have realized before they opened the sacks that they were about to find forged/stained money.

Economic, linguistic and moral concerns are eventually inseparable. I am not attempting a sociological analysis of the Trilogy; there are too many already. I simply wish to show that Flem Snopes decentres those modes of exchange - sexual, economic and linguistic - which give coherence to the language spoken on the store-front, in the porches and along the roads of this section of country. He drives Ratliff (the postal service for "mouthwords") to furtive mutterings and silence.

The word for Faulkner is public; it must at least "try to say".⁴⁷ Telling it right involves telling it to others, as Ratliff's second hermetic fiction makes plain. Again the information is vital: Ratliff dresses Eula in long black stockings and puts her to bed on a stage. Flem climbs through a flat, painted as a store window. The second act of the plot casts Mrs. Snopes as a negress who comes to purchase lard so that Mr. Snopes

(storekeeper) can achieve potency. If anything, the drama is more hellish than Ratliff's hell; certainly its point is as covert. Properly perceived, Flem's impotency and Eula's "gal meat" (p.149) temper the story-teller's rush to mythology. Eula is Eulanus, but Ratliff's point appears to be that she is also a sexual member, and any over-hasty appeal to mythic names can cheapen her flesh as much as Flem's attentions. Flem is a hypnotic devil and an impotent husband. Mediation is the teller's problem. Any anecdotalist takes responsibility for the typographic level at which he pitches his story, since the roles that he imposes edit the human history contained in the tale. The Hamlet grows into a sequence of editorial exercises as Faulkner stalks small pathologies and domestic details with mythic types: a cow might be Io, a dog could be Cerberus and a stallion has Zeus delusions.⁴⁸ The metamorphic potential is a test; its frequency ^{reflects} a celebratory habit within the community, and the anecdotalist must decide whether and when the habit is a good one.

Ratliff's warning is difficult to hear (indeed he only half hears it himself). Faulkner situates the story so that its position within the general narrative implies a reproof of the teller. Wrapped up in casting problems, Ratliff misses the "little boy of eight or ten" with "eyes innocent ^{as} periwinkles" (p.163), who solicits in the store for the bestial side-show. "Furtive, defiant" and fast, Ratliff's audience quits the porch for the barn wall. Self-absorbed and mumbling he follows, misses their mood and so is unprepared for what he sees - a functioning example of his technical problem. Ike and his mistress are not Zeus and Io, nor are they dirt. Ratliff hesitates. Lost between mythic and popular models, his reaction is untypically hasty. Good Calvinist principle offers him an interpretation of "love" which slaughters the cow and feeds

part of the carcass to the man. It is a kind of solution - the side-show stops, the cow vanishes, I.O. makes a loss, but the audience is ignored. Ratliff recognizes that by observing the letter of the wrong law he has turned "pharisee" (p.198) and failed the Bend. For once he did not listen hard enough at the right time, and as a result produced a judaic solution having little to do with common law or language. While it is difficult to see what else he could have done, one is aware that telling it wrong, somehow led to getting it wrong.

Faulkner implies his reproof, having no wish to declare himself as judge and author. A sustained omniscient voice would pre-empt the value of the Trilogy as an exercise in collaboration; (when the answers are at the back, people cheat). Reticence over authorship is a feature of the oral mode. Albert B. Lord in The Singer of Tales points out that in oral traditions "expression ... not originality", conservation not creation, is the business of the spokesman, who is therefore ignorant of terms like "author", "unique" or even "anonymous".⁴⁹ Faulkner is less modest, but his position is not unlike that of Lord's Homer; both men are collective terms. The names on the binding stand in for a host of names, and are the invention of the spoken tradition which they invent.

This may sound whimsical; in fact it is pragmatic. The Faulkner of the Trilogy is anonymous; he persuades the reader to listen and tell by making comments which fall short of omniscience. Despite their narrative variety, each of the three books shares a withdrawal from overt commentary. As a result the author is everywhere, and everywhere strangely unidentifiable.^A His rhetorical tricks and favoured words crop up as elements of one voice among several. The novelist withdraws from the fore-

ground of his fiction to assume a seat on the porch. A porch in Yoknapatawpha is no place for the indifferent. Faulkner is nota featureless Narcissus: unlike Joyce's language plot, his linguistic contrivance is motivated by collectivity. "We"/ Jefferson represents a genuine self-effacement, and although the stance may not appeal to every reader, it does grant to language a substantiality which is missing from Joyce's Dublin and from much Modernist writing.

The hermetic Joycean artist appears in Yoknapatawpha but is always shadowed by a man for whom words are public obligations. Fairchild laughs at Mark Frost; Darl has his Cash; Shreve watches Quentin, and Stevens is baited by Ratliff. The attendant's responsibility is to persuade the solitary that his experience is common and that his "I" is necessarily a version of "we". The inclination of Faulkner's first person narration towards collectivity is mirrored in the form of novels like The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying. The Sound and the Fury boasts three spokesmen and an omniscient voice. As I Lay Dying has sixteen and no omniscience. It would seem that multiple viewpoints are synonymous with increasing subjectivization and a weakened authorial tone. However, the sections of The Sound and the Fury indicate a measured emergence of voice - Benjy's silence gives way to Quentin's cryptograms, and Jason's unstable chatter moves into omniscient utterance. Darl's private struggle with words pre-occupies the first half of As I Lay Dying, but Cash's more open utterances fix the tone of the last third. Structurally Faulkner's novels counter solipsism.

V

It should be clear by now that Faulkner and Joyce are the creators of very different fictional worlds. Thus, even where Faulkner steals ideas and detail with little or no attempt at disguise, what he produces is at odds with its model. The out-of-town trial, causing the crucial transformation in Quentin, is lifted bodily from "Circe". Bloom is apprehended by the Watch for feeding a stray dog that follows him, and is submitted to mock-trial. Quentin is arrested by the Sheriff for taking and feeding the silent Italian girl; as Spode reminds us "Children and dogs are always taking up with him." (p.131). Arrest leads to a trial in a judicial comedy, some of whose smaller details are borrowed. Rudolph Bloom appears in the brothel to sentence his son, and the Judge in The Sound and the Fury has obvious links with Mr. Compson.⁵⁰ In the second trial, as Bloom the saviour becomes Bloom the fallen idol, he is accused of exactly those characteristics that obsess Quentin - Dr. Mulligan declares him "virgo intacta" (p.464); Dr. Nixon mocks him as "a finished example of the new womanly man". Quentin's virginity and Shreve's hand, as it persistently returns to Quentin's knee, spring to mind. Further, Dr. Mulligan "In motor jerkin, green motorgoggles on his brow" (p.464) might have posed for Gerald Bland. Mulligan is worldly, sporty, drives a car at trial time, is successful with the ladies and suffers from a dominating aunt. Mrs. Bland substitutes for the aunt, otherwise her son is Mulligan's counterpart. From his systematic pillaging Faulkner builds a courtroom and a case that are concrete images of an internal geography. Quentin is judged, and, learning that Caddy was just a precocious little girl, must relive his past in relation to this judgement. The vast edifice of "Circe" would seem to be Joyce's creation of a

similar opportunity. By becoming a dramatist in a brothel and demonstrating every intention of breaking all censorship barriers, he is in a perfect position to summarize interior lives, made more available in a semi-hypnagogic state of tiredness, drink and debauchery. At times he approaches this goal but always swerves away because no longer convinced that human interiors are very substantial places. Bloom's sexual frustrations appear as images of painful particularity. He recalls a mild flirtation with Molly's friend Mrs. Breen, prior to marriage. Mrs. Breen becomes Molly, though retaining her dramatic persona, thereby demonstrating Bloom's constant appraisal of the female world in Molly's terms:

'BLOOM: When you made your present choice they said it was beauty and the beast. I can never forgive you for that. (His clenched fist at his brow) Think what it means. All you meant to me then, (Hoarsely) Woman, it's breaking me!' (p.435)

The pronoun-switch from "they" to "you", contains the doubts that have afflicted Bloom from his first encounter with Molly - his fears that he was never worthy and should have tried the less attractive friend. His suspicions almost suggest that all the suitors and men who have cuckolded him are right - that he is insufficient. No wonder he can never forgive Molly and never admit his feelings to himself; to do so would be to remove his main success and reason for Dublin living. Here the reader experiences an emotional centre, but such moments pass. The trials, which seem designed as the perfect occasion for the sifting of this evidence and the exposure of truth, are wasted. There is no insight into Bloom beyond the implicit generalization that we all have dirty dreams. He is in effect accused of guilt, which may help to make him every man from Judas Iscariot to Christ, but does not help him to be Bloom. Joyce's concern is not to elucidate his human material, but to submerge it in

Greek myth, sexual farce, verbal association, literary allusion and fourth form humour, in order to make a metalinguistic maze whose centre will cease to exist. Any detail which appears in "Circe" is not the agent of a particular mind which it reveals; it is a single facet of the symbolic and intertextual network of the novel. The reader confronted with Stephen as "He lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier," (p.517) and "attractive and enthusiastic women ... casting themselves under steam rollers" (p.463), experiences an almost nervous reaction to what, by this stage, he knows is required of him. A broken lamp-chimney sweeps him via Homer into a huge theatre of European ideas; the "steam rollers" present him with a considerable problem of formal justification. His activities may discipline his intellect, create in him a sense of his own ordering consciousness and even initiate him into the bibliographic mystery - but all this will destroy character.

Faulkner's trial focussed one obsession, and so instigated the exploration of a particular social and moral world. "Circe", by encompassing the classics and the dirty joke, a six hundred voice choir singing the Allelujah Chorus and talk of the pox, expands to submit the whole world to the word. By answering the question 'Why all this?' in terms of the linguistically closed novel, it implies the irrelevance of that world.

Such an assertion is impossible for Faulkner. The single most Joycean passage in his novels is the notorious paragraph on memory from Light in August, and yet its meaning has nothing in common with Joycean fiction:

Memory believes before knowing remembers. Believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing even wonders. Knows remembers believes a corridor in a big long gabled cold echoing building of dark red brick sootbleakened by more chimneys than its own, set in a grassless cinderstrewn-packed compound surrounded by smoking factory purlieus and enclosed by a ten foot steel-and-wire fence like a penitentiary or a zoo, where

in random erratic surges, with sparrow-like child
trebling, orphans in identical and uniform blue denim
in and out of remembering but in knowing constant as
the bleak walls, the bleak windows ... (p.91)

The Joycean tradition is everywhere in this dislocating syntax, disregarding the speaking voice, erasing punctuation and so compressing language as to vaunt the single word above meaning. The best critical gloss on the method of its construction is one of Frank Budgen's memories. During a discussion of what had been for Joyce a solid day's work - two sentences - he asked: " 'You have been seeking le mot juste?' 'No' Joyce said, 'I have the words already. What I am seeking is the perfect order of words in the sentence. There is an order in every way appropriate, I think I have it.' " ⁵¹ These borrowed mannerisms take on a different force if the passage is seen as an exploration of Joe Christmas' mentality rather than of style. The verbal disjunctions typify the disjunction of Joe's story. The action of the prose duplicates the thought pattern of a character who lives through disjunction: aged five, he suddenly declared himself born, "Well here I am." (p.93) and at eight he believed that "On this day I became a man." (p.111). In Joyce the words divert the reader from meaning. Here words do mean and the reader's struggle for syntax and definition are an education into the central life of the novel. "Memory believes before knowing remembers." The mind's eye stumbles across this sentence and would gladly be free of the problems it raises. "Believes" blocks easy passage. By repetition Faulkner persuades us to take each of the verbs from its obscure syntax and define it separately. The second sentence, returned to, confuses the reader's definitions by adding unsuspected amplifications; is "recollects" the same as "remembers" (certainly the substitution is not motivated by a desire to avoid repetition)? Does "wonders" modify belief or knowledge? The relation between the

terms exists as a problem of definition; it annoys and may not even be solved, but there is no escaping the desire to make a meaning. The opening of the third sentence, "Knows remembers believes", reiterates the problem of bringing separate verbal units into a usable context before offering the release of a particular visual image, "a corridor in a big long gabled cold echoing building of dark red brick". The rapid multiplication of adjectives forces us to construct an image of the building from its parts, rather than simply and with relief to accept an omnisciently definitive picture. The place establishes itself as a particular building in a city, before suddenly, with "in and out of remembering but in knowing constant", it is broken across the disjunctions of the first sentence. The second paragraph deposits the confused reader suddenly and utterly inside the building without the warning of a gradual descriptive approach or narrative progression: "In the quiet and empty corridor, during the quiet hour of early afternoon, he was like a shadow,". Time and place are totally specific and are of no help. Slowly the reader deduces the "shadowy" identity of the "he". Through stylistic experience we learn the pattern of Joe's consciousness. Joycean language has been reapplied as an agent of character.

This claim implies that Faulkner did not just respond to Stephen Dedalus with Quentin Compson, or to the stream of consciousness technique with his own versions, but that he was critically aware of the linguistic implications behind Ulysses. The genial inaccuracies of his conferences at the University of Virginia and his frequent statements that style was the last of his concerns suggest that we should guard against crediting Faulkner with too much critical intelligence.⁵² Faulkner, the farmer, was amused to perpetuate this myth, but Pylon is

in too many ways a novel about the printed word and its manipulators for us to believe him.

With the Reporter, Faulkner dramatizes those implications in Ulysses that he chose to reject. The writer who wants "to tell about people" becomes the servant of the newspresses, chasing headlines and thinking like a Hollywood movie. Faulkner has learned the lesson of "Oxen of the Sun" that style, systematically applied, renders human action arbitrary. Where Joyce parodies the modes of English Literature, Faulkner uses the cliché of the American mass media. Thus, Bloom is courteous ^{in part} because Malory requires it; Stephen experiences an ethical plight at the promptings of Bunyanesque allegory, and the Reporter has a camera for his head and print for his eyes: "When he began to see it was as if the letters were beginning to emerge at the back of his skull.". The anonymous journalist steps from the pages of "Aeolus"; the presses' "thumping" shakes his life even as Bloom is overcome by their "SUT, SUT". Both men are victimized by news-boys as they step into mechanically clogged cities - Dublin is frozen in a "short circuit of trams" and New Valois has a road jam at its heart. Faulkner sees more than Dos Passos, who, with his Camera Eye and Newsreels, read Joyce simply as the great naturalist of urban life; he recognizes that a paralysed language permits a paralysed language-user.

The last two pages of "A Night in the Vieux Carré" dramatize an interior monologue as it turns into headlines:

Now it was dawn. It had come unremarked; he merely realised suddenly that he could now discern faintly the words on the paper and that he now stood in a gray palpable substance without weight or light, leaning against the wall which he had not yet tried to leave. "Because I don't know whether I can make it yet or not," he thought, with peaceful and curious interest as if he were engaged in a polite parlor game for no stakes. When he did move at last he seemed to blow leaflight along the graying wall to which he did not exactly cling but rather moved in some form of light slow attrition, like the leaf without quite enough wind to keep it in motion. The light grew steadily, without seeming

to come from any one source or direction; now he could read the words, the print, quite well though they still had a tendency to shift and flow in smooth elusion of sense, meaning while he read them aloud: "Quintuplets bank ... No; there aint any pylon ... Wait. Wait ... Yair, it was a pylon only it was pointed down and buried at the time and they were not quintuplets yet when they banked around it ... Farmers bank. Yair. Farmer's boy, two farmers' boys, at least one from Ohio anyway she told me. And the ground they plow from Iowa; yair, two farmers' boys, downbanked; yair, two buried pylons in the one lowadrowsing womandrowsing pylondrowsing ... No; wait." He had reached the alley now and he would have to cross it since his doorway was in the opposite wall: so that now the paper was in the hand on the side which now clung creeping to the wall and he held the page up into the gray dawn as though for one last effort, concentrating sight, the vision without mind or thought, on the symmetrical line of boxheads:

FARMERS REFUSE BANKERS DENY STRIKERS
DEMAND PRESIDENT'S YACHT ACREAGE
REDUCTION QUINTUPLETS GAIN EX-SENATOR
RENAUD CELEBRATES TENTH ANNIVERSARY AS
RESTAURATEUR

... the fragile web of ink and paper, assertive, proclamative; profound and irrevocable if only in the sense of being profoundly and irrevocably unimportant ... the dead instant's fruit of forty tons of machinery and an entire nation's antic delusion. The eye, the organ without thought, speculation, or amaze, ran off the last word and then, ceasing again, vision went on ahead and gained the door beneath the balcony and clung and completely ceased. "Yair," the reporter thought. "I'm almost there but still I don't know if I am going to make it or not."⁵³

The situation is ideal for a descent into the least rational areas of consciousness: the Reporter is drunk; the light is indirect and all movement is that of a dream. With Nighttown and the Vieux Carré sequence of Mosquitoes behind him, Faulkner could go inwards at will. However, the dawn brings print before insight and the Reporter opens his interior monologue as he opens his paper: "now he could read the words, the print, quite well though they still had a tendency to shift and flow in smooth elusion of sense, meaning while he read them aloud ...". The rhythm of the sentence scores Joycean points. ", the print",

is syntactically awkward and interrupts to establish that language is typography; the phrase "elusion of sense, meaning" halts all progress. The strangeness of "elusion", meaning 'to evade' but sounding like 'illusion' and 'elution' (separation by washing), is heightened as "sense" moves by verbal affinity across syntax into "meaning". The reader will ultimately resolve the grammar but will probably do so by first checking a dictionary and then allowing his definition of "sense" to "shift and flow" between 'sensation' and 'possession of meaning'. In this way the reader, like the Reporter, is subjected to the independent power of typography. The passage appears to move via verbal associations away from the headlines ("Quintuplets bank ...") into the Reporter's consciousness. The "Quintuplets" become the flying family of five, and "bank" passes from their money problems in which the Reporter is inextricably involved, through the swing of the plane round the pylon, to an echo of agricultural origin. The movement approaches the recognition of personal sterility and a sympathy for the family's strange fertility, "yair, two farmers' boys downbanked; yair two buried pylons in one lowadrowsing ..."; "down" grows into fine hair and the city "bank" is broken open with the hint of pastoral calm. However, the monologue has never been free from the innuendo of the muck-raking press and of jokes about "putting cockleburs under ... well you know where" (p.32) - a punch line that has already been broadcast over the airport amplifiers. The Reporter has no significant centre other than that allowed him by the media. Faulkner makes his point by presenting the interior landscape as a particular kind of external geography. To reach his doorway the Reporter "must" cross an alley called "The Drowned", a street name which is significant in the light of Schumann's death by water, and the novel's undisguised

references to Eliot's poetry. Faulkner does not need to be more specific, for the Reporter avoids looking inwards towards the strangely resonant place by concentrating his sight, "the vision without mind or thought, on the symmetrical line of box heads." Vision has degenerated into a mechanism fixed on distinctions between type setting. Inevitably there will be no consciousness to fall into where the interior has become a word game among headlines. The reader is asked to see how "REFUSE" and "DENY" turn into "DEMAND", to wonder why "STRIKERS" want a "YACHT", on what grounds "QUINTUPLETS" should need political representation and how indeed the "EX-SENATOR" keeps it up, ("TENTH" what?). The rhythms, the associative logic and the innuendo duplicate the interior monologue. The exercise is one of mechanical correspondence ("Circe") by which the reader proves that the Reporter is drowned in cliché ("Eumaeus").

It is odd that, having made his point with all the deftness of a close reading of Ulysses, Faulkner should find it necessary to spell it out. His paragraph of somewhat heavy-handed omniscient explanation usefully illustrates a point of difference. What for Joyce is a problem of style, pursued with tireless logic, is for Faulkner an issue of dramatization involving a contract with a particular character. When the Reporter, at the close of the novel, sits in front of a typewriter incapable of making the words at his disposal fit the experience of Schumann's death, he is a victim of the linguistic process typified by "Ithaca". In Bloom's kitchen our expectation of human climax is finally defeated; there is not even enough direct articulation in the room to persuade us that the characters are alive. If the much-mythologized father and son do speak, Joyce believes that we should not be interested in hearing them, since Ulysses

has taught us that they cannot possibly have anything significant to say. In the world of Dublin all human action must be anticlimactic, for the word, its source and explication, has become the stuff of catalogues and scientific languages. In "Ithaca" Joyce ignores Stephen and Bloom to explore this linguistic idea. Faulkner accepts that the idea is an interesting subject for one novel, but can deal with it only in human terms. Consequently Pylon is "Ithaca" rewritten from the point of view of Stephen and Bloom's inarticulacy.

The Reporter, watching the typewritten "letters materialize out of thin air black, sharp and fast, along the weeping yellow" (p.302), is the writer as disciple/victim of Joyce, aware that sensory experience resists language. His crisis of authenticity summarizes the position and difficulties of the Modernist Movement. However, his subsequent actions embody the conservatism of Faulkner's artistic aims. Hemingway writing in Death in the Afternoon of what he was trying to do as a journalist in the 20's claimed:

I found the greatest difficulty, aside from knowing truly what you really felt, rather than what you were supposed to feel, and had been taught to feel, was to put down what really happened in action; what the actual things were which produced the emotion that you experienced. In writing for a newspaper you told what happened and, with one trick and another, you communicated the emotion ... but the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion and which would be as valid in a year or in ten years or, with luck and if you stated it purely enough, always, was beyond me and I was working very hard to try to get it.⁵⁴

William Carlos Williams in a passage from Spring and All (1923) bears witness to the fact that the seeds sown by Joyce were as fruitful in New Jersey as in Paris.

The man of imagination who turns to art for release and fulfilment of his baby promises contends with the sky through layers of demoded words and shapes. Demoded not because the essential vitality which begot them is laid waste - this cannot be so, a young man feels since he feels it in himself - but because meanings have been

lost through laziness or changes in the form of existence which have left words empty.⁵⁵

The solution of Williams and of Hemingway, indeed of a great deal of the most noted writing from the 20's, was to follow Joyce in making the subject not "what happened" but the style as a formal and self-regulating activity. Williams' poetry is characterized by an almost precocious awareness of what will happen to a word if it is granted the event of a single line, this being part of his demand that every "of" and "what" justify its position in the poem and fill itself. Consequently to read Williams is to be ever-conscious of the presence of the typewriter. Indeed, reading Williams aloud is a challenge to one's voice. Just how is "The Red Wheelbarrow" to be read?

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens. 56

The opening line is typical in that his poems often depart from large moral claims which they proceed to avoid ("Sorrow is my own yard", "Its the anarchy of poverty/ delights me, ...", "The rose is obsolete", "Old age is ..."). It is as if moral judgement is required to identify the materials of the poem and to let it be known that chickens and wheelbarrows are more than stylistic opportunities. The Objectivists felt no such constraint: reacting against Imagist "sincerity" Zukofsky treats words as the objects of the poem:

William
Carlos
Williams
alive!

... reach
C
a cove -

call it
Carlos:

smell W
Double U
two W's
ravine and
runnel: 57

The premises of Imagism, as formulated by F.S. Flint in 1913, although over-schematic, capture a major flaw in the poetic:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing" whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase not in sequence of a metronome.⁵⁸

Flint instructs on the organization of poetic materials, without any notion of the disposal of those materials in the world. His rules are therefore a programme without a theory, and when Williams insists "(No ideas/ but in things)" ("A Sort of Song", p.108), he duplicates Flint's ideological vacuity. As Wallace Stevens suggests, all objects are not equal: things are located by social decisions; indeed, there is no such thing as a "thing" without an idea. The Imagist retreat from ideology allows their language associative carte-blanche and a curious purity. However, the translucent energy of "The Red Wheelbarrow" is artificial, depending upon the misassumption that language can usefully exist without history or semantic responsibility.

Ulysses falls prey to a similar dislocation. I hope that a comparison between eight lines of poetry and over seven hundred prose pages will not seem too specious. Joyce's concern with multiple fictive structures derives from no apparent psychological or social conviction: many "keys" fit Ulysses while fitting very little else. Likewise the Imagist poem as a formal unit is eminently successful until one seeks to relate its moral claims to its linguistic patterns: the result is liable to sound irrelevant and if so is a reflection on the poetic and not necessarily on the critic.

Hemingway went to Paris as (among other things) an Imagist poet. His prose style, even at its most successful, borders on self-appreciation. Thus, in the rightly famous first paragraph of A Farewell to Arms, the denuding struggle for authenticity approaches artificiality. Beauty of style is all that stands solid among the many images of transit, and the price paid is that the subject - the mortality figures - is lost behind the veneer of the retinted photograph.

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees.⁵⁹

Faulkner's Reporter is overcome by "demodé" words, and his "savagely defaced" copy suggests that he too suffers Hemingway's difficulty. The crucial distinction is that his third attempt to write the story of Schumann's death is a rejection of style: "I guess this is what you want you bastard and now I am going down to Amboise St. and get drunk awhile..." (p.315). Pylon is bleak because there is no solution, least of all that of a fourth draft. Significantly, the literary models for Faulkner's final image both stand well outside the Joycean tradition. The two drafts recall the final pages of Billy Budd⁶⁰ where "News from the Mediterranean" (reportage) and "Billy in the Darbies" (ballad) give two irreconcilable accounts of the death of another questionable innocent - like Faulkner's aviator martyred and thrown into the sea. Melville comments on the impasse of styles: "The symmetry of form attainable in pure fiction cannot be so readily achieved in a narration essentially having less to do with fable than with fact."⁶¹ The pure fiction is attractive but incomprehensible fact commands allegiance. The savage pencil marks at the foot of the reporter's torn copy might have been

mimeographed from Kurtz's Report to the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs. This document, filled with "the unbounded power of eloquence -- of words of burning noble words"⁶² closes on the note "scrawled ... in an unsteady hand", "Exterminate the brutes!" (p.118). For Conrad the scrawl which exposes language to a reality that it cannot encompass is far more significant than any "magic current of phrases". Amboise Street is "what happened", and as such it must be returned to. Even as Melville goes back to the "uncut block of marble" and Conrad to the necessary "darkness", so Faulkner faces the irredeemable nature of his material.

The Reporter's decision is Faulkner's, and it is one that many critics, pursuing the mannerisms of the Faulknerian style, have missed. While it is clear from Gerald Langford's work on the manuscripts of Absalom, Absalom! that there were many drafts to many passages, there is about few of Faulkner's sentences the element of stylistic self-congratulation heard so often in Joyce. We are always aware that there is too much that is difficult, pressing to be said, for the style to become the subject. Conrad Aiken has described Faulkner's "repetitiveness" as "a kind of chanting or invocation" that hypnotizes and thereby prevents analysis.⁶³ Warren Beck accepts this, though his description is less suspicious: "the prolonged even murmur of Faulkner's voice throughout his pages, is an almost hypnotic induction into those detailed and darkly coloured visions of life which drift across the horizons of his imagination like clouds."⁶⁴ Professor Kenner, more lucid and damning than both, has located what he considers to be the dominant historical influence on Faulkner's language:

A Symbolist poem, like an ideal Faulkner novel ... elaborates verbal formulae, verbal interactions, creating a world dense with specificity but difficult to specify ... (it) prolongs what it cannot find a

way to state with concision, prolongs it until, ringed and riddled with nuance, it is virtually camouflaged by patterns of circumstance ... With good will an identifiable word emerges, which, seeing the lavish trouble the writer has taken, we are apt to "interpret." This is usually a mistake.⁶⁵

All three attempts to place a characteristic style fail because they do not hear the voice behind the sentence. Although Faulkner owes much to the European Decadents, he is also a story teller. Just as he introduced the speaker into the Symbolist poem and restored tone to the Joycean stream of consciousness, so his own voice resists "unspeaking". The paragraph from Light in August is a good example. Even here at a mannered extreme there is a need, when all is said and done, to get the story told, the consciousness perceived and the usable content formulated in a narrative. The Symbolist intent to defeat reality by linguistic means (often, as in Valéry, by invocation) is not at the core of Faulkner's style. His sentences, and those of his characters, do not demand equations for how the speaker got from one word and its associations to the next, but why the speaker did it. The pressure is not on the riddle or nuance of the word, but back to the sentence, the paragraph, the extended unit of meaning. Often the unit will be obscure and have a tendency to fall into repeated abstractions, "myriad", "sourceless", "impalpable" and "outrageous"; typically these effects are neither hypnotic nor the signs of a beautiful artefact, rather they are inflexions of doubt, fear and rage. The Faulknerian sentence is not first and foremost a stylistic experience: it is a speaker's attempt to analyze what he fears will elude him. Such tones have no place on the finished page as complete artefact, and so are lacking in both the Symbolists and Joyce.

Any attempt to deal with the typical in Faulkner is bound

to fail. It might be argued that some of his more significant characters suffer a deep mistrust of language. Mahon says virtually nothing. Quentin in The Sound and the Fury drives his language towards objectivity and silence. Joe Christmas is viciously dumb, More articulate than any is Addie Bundren with her geometry for silence:

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.⁶⁶

This appears to have all the abstract logic which separated words from mouths in "Ithaca", and leads remorselessly to Beckett's view of language as "words that went dead before they sounded". However we have only to compare Beckett's statement with Addie's dismissal of the word "love" as "just a shape to fill a lack" (p.136) to appreciate differences. The word is not dead that is "a shape to fill a lack", because the force of human lack will cry up new words - each of which may indeed be "a shape profoundly without life", but being "like an empty door frame" (p.137) it is not a prison. Despite its insufficiency, Addie's simile is open as her diagram is not. Therefore she will go on not simply "trying to say" but "trying to say at" (p.136), and ultimately her "word" will get Anse off his butt and generate action.

Muscularity of effort is the distinguishing feature of Faulkner's response to Joyce's vision of linguistic deficiency. He takes the problem of the word away from the language system and returns it to the throat. In this way it is transformed from a general and incapacitating theory to problems of particular inarticulacy. Consequently, a failure of words in Yoknapatawpha is not fatal, whereas the loss of style or rhetoric in Paris, Dublin, Pamplona or Paterson is. Robert

Cohn reads The Purple Land and admires Mencken. He is ejected from Jake's "coterie" not because he is a Jew but because he is a mess with doubtful literary tastes. Sam Patch - cliff diver extraordinary - began his career at the Passaic falls and was killed on November 13th 1826, while attempting to leap one hundred and twenty five feet from the falls of the Genesee River. His mistake, according to Williams' sources, was rhetorical - he made a bad speech which upset his dive:

A speech! What could he say that he must leap so desperately to complete it? And plunged toward the stream below. But instead of descending with a plummet-like fall his body wavered in the air - Speech had failed him. He was confused. The word had been drained of its meaning. There's no mistake in Sam Patch. He struck the water on his side and disappeared. ⁶⁷

Poised not quite so high above Jefferson, Gavin Stevens makes one of his worst orations:

Then, as though at signal, the fireflies - lightning-bugs of the Mississippi child's vernacular - myriad and frenetic, random and frantic, pulsing; not questing, not quiring, but choiring as if they were tiny incessant appeaseless voices, cries, words. And you stand suzerain and solitary above the whole sum of your life beneath that incessant ephemeral spangling. First is Jefferson, the center, radiating weakly its puny glow into space; beyond it, enclosing it, spreads the County, tied by diverging roads to that center as is the rim to the hub by its spokes, yourself detached as God Himself for this moment above the cradle of your nativity and of the men and women who made you, the record and chronicle of your native land proffered for your perusal in ring by concentric ring like the ripples on living water above the dreamless slumber of your past; (p.316)

The moment is crucial. Will Varner has been informed of his daughter's eighteen-year-old adultery and is in Jefferson, enraged. Eula, who has no need of a beautician, has been to a beauty parlor. A note has been dispatched to Lawyer, requesting that he meet her late at night in his offices. Instead of "watching the bushes" for Flem's move, Stevens gazes out at the world. Local talk is ignored as he composes an Introduction for a Chronicle. Legal responsibility is traded for the less specific duties of Divinity. He pursues assonance over meaning

and allows language to deafen him ("s's" multiply and participles accumulate). Rather than look at the problematic lights of Jefferson, he immortalizes the fire-bug - unsuccessfully, since even mute insects discover voices. "Request" and "require" are loaded terms, so Stevens edits them out to produce a poetic word ("questing"), and a nonsense which he covers up with a spelling correction (quiring is written "choiring"). Hollow abstractions follow, in a list that is indirectly responsible for Eula's suicide. Well-briefed, Lawyer might have reacted better to his client's suggestion that he marry her daughter. Might-have-been may not be a legitimate critical realm but I cannot help hearing Stevens' style as fatal procrastination. Stevens does not die: there are worse things in Yoknapatawpha than making a bad speech.

The fact that Faulkner treats rhetorical failure as an individual (albeit frequent) incapacity is a sign of just how exceptional a disciple of Joyce he is. During the 20's language was the enemy and the tactic was to shrink it. The imagists were seeking the objectivity of a poetic of concrete things; Hemingway declared abstract words "obscene",⁶⁸ and Eliot was spreading a mistrust of rhetoric.⁶⁹ The voice of Faulkner's characters, and where discernible his own, remained active and muscular. Utterance is difficult but there can be no retreat from it. The refusal to submit to silence or listen for the dead sound in words is sustained through the most Joycean of his novels. In The Sound and the Fury, Faulkner forces words from a mute, and in As I Lay Dying a corpse articulates the novel. Clearly the word in Faulkner can be exposed to the most debilitating circumstances and live. The source of vitality is its origin in the speaking voice.

In a later chapter on As I Lay Dying, I shall try to show that Faulkner's contract with voice is partly motivated by a theological account of language. Southern Fundamentalism still recalls a time when words were Divine Signatures whose meanings had to be adhered to if the Devil were not to peep over the fence. For the modernist in Mississippi, sharing a regional memory, the centre of the signifying act could not be entirely vacant: a ghost of the Divine Signified still walks at the heart of language.

Faulkner's ideological adherence to utterance is, however, more than theological nostalgia. The Hamlet exemplifies his insight into the relation between linguistic and social form. I spoke earlier of the shocking loss of a shared metaphysic in the hamlet. I should perhaps have described the loss more roundly as theft. Flem Snopes steals words from out of the mouths of Frenchman's Bend by occupying the institutions that give meaning to the words. He takes up residence at the points of exchange, eventually owning the semantic sources of language - the store front, the horse fair, the woman and the earth.

The Varner store runs on a system that exemplifies the mixed economy of the region it serves. "Nickles and dimes" are put into a cigar box for individual items (p.56), but the basics (seed-cotton, agricultural instruments and winter food) are likely to be distributed on credit. They will be paid for when the crop is made. Cotton-money is currency in a material form: at ginning time cotton pays the peasants' debts and as such it is "money", full of substance and labour. Flem's clerking changes everything; since money is a form of exchange, modifications to the economic sign system will modify all modes of exchange. With Flem behind the counter, customers grow self-conscious about prices;

effectively the new clerk limits their linguistic variables. Where, under Jody, store articles might have been valued in different ways, under Flem they are converted into exclusively cash terms.

Money is a quiet language and Flem moves quietly. Michael Millgate quantifies his silence - in the novel Flem has only 244 words. His silence is that of the cash-nexus which is most effective when most silent: money does not talk about its profits - as one villager puts it, Flem doesn't even "tell himself what he's up to." Financial success brings with it growing anonymity and fewer words. Each book gives Flem more influence and less language, while muting those similes through which others perceive him. His power extends from and beyond the store-front, where traditionally men gather to talk. Frederick Jameson has argued that a living communal language depends upon "the privileged meeting places of collective life and (on) the intertwining of collective destinies - the tavern, the high road, the court, the paseo, the cathedral."⁷⁰ Frenchman's Bend never boasted a cathedral and thanks to new management its market place is threatened; men continue to tell stories there, but, within earshot of the clerk, their voices are uneasy. Money threatens oral currency because, if the analogy is pursued, words are deemed to work like financial terms and, deprived of dialogue, slot into a closed system.

Flem is described by Ratliff as a man who "establishes the foundation of his existence on the currency of coin." (p.199). He persuades others to follow him into the unstable monetary arena. It is conventional to speak of money as liquidity; Mary Douglas elaborates on the commonplace by positing what she calls "perfect money" or a coin whose capacity to permeate and flow knows no limit.⁷¹ Such movement allows it total purchasing

power. Flem, doubtless fortified by the "supption" he derives from chewing nickels, embodies just such mobility - most of it upwards. Faulkner's mistrust of coins, in general and Snopes-coin in particular, rests on more than the dubiously symbolic rejection of one 50 cent piece by an idiot: whether or not Ike "consciously" drops Houston's bribe from the bridge, whether or not he searches for it, are matters of nice emphasis. Ratliff offers plain economic evidence for Faulkner's doubts about the monetary system. Drawn out of the four counties for the first time in a decade, the trader whose stock is generally no more than a few dollars and varied objects of barter (ranging at any one time from a set of used wagon-harness to eight white leghorn hens), makes too much money:

He found himself not only on foreign soil but shut away from his native state by a golden barrier, a wall of neatly accumulating minted coins. (p.55)

To escape Tennessee, indeed "to reach home", Ratliff has to reduce the cash about his person to a minimum. He crosses the border holding \$2.55 cash, and far more in credit agreements scattered throughout Yoknapatawpha: these notes are "good" because they constitute money in a material form: they can be realized only when "the cotton is ginned and sold" (p.56). His notional \$240 will have been sweated into. One might almost claim that labour imbues the monetary system with a semantic charge; certainly Mrs. Armstid believes that work personalizes what it produces:

I would know them five dollars. I earned them myself, (p.326)

Cash money does not gain easy access to the four-counties, and when it does disruption occurs. Ratliff's stories about Ab Snopes and Pat Stamper create a world of economic calm, in which horse trading is "not for profit but for honour." (p.36). The exchange of horses or mules exemplifies barter since it involves

goods in plain sight charged with seen value. In making a trade the trader risks his reputation - the horse is effectively carrying the "honour" of his name. Forgery is part of the game. Ab Snopes rubs saltpeter into the gums of the Beasley horse and livens it up with fish-hooks under the skin. Pat Stamper takes the same animal, blows it up with a bicycle pump and dyes it dark brown. But, curiously, transformation only adds to the value of the stock. The Beasley horse is loaded with stories available for any visiting dealer to check. Ab neglects the ground rules and is duped, as Hugh Mitchell with some relish points out:

Herman Short swapped Pat Stamper a mule and a buggy for that horse five years ago and Beasley Kemp give Herman eight dollars for it last summer. What did you give Beasley? Fifty cents? (p.34)

The horse is an oral anthology. It is almost as if man and beast exist in greater amity where money does not intervene. Although the trader adorns the horse with hooks, valves and stains, he also dresses him in elaborate stories whose anthropomorphic weight is reinforced by the presence of Ike and his bovine mistress, busy reversing the transition from nature to culture. To labour the point - horse trading deals in semantically charged terms, which money corrupts in a process of desubstantiation. Even in Pat Stamper's days cash--dollars were the problem:

That's what did it. It wasn't what the horse had cost Ab because you might say all it had cost Ab was the straight stock, since in the first place the sorghum mill was wore out and in the second place it wasn't Ab's sorghum mill nohow. And it wasn't the mule and buggy of Herman's. It was them eight cash dollars of Beasley's, and not that Ab held them eight dollars against Herman, because Herman had done already invested a mule and buggy in it. And besides, the eight dollars was still in the country and so it didn't actually matter whether it was Herman or Beasley that had them. It was the fact that Pat Stamper, a stranger, had come in and got actual Yoknapatawpha County cash dollars to rattling around loose that way. When a man swaps horse for horse, that's one thing and let the devil protect him if the devil can. But when cash money starts changing

hands, that's something else. And for a stranger to come in and start that cash money to changing and jumping from one fellow to another, it's like when a burglar breaks into your house and flings your things ever which way even if he don't take nothing. It makes you twice as mad. (p.34)

Where \$8 can "rattle", "jump" and "fling things about", Flem's cash will be the next best thing to an apocalypse. The Texan ponies destroy barns, carriages and the due process of law, to make Snopes his profit. Flem introduces "painted", foreign and frantically mobile stock into Frenchman's Bend. He trades by proxy and realizes a hidden profit that enables him to purchase the Old Frenchman's place and to perpetuate his forgeries.

Once established at the store and in the place of barter, Flem pre-empts the land and more importantly the stories about the land. Marriage to Eula Varner gave him proprietorship over one fertility myth; Eula, according to one story, is the progeny of a "spendthrift Olympian ejaculation" (p.147), according to another "Soon as she passes anything in long pants she begins to give off something." (p.99), either way she is more deserving of the name Dewey Dell than Addie's daughter. With economic vision Faulkner makes the clerk who disposes seed-cotton sole owner of the mythic seed. The words for fertility, whether agricultural or legendary, belong to Flem Snopes. Indeed, the name for the hamlet passes into his keeping when he purchases the title deed to the Old Frenchman's place. Predictably, he abuses that name.

Flem works on the stories about jewellery buried by plantation owners; his materials are the rumours about maps made to redeem family treasures once the Yankees were gone. He salts the land with seventy-five silver dollars, minted before the Civil War, and a make-weight of current coins. He then puts the old stories back into circulation by digging conspicuously

and late at night in the ruined rose garden of the old house. By these devices he sells the land and at the same time devalues both it and the words that give it value. As Ratliff recognizes the forgery, he learns that the legend itself was a dupe perpetrated by the communal voice. For the purveyor of "mouthwords" this is wormwood. The last paragraphs of The Hamlet realize the wider implications of the bitter taste:

(Armstid) did not glance up at the sun, as a man pausing in work does to gauge the time. He came straight back to the trench, hurrying back to it with that painful and laboring slowness, the gaunt unshaven face which was now completely that of a madman. He got back into the trench and began to dig.

Snopes turned his head and spat over the wagon wheel. He jerked the reins slightly. "Come up," he said. (p.366)

Armstid digs in the ground for the treasure that made the ground valuable: because Snopes has dispossessed even the soil of its symbolic status, Armstid is engaged in a craziness and not in the substantiation of a legend. Small boys gather and jeer as a mad man proves that there is nothing to one of their father's favourite stories. Armstid "labor(s) on in measured stoop and recover like a metronome ... (digging) himself back into that earth which had produced him to be its born and fated thrall forever until he died." (p.359). All the peasants are in "thrall" to the "earth", but Flem's activities take any grace from their labour: with Snopesism controlling the institutions that distribute utterance, language declines to a system of measurement; and men, deprived of their stories, may become machines for making holes and dropping seeds into the ground.

Faulkner's skill in The Hamlet is to describe, as a sequence of stories, the events that will make story telling itself an increasingly self-conscious and unsatisfactory process. The Hamlet defines what makes the last two books of the Trilogy a disappointment.

VI

A contract with the struggling voice commits an author to action and narrative. It is therefore strange that the four days of The Sound and the Fury should be modeled on Joyce's encompassing "dailiest day" in Dublin, itself a rationalization of the epiphany. Indeed, on the surface the sections seem to centre upon epiphanic moments which concentrate lives into single glimpses. The detail of Caddy's muddy drawers in the tree could be any of those which open A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man; the suggestion through evasion of the bare dialogue between Caddy and Quentin at the branch resembles the "green oval leaves" of Joyce's earliest epiphanies, and the apparent objectivity of the fourth section's final paragraph is close to that which ends "A Painful Case" or "Two Gallants". At a more general level, the critically popular view of Benjy as a camera lens who cannot question what he sees, turns him into a machine for epiphany - incapable of significant action. The development of the novel through his section might imply a Joycean concern with information indirectly given, anathema to the story teller. However, a closer look at epiphany qualifies its relevance to Faulkner and establishes the significance of his use of the moment.

Epiphany rests on the assumption that the moment implies the all. Its user assumes that the part reveals the whole, the remark contains the mind and the behavioural quirk embodies the person. The epiphanic artist is a collector who mirrors incidents rather than explores their contexts. His search is for the perfect still life, that moment whose objects, people and dialogue, once found and made static in words, will stand forever as a summary - in Joyce's case of Dublin living. The objectivity of the artist as reflector will lift the artefact above time and question. A Portrait of the Artist is full of such moments.

Having declined the priestly vocation, Stephen enters his kitchen to see his life in Dublin, without church or family ties, spread on the table in front of him.

He pushed open the latchless door of the porch and passed through the naked hallway into the kitchen. A group of his brothers and sisters was sitting round the table. Tea was nearly over and only the last of the second watered tea remained in the bottoms of the small glass jars and jampots which did service for teacups. Discarded crusts and lumps of sugared bread, turned brown by the tea which had been poured over them, lay scattered on the table. Little wells of tea lay here and there on the board, and a knife with a broken ivory handle was stuck through the pith of a ravaged turn over.

The sad quiet grey-blue of the dying day came through the window and the open door, covering over and allaying quietly a sudden instinct of remorse in Stephen's heart. All that had been denied them had been freely given to him, the eldest; but the quiet glow of evening showed him in their faces no sign of rancour.⁷²

Stillness overcomes the scene and objects shine with their own significance. Even Stephen's mood is emptied into the objective world as it becomes a quality of the light. The link between epiphany and Impressionism is clear - in both the object is revealed by the light rather than by the artist and for both each moment contains its own still life. The stories in Dubliners are a literary version of Monet's successive treatments of a city through the play of light on one of its buildings. Joyce's comment "I always write about Dublin because if I can get the heart of Dublin, I can get the heart of all the cities in the world. In the particular is contained the universal" might be Monet's on Waterloo bridge or Rouen cathedral, edifices that were important not just for themselves, or even for their cities, but as containers of the impersonal light that revealed them. E.R. Steinberg points out that, in Paris between 1902 and 1903, Joyce lived among painters and talk of paintings. The ramifications of the tache and of pointillism would in all probability have been known to him. A tache is a single brush stroke within which the Impressionist seeks to preserve one moment of

light. Each is an epiphany. Logically, the temporality of the Impressionist subject is not a matter of personal history (portrait), or architectural tradition (landscape), but of present moments retained. Pointillism turns the brush stroke into a coloured dot, thereby atomizing the tache in all its aspects. Theories of retinal fusion were evolved, leading to debates about the viewing distance at which pointillist canvases might best be seen. Seurat's worries reduce a subject and its history to issues of light and colour, and ensure that canvases tell no story other than the story of a technique. Pissarro best summarizes the assault mounted by tache and point (epiphany) upon the line (plot):

Do not define too closely the outline of things; it is the brush stroke of the right value and colour which should produce the drawing.⁷³

Significantly, Faulkner's early ink drawings were those of a graphic artist, illustrating a text (as in his own play Marionettes), or completing a cartoon. His artistic response was to Beardsley and the Decadent school of literary painters, for whom the line, although an element in a design, was still required to tell a story. To compare Joyce's impressionist room with the Compson kitchen is to be immediately aware of movement. The Faulknerian moment, no matter how impersonal its sight line, will not stand still:

"Shhhhhh." Dilsey said. "Didn't Mr. Jason say for you all to be quiet. Eat your supper, now. Here, Versh. Git his spoon." Versh's hand came with the spoon, into the bowl. The spoon came up to my mouth. The steam tickled into my mouth. Then we quit eating and we looked at each other and we were quiet, and then we heard it again and I began to cry.

"What was that." Caddy said. She put her hand on my hand.

"That was mother." Quentin said. The spoon came up and I ate, then I cried again.

"Hush." Caddy said. But I didn't hush and she came and put her arms around me. Dilsey went and closed both the doors and then we couldn't hear it.

"Hush, now." Caddy said. I hushed and ate. Quentin wasn't eating, but Jason was.

"That was mother." Quentin said. He got up.
"You set right down." Dilsey said. "They got company in there, and you in them muddy clothes. You set down too, Caddy, and get done eating."
"She was crying." Quentin said.
"It was somebody singing." Caddy said "Wasn't it, Dilsey."
"You all eat your supper, now, like Mr. Jason said."
Dilsey said. "You'll know in the Lawd's own time."
Caddy went back to her chair. (p.30)

The domestic objects, which in the passage from Joyce attracted all the most active verbs and held them still in past time, are acted upon. The spoon and bowl have a curious life but only as implements in a feeding method, and the steam is not a moment of light but a tickle in the throat. Just as objects are part of the action, so the children will not remain posed as "a group of brothers and sisters." We are forced by the precision of detail to ask questions. Why does Quentin repeat, "That was mother"? Does Caddy know that it was not "singing"? Just what is it about Jason that allows him to go on eating? These establish the irrelevancy in Faulkner of the term "claritas"; his moments have no affirmative confidence since they fail to contain the whole story. Further, the nature of the questions introduces time, for they will only be answered if the children grow up. A moment whose detail demands a story is not complete. Joyce takes a narrative climax, reduces it to its elements and epiphanizes each of them. Stephen's rejection of vocation becomes "the man with the hat" (p.162), the loss of home is on the table and not with May and Simon on the streets, and the poverty of the children's lives is freed from social time by acute observation of the moment. Joyce's effort is to defeat narrative expectation by reducing the dependency of each moment upon the next, to an absolute minimum. The same intention timetables June 16th 1904, which from the point of view of plot is a far from daily day. Stephen gives up his teaching

post, surrenders his lodgings and decides to free himself from Mulligan's friendship ("Part ... the moment is now"); and though Molly has had many men, her seduction at four by Blazes Boylan makes Bloom's day eventful. However, Ulysses persuades us that such a viewpoint is irrelevant.

The organization of the Faulkner passage is dramatic. Noises filter through to the kitchen, some "company" is "crying" or "singing"; we cannot disregard the fact that this appears to be a moment of considerable consequence, part of a sequence of events about which we have not been told enough, and as a result Dilsey's "You'll know in the Lawd's own time." strikes the ear as a calculated pause. Such plotting is not that of a reflector, nor can Faulkner share Joyce's epiphanic belief in the equality of all moments before the artist, since narrative rests on its denial. The criteria for the Faulknerian moment are dramatic. The four days of The Sound and the Fury are special days containing crises whose intensity, though it may defeat explication, demands narrative effort. A story line must be formed so that the moment may be realized through its social, personal and historical context. This is true even for a man nominally without time. Benjy Compson has a plot - to get Caddy back. He wants to live behind himself, at a time when he and Caddy were children in a garden. This desire motivates his time and whenever possible Benjy's temporal shifts shift backwards. The plot is historically crude but Benjy is not an epiphany machine.

The style with which each author approaches the moment is indicative of his convictions about action and history. Joyce values the moment as an artefact whose creation demonstrates the impersonality of the perceiver and the radiance of the objective world. Such principles depend upon the emptying of

man's psychological vitality and the reduction of his ability to dictate external circumstances through action. As epiphany is a closed system of inter-related objects determining the artist, so Ulysses is a closed novel of inter-related words determining character. Even as language breaks Stephen's and Bloom's will to mental effort, so its pattern of continual cross-reference convinces the reader that every word and detail has a causal place into which the random, governed by the elements of "integritas" and "consonantia", cannot enter. This structure embodies a cyclical view of history. Circles hang over Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. Joyce had a seemingly compulsive ability to find a head for a tail and to discover in each end its beginning. Single words turn circular (Fin negans Wake), and circularity disposes bodies in a bed ("Ithaca" has Bloom lie with his mouth to Molly's buttocks, forming a closed circle, half male and half female). Joycean geometry descends from Vico, who considered Gentile history as a spiral. Time moved for him in complete cycles, each consisting of the three great ages (Divine, Heroic, Human). Finished cycles were linked by a brief fourth stage of dissolution (ricorso), which ended one stage and began another. The whole scheme was driven by a Divine mechanic with no time for human will or causal events. Clive Hart adds Theosophy to Vico as a source, but stresses that Joyce was interested in the system as system rather than in credibility, which begs the question - why this system?⁷⁴ I believe that Viconian geometry structures the linguistic absence at the centre of Ulysses. When Joyce took language out of everyday he consciously deprived it of a material and theological base: without some kind of grounding language and literary activity is liable to ring hollow. Decentred, the language-user is ripe for a mythic comforter. Having demythologized his language and himself,

Joyce finds in circularity the delusion of an absolute order, and "Penelope" rounds Ulysses off with all manner of circles. Stephen and Bloom end their days in the cyclical toils of Molly, whose thoughts revolve upon the axis of her husband, and whose mythic qualities have a pronounced geometry:

Penelope ... turns like the hugh earthball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning. Its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and cunt expressed by the words because, bottom (in all senses, bottom, button, bottom of the glass,⁷⁵ bottom of the sea, bottom of his heart) woman, yes.

8 sentences, annotated with such orifices, may very easily be read as a passport to infinity: Molly lies on her side and her conspicuous figure, on the tilt, becomes "∞" the infinity sign. Mythopeic logic discovers a seemingly enormous number of "o's" in the text, the typographical status of which (given axes and emissions) may signal the female physiognomy: a possibility that interrupts the linear development of a monologue already interrupted 88 times by the word "yes". If Joyce's identification of "yes" with astrological pivots and key points in the female organism is taken seriously, "yes" (along with "because", "bottom" and "woman") must impede the verbal flow, since physical and heavenly bodies sit uneasily on typographic entities. And yet Molly's non-allusive sentences resist formal diagrams; indeed, it might be argued that "Penelope" offers a comparatively conventional narrative. Molly's soliloquy, although unspoken, reads like speech; her biography traces a redeemable line in a natural vocabulary whose speech rhythms flow. After an extended exercise in intertextuality, a vocalist is restored. The conclusion is attractive but, I believe, misguided, primarily because the intertextual lesson is not

easily unlearned (witness, "o"). Moreover, Molly's linear stream, and the voice that utters it, share the section with conspicuous emissions from all other orifices. Vaginal discharge, menstrual blood, milk, semen and excrement (often linked to eating) are thematic focal points for Molly's imagination. It is clear from Joyce's love-letters to Nora that the relation between writing and excremental functions intrigued him; a proximity between language and human emission is constant in "Penelope", and is a source of sexual stimulation in the letters:

Write more and dirtier darling ... Write the dirty words big and underline them and kiss them and hold them for a moment to your sweet hot cunt, darling, and also pull up your dress a moment and hold them under your dear little farting bum. Do more if you wish and send the letter to me, my darling brown-arsed fuckbird. ⁷⁶

The quotation may strike some as being misplaced in a critical work - its inclusion will possibly offend literary decorum. Any offence makes Lord Chesterfield's point again; dirt must threaten all decorums (literary, social and linguistic) because it is matter out of place. Naming and meaning are intimately connected with the mental process of setting things in order. Dirt - so difficult to categorize, particularly when it involves a confusion of orifices - challenges that capacity for order. So, Molly's flow, being as excremental as it is vocal, threatens the very materials of the voice and of the narrative that it sustains.

In "Penelope" Joycean unvoicing takes a non-allusive form; arguably, as the conclusion to Ulysses it casts suspicion on the ploys of intertextuality. However, I am less concerned with the reverberations of this joke-on-language in Finnegans

Wake, than with setting Molly Bloom's voice in an anti-vocal perspective. For anthropological and formal reasons it is difficult to relax and accept the onward going movement of the "Penelope" soliloquy, and as Molly's voice weakens, so the line of her story grows amenable to the comforting geometry of the \odot . The circle, whatever its source, is an extremely coherent shape, capable of curing even self-imposed discontinuities.

The single word and the minor domestic habits of Joycean characters move in a circular way, so that, by the time we have read Ulysses, we are indifferent to whether Bloom cooks breakfast on June 17th or whether Stephen returns to improve Molly's Italian, not because they have proved themselves worthy of our indifference, but because we have read Ulysses, and been told about Vico. Even as Stephen, Bloom and Molly are caught in a circle and variously ensnared by words, so Dublin is a deterministic universe.

Faulkner's view of the moment as a dramatic and vocal formulation indicates a linear view of history, in which action plays a crucial part. His approach to it through individual narrators, whether at the level of the stream of consciousness (The Sound and the Fury/As I Lay Dying), the interior monologue (parts of Light in August/Absalom, Absalom!), or the feet-on-the porch persona (the Trilogy) suggests that the teller has some say in the story. However, narrators in Yoknapatawpha share the mythic habits of their region's imagination. The South has been slow to respond to historical change; informed by a theological account of history as fallen time, the Southern

mind is eager to regress to a lost ideal (whether agrarian, economic, cavalier or biblical). Some Faulknerian narrators, under the strain of describing a linear story, revert to mythic simplification. Joe Christmas, for all his creative iconoclasm, has fatalistic moments. Ike McCaslin experiences pre-historical "old times" in his encounters with bear and snake. Benjy Compson insists that Caddy perform as a virgin in accordance with a type of female innocence projected from Eden. These are particular instances of an abiding theme, and in later chapters on The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying I shall discuss in detail how Faulkner deals with the shadow of the circle on the narrative line.

At this point it is perhaps sufficient to emphasise the linear impulse of Faulknerian characters and words. When Faulkner disrupts historical sequence, or has a narrator do it for him, he is not making a theoretical point about the determining pressure of "was" or, after the Joycean model, suspending time; he is establishing that some moments are formative and must therefore be understood first, or at least be seen in a certain perspective, both by the reader and the teller. The intensity of the moment may reduce the narrator to incoherence, but this merely generates a different moment and a new narrative line, to be followed simultaneously (Absalom, Absalom!). Where the moment is a dramatic contraction, tense with possible stories, history, though impacted with myth, will be a confused progression filled with random circumstances. These may manifest themselves in

details as slight as the presence of an Italian girl in a baker's shop, or as sudden as the second Mrs. Bundren; whatever their form they will change the direction of lives and the meaning of novels.

The obvious question remains. If Faulkner was concerned to write stories about character, why are the major works so difficult to read? We are not surprised by the difficulty of Ulysses.

Any book concerned with the nature of language generates a convention of difficulty and addresses itself to the select few. Those chosen will expect the stylistic structures, from the single sentence to the overall pattern, to work against notions of character that have been accepted as traditional. But if Absalom, Absalom! is about Sutpen or even its four major narrators, what need or right has it to be so obscure? Any answer, outside the context of a particular novel, will be dangerously vague but the problem is located in the Faulknerian character. He is most typically one for whom the centre has been lost - Caddy has gone away, Addie has died, Sutpen is in pieces. The failure of what might motivate his story has isolated him. Not surprisingly, he is often seen as a figure in a collapsing household, lost for a name. If the narrator is to tell the story (whether it be about Caddy or Sutpen), and if the character is to live a significant plot (whether that is to bury Addie or be lynched), he will have to struggle. Success or failure depends upon his ability to control events through telling a story about those events. Consequently the structural difficulties of The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying, Light in August, and Absalom, Absalom! dramatize a significant character's attempt to break from the Narcissus mode of Modernism. The redemption of the story will counter solipsism but raise immense difficulties. Quentin

returns in imagination to his childhood at the Compson place, in action to the deserted Hundred. Joe Christmas decides to die in Jefferson. Although on the surface self-destructive acts, they set up lines of consequence between moments and redeem causality. The telling will make action meaningful and the character significant. In Faulkner, life does not become style, as it did at the most personal levels for Joyce and Hemingway; the style of the telling redeems the value in the life.

The redemptive nature of talk goes some way to explain the shape of the Faulkner novel. His structural elaboration grows from a progressive involvement with the links between characterization and narrative. The first three books establish a concern with areas of extreme isolation at which character is unstable. Family and communal structures are threatened by those who live within them; psychic virgins, incestual brothers, androgynes and the living dead put an undue strain on social constraint. The Rev. Mahon's church is empty, its steeple at a precarious angle. The cruise of the Nausikaa makes the community of artists, by definition, temporary, and the remaining male Sartoris leaves home.

The Compsons repeat these situations, but Joycean techniques allow Faulkner to realize his themes. When Quentin commits suicide because his symbolic accounts no longer add up, he poses narrative questions. Deprived of structures man feels that he has ceased to exist and in limbo kills himself. The alternative is that he invent structure (Benjy takes a slipper and Jason wields stereotypes), but his inventions are never fully satisfying (Benjy bellows and Jason blacks out). The fourth section of the novel implies that, at this stage, Faulkner was not prepared to face the questions that the three brothers raise

over every image and structure. A crisis as extreme as Quentin's suicide may be countered only with the ultimate imposition of inexplicable continuity, the Resurrection. Shegog's sermon gives the isolate a community of love, and an unfinishable novel the illusion of continuity. It is not, however, a lasting evasion. As I Lay Dying takes up the question of what constitutes love; by the close of the journey, isolation has been countered and the family has extended its history. The novel/^{also deals}with the aesthetic issue of what constitutes a valid image. Quentin's void is re-engaged as the flux of Addie's "boiling blood", common to all, but most manifest in Darl's insanity. The structural impulse resides in the units of character, each of which is a shape thrown into the turmoil of the action instituted by Addie. As I Lay Dying, against the odds, is a unity, gaining its shape from the principle of constant reappraisal that guided Faulkner's placing of its sections. Extreme alternatives are held in self-generated tension. For every Addie there is a second Mrs. Bundren; for every insane visionary a pragmatic carpenter. Striking the balance that will get the body into the ground and the family held together is vital, despite its terrible cost. Cash walks with a limp and will never forget Darl. The exact price of Cash's decision to build a structure and "drive the nails down and trim the edges well." (p.185), is explored in Sanctuary, a novel about a man "cut out of sheet tin" who cannot love.

Faulkner extends Cash's need for categories and rules until he produces a hell of stereotypes in which fictional motifs function with an independent logic that dictates lives. For example, something as seemingly innocuous as Popeye's suit becomes so much a part of the character that it induces doubts about the colour of his skin. Faulkner carefully

nurtures suspicions. We are moved from an acute perception of clothing as a second skin - "What river did you fall in with that suit on? Do you have to shave it off at night?"⁷⁷ (Temple), into a number of imprecisions during which metaphor confusingly dictates reality, so that, for Temple, Popeye is "that black man" (p.35) and for Benbow he smells "black". Finally repetition causes the reader to hear strange details of emphasis like Tommy's inflexion "I be a dog if he aint the skeeriest durn white man I ever see" (p.18) or the fact that in her waking-dream Temple presents her sexual assailant as "a nigger boy" (p.175). Obviously Popeye's suit is in part a satanic label, possibly borrowed from James Wait, but this does not explain how clothing can induce doubts about racial origin, doubts strong enough to lead at least one critic astray in print: "Popeye is suspected of having some negro blood".⁷⁸ Since the final chapter provides Popeye with a white parentage, why did Faulkner raise the issue? Working back from the suit's effect, it seems that he did so as an exercise in metaphoric logic, to establish a suit can change the pigment of its wearer. The same principle lies behind his use of Temple's hat, an accessory which controls the nature of her consciousness:

At Taylor station: She looked at him, her mouth boldly scarlet, her eyes watchful and cold beneath her brimless hat, a curled spill of red hair. (p.31)

In the kitchen of the Old Frenchman place: Temple^{had} pushed her hat on to the back of her head at a precarious dissolute angle above her clotted curls ... (p.46)

At the evening meal: Bending her shadow loomed high upon the wall, her hat tilted monstrously above a monstrous escaping of hair. (p.53)

On the Memphis road: Temple was beside him. Her hat was jammed on the back of her head, her hair escaping beneath the crumpled brim in matted clots. (p.109)

In the court room: From beneath her black hat her hair escaped in tight red curls like clots of resin. (p.226)

The list is graduated: the hat is seen, is seen as monstrous, is seen as a favoured garment before the nature of the dissolution makes itself logically apparent. The brain has clotted beneath clothing. A hat has consumed a character. Examples could be multiplied. At all levels, from the furniture to the dialogue, Sanctuary is a typological and metaphoric machine, operating within a limited set of literary rules. The genre expectations that dictate it are as tight as any Faulkner could find - an allegory which will fulfil the requirements of the best-seller by resolving an account of sexual crime and a detective novel, in a court room drama.

Light in August is an extended footnote to the earlier text. The story of Joe Christmas departs from the shocking implications of the first sentence to the final chapter of Popeye's story: "While on his way to Pensacola to visit his mother, Popeye was arrested in Birmingham for the murder of a policeman in a small Alabama town on June 17 of the year." (p.241). The outrage is not in the crime, or even in Popeye's innocence, but in the fact that a comic cut-out should have had a mother. After exploring character at its most inflexible, Faulkner can recreate Popeye from behind the mask. Joe Christmas will not accept the sheet-tin images that are imposed upon him. The hard edges of the comic-cut "white", "black", "Christmas", "McEachern", "bootlegger", "nigger-rapist" and "murderer" are the definitions thrown off by the continuity of Joe's life. Like Quentin and Addie before him, he senses the inadequacy of given names and accounts, and discovers a death whose nature is more positive than suicide. Unlike them, his is an inarticulate and closed consciousness; nonetheless, Faulkner uses the pattern of his separatist and iconoclastic instinct as a model for the novel's

structure. Light in August contains three other major strands of action which are interdependent but do not have sustained thematic relation. Joe is almost the link, just as their accounts of events in Jefferson almost define him. The careful disjunction is intensified by the device of describing action before providing the history which motivates it. Joe's decision to kill Joanna Burden (Ch. 5), comes before his childhood (Ch. 6), and is not acted upon until chapter 13 - though we discovered the body in chapter 4. Similarly, Hightower's public history is available to us early in the novel, but the private life is held back for the penultimate chapter. The overall effect is that the four stories break across one another, none being in itself an adequate meaning. Behind the structure, with its dramatically fractured edges, is the silent mind of the image breaker, needing shapes almost as much as he needs to break them.

Absalom, Absalom! is the formal culmination of the discoveries that Faulkner made through this line of related characters. Quentin, whose suicide instigated the problem, is returned to. His situation is the same - the Harvard study, Shreve the roommate, the lost story and the need to build a structure that will get that story told, and in so doing make the South, and his life in it, possible. The materials available are very similar. Sutpen (the absent hero) is the principle of flux. Such facts as there are provide the impulse to structural shape. What has changed is Faulkner's ability to create, through character, a structure that will hold the two forces in constant tension. This co-existence can best be described as a figure-ground. The most common example of the visual test is that of two silhouettes whose profiles form a white candlestick. The nature of the figure is such that, though the eye knows that both images exist, it is unable to see them simultaneously.

The more closely the eye looks, the faster grows its ability to shift the foreground into the background and background into foreground. The point at which both are seen together is never reached. Sutpen is the candlestick formed by the narrator's profiles, even as he forms them. Quentin and the reader are the viewing eye. The story line will never be clearly seen; the impulse to see it will remain. Absalom, Absalom! is arguably about those problems that have proved central to modern fiction - the resistance of the materials of a story to the language of that story, the breakdown of character as a reliable entity and nostalgia for the past as a source of coherence. These ideas, although implicit in its structure, are all secondary to Quentin's need to extend an utterance that will redeem him.

Because his characters need to talk, Faulkner abandons the most obvious and useful of the Joycean gifts. The stream of consciousness technique is used in only two novels, The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying, and even there is modified by various devices which guard against its tendency to passive naturalism. Thus, in The Sound and the Fury the confessional is made into a reflective mode, and moves towards interior monologue and soliloquy, though its need to evaluate a special day. With As I Lay Dying and the shortening of the sections, the element of address grows more apparent as characters swim rather than float in their own streams. Absalom, Absalom! recreates all the intricacies of the style but in an explicitly spoken form. Joyce's technique has been progressively verbalized as part of Faulkner's conviction that the fascinating isolate must "try to say" or be lost without a story. Faulkner's word for word is "talk".

Dublin's language is paralysed. Solipsism is everywhere, and everywhere accepted. Joyce's city is a city of acquaintances

and betrayals in which the unifying forces of church, politics and family have decayed to such an extent that cultural institutions are no longer distributing active words. Bloom, isolated by race, religion, employment and wife, accepts his state as that of the common man. Stephen considers exile necessary to the ego. For Joyce all this is not a problem but a condition of the modern world and, more importantly, for the kind of fiction that he is concerned to write. In Yoknapatawpha character is often isolated, but this is a state of pain that is not conclusive. The point becomes clear if we compare the map of Dublin provided by "The Wandering Rocks" with the chart of Jefferson drawn on the fly leaf of Absalom, Absalom!. Joyce's city is a collection of topographical fragments, street names and house numbers through which Father Conmee and the Viceregal procession thread. The door of Dillon's auction room is observed and the time-tabling of the Dollymount tram is noted, but no convincing route or civic shape emerges. What impresses is the catalogue of bits. Dublin becomes a city in pieces of typography, available to us only in a directory. Yoknapatawpha has few place names, none of them printed. It is a map of stories written in free hand.

COMPSONS WHERE THEY SOLD THE PASTURE TO THE GOLF CLUB SO
THAT QUENTIN COULD GO TO HARVARD
BRIDGE WHICH WASHED AWAY SO THAT ANSE BUNDREN AND HIS SONS
COULD NOT CROSS IT WITH ADDIE'S BODY
FISHING CAMP WHERE WASH JONES KILLED SUTPEN

Obviously the map makes an easy point in tersely epigrammatic plot summaries, where the stories themselves are broken narratives involving incompleated actions which often fail to explain. Moreover, they are told in words which struggle to keep their voice. But the point is a fair one. The crucial differences between Joyce and Faulkner are all contained within their attitude to voices that tell stories:

Question: Mr. Faulkner, do you think an author has his prerogative to create his own language? In other words to go against what the people create, vernacular?

Answer: He has the right to do that provided he don't insist on anyone understanding it ... actually, that's an obligation that he assumes with his vocation, that he's going to write it in a way that people can understand it. He doesn't have to write it in a way that people can understand it. He doesn't have to write it in a way that every idiot can understand it, but he's got to use a language which is accepted and in which the words have specific meanings that everybody agrees on. I think that Finnegans Wake and Ulysses were justified, but then its hard to say on what terms they were justified. That was a case of a genius who was electrocuted by the divine fire. (Faulkner in the University, p.52-53.)

The Joycean stream of consciousness makes solipsism and silence simple. It implies that the word has lost its oral value, that the listeners/readers have gone away, that the story is less interesting than the isolate consciousness and (with remorseless logic) that the consciousness is itself a verbal machine - a language model. All these aspects fascinated Faulkner, but ultimately he felt compelled to reject them and to follow the difficulties of utterance. Out of the tensions of this decision, charged but not "electrocuted" by Joyce's "divine fire", came the major works.

1. Faulkner in the University, ed. Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph Blotner (Random House, New York, 1972), p.58.
2. Quoted by Michael Millgate in The Achievement of William Faulkner (Constable, London, 1966), p. 14.
3. Marshall Smith, "Faulkner in Seclusion, Writing Movie Script," Memphis Press-Scimitar, (December 1, 1931), p.11.
4. William Faulkner, Mosquitoes (Dell, New York, 1962), p.205. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
5. "Hermaphroditus" appears in slightly modified form as Poem XXXVII of A Green Bough. It owes its subject indirectly to Baudelaire's poems "Femmes Damnées" and "Lesbos".
6. William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.98. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
7. James Joyce, Ulysses (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.42. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
8. Hugh Kenner, Dublin's Joyce (Beacon Press, Boston, 1956), p.184.
9. E.R. Steinberg, The Stream of Consciousness and Beyond in Ulysses (Univ. of Pittsburg Press, Pittsburg, 1973). See Part 3 for a discussion of the stream of consciousness as a scale of variously abstract levels poised above the non-verbal.

10. Weldon Thornton, Allusions in Ulysses (Univ. of N. Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1968), p.62. Thornton's glossary was an invaluable reference source.
11. William Faulkner, The Hamlet (Chatto and Windus, London, 1965), p.23. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
12. Umberto Eco, "The Poetics of the Open Work," Twentieth Century Studies, Vol. 1, No. 12 (December 1974), p.14.
13. Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics (McGraw-Hill, London, 1966), p.66. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
14. Phillippe Sollers, "Joyce and Co.," trans. Stephen Heath, Tel Quel, Vol. 64 (Winter, 1975), pp.3-13.
15. Brian Wicker, The Story Shaped World (Athlone Press, Univ. of London, 1968), p.137.
16. James Joyce, Dubliners (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968), p.7.
17. V.N. Vološ^Yinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Tilunik (Seminar Press, New York, 1973), p.74. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
18. William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom! (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973), p.311. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.

19. Armstid: Well, that'll be the last they'll ever see of him (Jewel) now, sho enough. Come Christmas time they'll maybe get a postal card from him in Texas, I reckon. And if it hadn't a been Jewel, I reckon it'd a been me; I owe him that much, myself. I be durn if Anse don't conjure a man, some way. I be durn if he ain't a sight.

As I Lay Dying (Penguin Harmondsworth, 1973), p.153.

Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.7

Tull: Whitfield begins. His voice is bigger than him. It's like they are not the same. It's like he is one, and his voice is one, swimming on two horses side by side across the ford and coming into the house, the mud-splashed one and the one that never got wet, triumphant and sad. (p.73)

20. Quoted by Chris Prendergast in "Beckett's 'Not I': Transluding from the Otherman," Fuse, No. 4 (November 1973), p.56.
21. T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," collected in Collected Poems: 1909-1962 (Faber, London, 1963), p.82. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
22. Malcolm Cowley, The Faulkner-Cowley File (Viking, New York, 1966), p.14.
23. Cleanth Brooks, "Introduction to Light in August" (Random House, Modern Library Edition, New York, 1968), pp.XVII-XVIII.
24. Mary Douglas, "The Couvade and Menstruation," collected in Implicit Meanings (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975), pp.59-60. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
25. More to the point - it is difficult to measure. Even in a static group, where three generations might conceivably co-exist, blood percentages would be a matter of guesswork and rumour.

26. Alfred Kazin, "The Stillness in Light in August," collected in Light in August and The Critical Spectrum, ed. O.W. Vickery (Wadsworth Pub. Inc., Belmont, 1971), p.263 & 265.
27. Olga Vickery, "The Shadow and the Mirror," collected in Light in August and the Critical Spectrum, ed. O.W. Vickery, p.69.
28. William Faulkner, Light in August (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967), p.80. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
29. J.G.Frazer, The Golden Bough (Macmillan, New York, 1944), pp.207-216. Frazer's account of menstruation among Zulu girls is typical of the effect that "dirty" blood can have on order, "the girl is viewed as charged with a powerful force which ... may prove destructive ... to all with whom she comes in contact." (p.607).
30. Joe's ruination of Mrs. McEachern and Joanna's cooking has less to do with a Freudian subplot than with the delight Joe takes in spoilure, i.e. in making dirt in bedrooms and kitchens.
31. Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.48.
32. Chester Himes, If He Hollers Let Him Go (Sphere Books, Aylesbury, 1967), p.173.
33. Stéphane Mallarmé, Mallarmé, trans. Anthony Hartley (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.159.
34. I should like to offer a highly speculative interpretation of the title, along the lines of the novel's doubts about

nomination. Faulkner declared that Light in August refers to a specific climatic condition:

... in August in Mississippi there's a few days somewhere about the middle of the month when suddenly there's a foretaste of fall, it's cool, there's a lambence, a luminous quality to the light, as though it came not from just today but from back in the old classic times. It might have fauns and satyrs and the gods and - from Greece, from Olympus in it somewhere. It lasts just for a day or two, then it's gone, but every year in August that occurs in my country, and that's all that title meant, it was just to me a pleasant evocative title because it reminded me of that time, of a luminosity older than our Christian civilization. /Faulkner in the University, ed. Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner (Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1959), p.199/

Faulkner exaggerates; the light features in only some Mississippi Autumns. It is attended by a singular and luminous clarity which none who have seen it forget, but which is extremely evanescent. The jump from light to language is large, but clarity of perception gained through transition is a feature of Joe's stylistic plot. It may be far fetched to bracket Mallarmé's favourite colour "azure", with Faulkner's August light, but less so, I believe, than to talk about pregnant cows. Symons spoke of Mallarmé's words striking light from one another, "like an actual rain of fire over precious stones." Faulkner illuminates Joe's linguistic delinquency with similar clarity.

None of this explains the classical decoration, whose substantiality seems ill suited to Symbolist speculation. However, just as Faulkner's alliance with voice firms up Decadent evanescence, so it sets up statues in the azure. Even the unnameable Joe Christmas seems at times to don his shadow, much as a villain from melodrama might don his inky cloak: his over-playing expresses an occasional need for identity, and exemplifies Faulkner's adherence to "presence" - a loyalty which embraces his most absent character and the light that falls on Mississippi during some Augusts.

35. William Blake, Songs of Innocence and of Experience (Oxford U.P., London, 1970), p.25.
36. George Charbonnier, Conversations with Claude Lévi-Strauss (Cape, London, 1971), p.26.
37. Mrs. Hait gets her asking price for a mule and shoots the beast. Flem realizes his valuation on his wife and disposes of her. Mrs. Hait's phrase, "I shot it", (p.256) reads like no more than a casual and very funny joke, until one realizes that "Mule in the Yard" is the last anecdote before Eula's suicide. Since the comic gun-shot is accompanied by increasing panic on Ratliff's part, it should have important overtones for those who tell it right.
38. The phrase is Eula Varner's and stands as a useful contrast to Joyce's term "unspeched".
39. Michael Millgate, The Achievement of William Faulkner (Constable, London, 1966), p.237. Millgate offers a full computation.
40. Helen McDuffi Swink, "The Oral Tradition in Yoknapatawpha County" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis for the University of Virginia 1969, collected in The Faulkner Room, at the University of Mississippi). Swink conducts an exhaustive study of oral devices, particularly cumulative sentences, suspended grammar and extemporaneous play.
41. William Faulkner, The Town (Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1957), p.3. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.

42. Quotations in order of occurrence refer to F.J. Hoffman, William Faulkner (College University Press, New Haven, 1961), p.91; Irving Howe, William Faulkner: A Critical Study (Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1952), p.247; T.Y. Greet, "The Theme and Structure of Faulkner's The Hamlet," collected in William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, ed. F.J. Hoffman and O. Vickery (Harcourt, New York, 1963).
43. William Faulkner, "Afternoon of a Cow," Furioso, No. 11 (Summer, 1947). The story was first published as "L'Après Midi d'une Vache," in Fontain (June-July, 1943), pp.66-81. However, Maurice Coindreau claims that the story was written in 1931 or 1937: the former dating would set the story in the year of The Hamlet's publication and link it inseparably with the drafting of the novel.
44. For a general discussion see Raymond Firth's introduction to Capital, Saving and Credit in Peasant Societies, ed. B.S. Yarney (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1964).
45. A "social" as opposed to an "economic" loan is defined by Raymond Firth on p.29 of this introductory essay.
46. Ratliff is more properly a trader than a salesman:
He sold perhaps three machines a year, the rest of the time trading in land and livestock and second hand farming tools and musical instruments or anything else which the owner didn't want badly enough, retailing from house to house the news of his four counties.
(The Hamlet, p.13)
47. The phrase belongs to Addie Bundren. Benjy Compson modifies it, "trying to say at". It applies widely among speakers

in Yoknapatawpha.

48. The mythic references are unsystematic and in no way constitute "a method" (see Ch.6: "Caddy, She Smelled of Trees?" p.353-4); they are simply ways in which Houston's cow, dog and horse might be perceived.
49. Albert B. Lord, The Singer of Tales (Atheneum, New York, 1965), p.44.
50. See Ch. 6 of this thesis, particularly p.328.
51. Frank Budgen, James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses, and Other Writings (Oxford U.P., Oxford, 1972), p.20.
52. Many examples of such remarks may be found throughout Faulkner in the University; the following is typical:

I don't know anything about style. I don't - I think a writer with lots to say - pushing inside him to get out hasn't got time to bother with style. If he just likes to write and hasn't got anything urging him, then he can become a stylist, but the ones with a great deal pushing to get out don't have time to be anything but clumsy. (p.77)
53. William Faulkner, Pylon (Harrison Smith and Robert Hass Inc., New York, 1935), p.298. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
54. Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973), p.6.
55. William Carlos Williams, Spring and All (Frontier Press, 1970), p.20.

56. William Carlos Williams, The Selected Poems of William Carlos Williams (New Directions, New York, 1968), p.21. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
57. Louis Zukovsky, ALL the collected short poems, 1923-1964 (Norton and Comp. Inc., New York, 1965), p.154-155.
58. Quoted by Peter Jones in his introduction to Imagist Poetry (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972), p.18.
59. Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1974), p.7. Hugh Kenner offers an illuminating discussion of Hemingway as a dilettante in A Homemade World (Alfred Knopf, New York, 1975), particularly Ch.5, "Small Ritual Truths," pp.119-157.
60. "Scavengers", the last story in Pylon, with its description of sight-seers on the sea wall watching attempts to recover Schumann's body, repeatedly echoes Moby Dick. The morbid crowds are the figures from "Loomings", "fixed in ocean reveries", and the dredger attached by its "steel umbilical chord" to "the prime oblivious mother of all living", recalls "The Monkey Rope". The pointers indicate that Faulkner wished his allusion to Billy Budd to be recognized.
61. Herman Melville, Billy Budd and Other Tales (Signet, New York, 1961), p.84.
62. Joseph Conrad, Youth and Two Other Stories (Doubleday, New York, 1924), p.118.

63. Conrad Aiken, "William Faulkner: The Novel as Form," collected in William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, ed. F.Y. Hoffman and O. Vickery, p.138.
64. Warren Beck, "William Faulkner's Style," collected in William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, ed. F.Y. Hoffman and O. Vickery, p.154.
65. Hugh Kenner, A Homemade World (Alfred Knopf, New York, 1975), p.205.
66. William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973), pp.137-138. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
67. William Carlos Williams, Paterson (New Directions, New York, 1963), Book 1, p.27.
68. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages ... (Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p.144)
69. This is inherent in his invention of "the objective correlative"; an idea explored most fully in "Hamlet and his Problems," The Sacred Wood (Methuen, London, 1960), p.100.
70. Frederick Jameson, "Metacommentary," P.M.L.A., Vol.80 (January 1971), p.13.

71. Mary Douglas, "Primitive Rationing: A Study in Controlled Exchange," collected in Themes in Economic Anthropology, ed. Raymond Firth (Tavistock Publications, London, 1970), pp. 119-147.
72. James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968), p.163.
73. Quoted by E.R. Steinberg in The Stream of Consciousness and Beyond in Ulysses, p.261.
74. Clive Hart, Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake (Faber, London, 1962). My comments are heavily reliant on Hart's second chapter.
75. Stuart Gilbert (ed.), Letters of James Joyce (Faber, London, 1957), p.170.
76. Richard Ellman (ed.), Selected Letters of James Joyce (Viking Press, New York, 1975), p.186.
77. William Faulkner, Sanctuary (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.41. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
78. Lawrence S. Kubie, "William Faulkner's Sanctuary, An Analysis," Saturday Review of Literature, (October 20th, 1934), p.224.

Chapter 4

"As I Lay Dying" : Addie Bundren and God

"Puny inexhaustible voice(s)"¹ go on talking in Yoknapatawpha partly because they have Divine permission to do so, or at least a dim recollection about some Godly sanction. The theological aspect of Faulkner's language reinforces the substantiality of the oral in his work. Moreover, a nostalgia for a Divine script further differentiates the Faulknerian word from words as they were being used by his contemporaries.

It is a commonplace that in 1917 a generation of Americans went to war for soiled words and came back determined to purify them. Hemingway knew that "glory", "Sacrifice", "sacred" belonged in the meat yards of Chicago. Dos Passos could taste how "the clean words our fathers spoke" had been "slimed and fouled". E.E. Cummings, in the Enormous Room of a French prison, revered a man called Zulu who could only emit the phonetic noises "Huh" and "Mog", but who was "a master of the well chosen silence". The consensus had it that language was in decay. To stop the rot Hemingway retreated to small concrete words. Dos Passos piled up more and more evidence. E.E. Cummings, like the Dadists, longed to bury printed matter under blocks of abstract colour, so that dirtied-words might be seen as just one of the resources available to the artist - a diminished one.


Faulkner was never an ambulance driver. He got no nearer war-time Europe than a Royal Airforce training camp in Canada - but I should like to suggest that, by using peculiarly Southern values against Southern myths, Faulkner achieves a purification of language not only more astringent than any of his American contemporaries, but strikingly different in kind from the linguistic attitudes that characterized the major modern figures, Joyce, Eliot and Pound.

To back up the claim, I shall analyse a passage from the Addie Bundren section of As I Lay Dying. This may seem a narrow way into a broad subject, but Faulkner critics have long focussed on Addie Bundren in their debate about Faulkner and language. I think that too often they choose the wrong piece of Addie Bundren and so fail to hear the details of what she is saying.

He did not know that he was dead, then. Sometimes I would lie by him in the dark, hearing the land that was now of my blood and flesh, and I would think: Anse. Why Anse. Why are you Anse. I would think about his name until after a while I could see the word as a shape, a vessel, and I would watch him liquefy and flow into it like cold molasses flowing out of the darkness into the vessel, until the jar stood full and motionless: a significant shape profoundly without life like an empty door frame; and then I would find that I had forgotten the name of the jar. I would think: The shape of my body where I used to be a virgin is in the shape of a and I couldn't think Anse, couldn't remember Anse. It was not that I could think of myself as no longer unvirgin, because I was three now. And then I would think Cash and Darl that way until their names would die and solidify into a shape and then fade away, I would say, All right. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what they call them.²

"Anse? Why Anse? Why are you Anse?" Addie is in fact asking a riddle which could be worded, "When is the man Anse, the word Anse?" Riddles work by reducing several terms to one term, "When is a door not a door? When it's a jar". A door and a jar are not the same thing but the riddle, working on the pun in "ajar" tricks two words "door" and "jar", for a moment into one "ajar". The game pleases because it promotes a mystery and solves it with a solution that is at once satisfying and impossible; a door is no more a jar than a man is a word.

Riddling impulses are present in Addie's determined effort to make Anse fit his name. Her attempt asserts that language is a literal system, within which each word exists in a one to one relationship with a thing. Addie by asking the question, "How does a man earn his name?" tries to guarantee the answer,

"Because it is natural to him". She takes as her model for the naturalness of language a proper name, the most referential of terms (a man's name very rarely needs to be explained; it usually points to one particular man, unless there happen to be five Anse's in the room at any one time). But Addie is still not sure that the riddle is going to give her the right answer - after all the name "Anse" is a word consisting of four arbitrary phonemes: in the cause of naturalness, Addie substitutes a storage jar for the word "Anse", and takes her riddles to the kitchen where she pours Anse's blood like molasses into that jar. Rephrased, the riddle reads, "When is the man Anse a storage jar?". The answer, "(when he is) a significant shape profoundly without life like an empty door frame". This is an approximate answer since it replaces the vessel with a shape that is only "like" an empty door frame. It is however significant on two counts; it is lifeless i.e. Anse's blood has coagulated into a cold molasses; it is nameless, "and then I would find I had forgotten the name of the jar". The solution that substitutes a pot for Anse and a door frame for both, may seem to mystify more than to satisfy. Nonetheless, each substitution is one stage in a systematic purification. A word is remade as an object and that object becomes an empty space seen through an open door. During the cleaning up a man dies and his name is erased. The door jamb that marks the last in this series of substitutions is hardly an answer to the riddle but it is a shape that has a double characteristic. It is a silent and apparently empty space. It can be diagramatized (). Addie has not solved her problem, but she has rephrased it as a threshold that a riddle might cross.

Addie lives in a physical world, neither she nor her thoughts escape the limits of the Bundren farm; her imagination works with the resources of the Mississippi hill country and her language reflects the physical realities of her surroundings. Just as she keeps a clean house so she uses a neat language in which words must have a physically realizable value. Words come to her mind much as domestic utensils might come to her hand - pots, door frames, spiders, molasses, clothes and blood. She insists that even abstractions can be tidied away into physical objects by the simple expedient of comparing them to those objects:

We had to use one another by words like spiders dangling by their mouths from a beam (p.136)
words that are not deeds ... coming down like the cries of geese out of the wild darkness (p.138)
I would think of the sin as garments which we would remove (pp.138-139)

The similes like the riddles are quite undisguised. In each case Addie substitutes a thing for an abstraction - spiders for dialogue, geese-cries for words, garments for sin; the substitutions are justified by the silent assumption that nothing could be more natural. Addie's imagination, like her domesticity, dislikes loose-ends and so her monologue is full of riddles and geometries whose resolution is simply a matter of tidying up.

Having set the molasses jar aside in an insecure mental niche, she tries the riddle of Anse's name again. Addie, lying in bed, "by (Anse) in the dark", touches her own slackening body and finds another entrance in the shape of a jar - under her hand she has material for a further riddle:

I would think: The shape of my body where I used to be a virgin is in the shape of a _____ and I couldn't think Anse, couldn't remember Anse. (p.137)

The missing word marked by the gap in the typography could be

one of two: "hymen" ("the shape of my body where I used to be a virgin is the shape of a hymen"); or "phallus" ("the shape of my body where I used to be a virgin is in the shape of a phallus" [that broke the hymen]). Ideally the word should incorporate both. Addie needs a word that will trick the two into one. That word is "Anse", since it was his phallus that broke the hymen. But even now, knowing the answer, Addie will not use the word. ("I couldn't think Anse" implies that she couldn't think of the name then, but can now). Instead she leaves a space in the print. By doing this she is describing her hymen as a space without words - the pause is a blank thought; blank because it is silent; silent because Addie has made a choice. Addie has linked "hymen" or virginity to silence, and this involves a rejection of the equally likely answer which would link "phallus" or fertility to a word - "Anse".

It is typical of Faulkner that virginity like silence is a negative value; virginity exists as a felt reality at and after the moment of its loss; silence can best be heard after noise. Nevertheless, for a moment in Addie's mind the negative value exists as a positive. The pure space in the text is the positive answer to her riddle, "When is the man Anse, the word Anse?", which could be rephrased as the riddle of language, "When is a man, a word?". Answer, "When he violates an original and silent purity". But farmers' wives have no use for such answers and Addie moves away from the riddling gap, to the fact of being the mother of two:



It was not that I could think of myself as no longer unvirgin, because I was three now. (p.137)

This escape from a difficult riddle is as unsatisfactory as it is laboured. The triple negative, cancelled-out, leaves "I

could not think of myself as being a virgin". But an "un" and a "no" are not easily disposed of. It is impossible to make a total denial in literature because the positive sign remains in printed evidence and more often than not is longer than the negative. Addie wants to forget the riddle and its tiresome equations, "virginity = silence" "fertility = language", but her evasion draws attention to itself; a re-grown hymen, a word like "unvirgin" and the hasty erasure of two sons are not easily passed. Furthermore her compromise solution (I should imagine one of the most quoted pieces of literary graphmanship) is a patent falsification:

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.137-138)

This formula is reached because Cora nagged and a riddle proved problematic, but it, more than any other statement in the novels, has stimulated influential generalizations about Faulkner's attitude to language. Olga Vickery's is typical, "one of his basic attitudes is that language and logic act to obscure truth rather than to reveal it ... barrenness attends all discussion".³ The remark is, I believe, doubly mistaken. In As I Lay Dying as a whole, words are inseparable from acts - Whitfield with a voice "bigger than himself." is a man of words who breaks his word - for Addie he "does" but having crossed a river in flood, he fails to "do", that is to "say". Anse, a less tautological example, is forced by a promised word to get to Jefferson. While doing so he behaves like a man who knows that bridges down, teams lost, and barns burned earn him a place in every barber's shop, on every porch and anywhere in Yoknapatawpha where stories are told. Anse does to become a by-word. In Addie's section, the

graph  does not match the shape  or its modified version " " printed as a gap in the text. General claims about Faulkner's view of words will have to come to terms with the hole in the text, rather than with a graph drawn in exasperation to obscure the issue.

A great deal of Addie's section leads the reader back to " " or at least to a sense of an unstated theme. There are several points in the monologue where questions are almost asked, whose answers imply a sub-text which, recovered from Addie's inarticulacy, would offer an account of language so complete that it would also be an account of the world.

That was when I learned that words are no good; that words don't even fit what they are trying to say at. (p.136)

"At" is awkward; it gives direction to speech which is not generally thought of as so forcefully directional. What is it that all words are directed at?

or:

I knew that the word was like the others: just a shape to fill a lack; (p.136)

The word that is a shape to fill a lack, rather than a gap, is the sign of some original loss which caused the "lack". How did this loss occur?

or:

I would think of him dressed in sin. I would think of him as thinking of me dressed also in sin, he the more beautiful since the garment which he had exchanged for sin was sanctified. I would think of the sin as garments which we would remove in order to shape and coerce the terrible blood to the forlorn echo of the dead word high in the air. (pp.138-139)

Addie's adultery is sinful before it is sexual - it is the sin that makes her hot for it. The stripping of the clothes is dogmatically urgent. Clearly Whitfield did not have Addie, as he must have had any number of Addies behind the tent at a

revivalist meeting. She "took" him because he was, "the instrument ordained by god", with whom adultery would be an offence "utter" and "terrible" enough to echo the original sin. God would have to hear. If the sob of their passion could be shaped it might do more than echo above them through the woods. Addie has been taught by Anse's usage that the "dead word" is "love". Her image shapes an echo into a vessel and fills it with blood. A word that is flesh is one that regains value, proving by its quasi-religious example that all words might regain their values and in so doing fall silent. That term which is natural is never more than an echo, because, as a shared-meaning, it doesn't need saying. In the adulterous episode that Addie describes, purity grows from profanity and silence rises out of a word. On whose authority do such events occur?

or:

But then I realized that I had been tricked by words older than Anse or love, and that the same words had tricked Anse too (p.137)

In each case the unstated question raises the issue of the origins of language. Addie has been trained almost to ask this kind of question. She is the child of Fundamentalist theology. Her father traced the Calvinist stress on Original Sin to its logical dismissal of life, formulating it for his daughter as the central text "The reason for living is getting ready to stay dead a long time" (p.136). Her lover must have reinforced the loss: named for George Whitfield an 18th century circuit-rider who claimed, "The fall of man is written in too legible characters not to be understood: Those that deny it by their denying prove it".⁴ The remark is well within demagogic range of itinerant preachers who, during the 30's, employed a similar rhetoric to persuade their congregations as to the originality of

their sin. The tone of Addie's section is therefore understandably doctrinal. She inhabits a spiritual and geographical region where fundamentalist sects insisted upon the value of personal testimony. Southern Presbyterianism and Southern Methodism both stress that each man talks directly to God, and is a microcosm of the Fall and of a problematic redemption. However, neither institution offers a measure of whether or not the testifier is saved, beyond more of the same - more systematic self-scrutiny, more personal testimony. Driven in on itself by absence of theological certainty, the puritan imagination has often been solipsistic. Alternatively, it avoids doubt by adopting conviction (Doc Hines and McEachern are types common in Yoknapatawpha). Addie vacillates, her school room sadism is the gesture of a fanatic, but the fanataticism is desperate. Her language is at once private and dogmatic; riddles appear next to profundities. Obscurity generates its own rhetoric, and the monologue might at times be a sermon whose terms are as cryptic and convinced as any that Hightower gave to Jefferson. One thing is plain: Addie has a conviction, beyond personal arrogance, about the representative originality of everything in her life. Her virginity, to her, was the first that was ever lost; her adultery occurs in the eye of God: her children might well be divided tribes; her refusal of Anse is murder, and her words are as new as Adam's - none of them is expendible since each word must contain what it names in a word so ideally natural that it need not be said and can be left silent.

Addie's world is filled with oppositions, between death and life, deed and word, Whitfield and Anse, child and child. The point about what I am rather unsatisfactorily going to call, her

rage for origination, is that the secondary term of every opposition must be reabsorbed by the primary. For example, male and female exist as an opposition, but when Addie remembers her marriage bed she absorbs Anse and can no longer imagine him; as she puts it "I took Anse". The problem for the reader is how have the two become one; just how/^{has}the opposition between the sexes been overcome; why is living a preparation for death; or, linguistically, in the case of the first riddle, how does a man become his name?

Effectively Addie never gives us the answer, but, led by her compulsive mixture of intuitive linguistics and primitive non-conformism, it is I believe possible to attempt one. Addie frequently mentions "dark voicelessness" (p.138) "voiceless speech" (p.139) and "the dark land talking of God's love" (p.138); because this language is silent it should be associated with the silent gap in the text, and so must form part of a clue to the first riddle. A remark like "the dark land talking of God's love" implies some original place, where in an earlier time a language was spoken that man can no longer hear. Since this place is linked to the gap in the text it must be a pre-sexual place in a pre-linguistic time: the nearest symbolic approximations that Addie can offer are the hymen and silence.

Given Addie's compulsion to understand what she cannot quite understand, a hypothetical piecing-together of the story served by these symbols seems justified. It is a version of Genesis set in Eden before mankind was split into Adam and Eve. The garden is silent; in it man lives in such amity with God that he is at one with all things, whether they are animals or objects - as a result of this he has no need to differentiate them from himself by naming them. The place is thoughtless, wordless and

sexless. This location adds a further term to Addie's equation. Eden is the source: Eden = virginity = silence.

The story has a sequel; God divided man into man and woman; the single unit was doubled with the removal of the rib. The newly created woman ate the apple and offered man sin in two forms, sexual knowledge (a source of infinite multiplication), and knowledge as thought, which since we think in words is language (itself a source for the infinite multiplication of ideas). The sequel is the Fall, which-as the first moment of fertility and language - adds a new initial term to Addie's second equation: The Fall = fertility = language. According to this story language is synonymous with the Fall; like God's curious creation of man in his own image, like the division of man into man and woman, like the expulsion from the garden into the world, it is one more division. The gap between every word and its object is for Addie the gap between man and God. Language is the Fall and it happens everyday.

In this, Addie's Eden is more stringent than the Eden of Genesis. According to the Old Testament, Adam was a namer before the division of the sexes; nouns were part of his God-given task:

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.
(Genesis Ch2, v.19)

However, the words used by Adam have a divinely sanctioned naturalness. As part of Creation they seem physical in the way that the physical world is physical, that is to say they contain the materials to which they refer. Their distinctive quality can be felt in the comparative value that we still give to "name" as against "word". Something of the shock that

Eve's appearance had on these names is recorded by Mark Twain in his Extracts From Adam's Diary:

Monday: This new creature with the long hair is a good deal in the way. It is always hanging around and following me about. I don't like this; I am not used to company. I wish it would stay with the other animals ... Cloudy today, wind in the east; think we shall have rain ... WE? Where did I get that word? ... I remember now - the new creature uses it.⁵

"We" is not the container of anything; it is an arbitrary sign.

Linguistic abstractions begin to appear.

I wish it would not talk; it is always talking. That sounds like a cheap fling at the poor creature, a slur; but I do not mean it so. I have never heard the human voice before, and any new and strange sound intruding itself here upon the solemn hush of these dreaming solitudes offends my ear and seems a false note. And this new sound is so close to me; it is right at my shoulder, right at my ear, first on one side and then on the other, and I am used only to sounds that are more or less distant from me.

Conversation pursues the occasional namer with an excess of words.

Friday: The naming goes recklessly on, in spite of anything I can do. I had a very good name for the estate, and it was musical and pretty - GARDEN-OF-EDEN. Privately, I continue to call it that, but not any longer publicly. The new creature says it is all woods and rocks and scenery, and therefore has no resemblance to a garden. Says it looks like a park, and does not look like anything but a park. Consequently, without consulting me, it has been new-named - NIAGARA FALLS PARK. This is sufficiently high-handed, it seems to me. And already there is a sign up:

KEEP OFF
THE GRASS

My life is not as happy as it was.

Things require more than one name. As words multiply, writing appears not simply on sign boards, but on the diary pages left blank by Adam before the opposite sex turned up.

Addie's version of this story of all kinds of separations and multiplications derives from a still more original division. Addie speaks enigmatically of "hearing the dark land talking of God's love and His beauty and His sin" (p.138). But how can God

sin? Why should this sin be linked to beauty and love? What left the dark land in on the secret? Three questions which are clues to a first version that pre-dates Genesis. God sinned when he divided himself. He made man after his own image as a mirror in which to see and love his own beauty. The Earth knows because, split from heaven, it too was part of the first fall.

This reconstruction may sound fanciful, however I do believe that this story, or one very like it, will give consistent answers to the riddles in her monologue. For example, "Why is the man Anse, the name Anse?". The riddle has two equally valid answers; a gap in the typography which is the sign for a silent and sexless Eden, or "Anse" which is the sign for a fertile and fallen word. Addie solves the contradiction by trying to ignore the second possibility. Her whole life has, it seems, been lived to erase the equation, The Fall = fertility = language. She was a virgin who married in spite of herself; a mother outraged by each pregnancy; a silent woman unable to resist words. Her funeral plans are a last attempt to prove the primacy of, Eden = virginity = silence. By insisting on a Jefferson burial, she returns not simply to her place of origin, but by lying in her family plot she cancels out her second (marital) name - Bundren, and reverts to her maiden name - a name which because we never hear it, is silent.

My reading is wilfully theoretical, but it seems to me that I have more licence for this than Addie's mathematical turn of mind. There is nothing in my equations as odd as the oddness of the title. I started with a riddle simply because the novel's title is a riddle - As I Lay Dying? "I" riddles; for a long time the reader probably assumes that the "I" refers to Addie, but her section complicates rather than affirms the assumption.

If "living is getting ready to stay dead" (p.134), the "I" should refer to the living and not to Addie, who is dead. In this case it is an anonymous pronoun asking for a name, by begging all names. "Dying" riddles; tradition has it that the whole of life may pass before the eyes of a dying man, but Addie is in her coffin before we reach her last testimony. The title, in her case, might be more aptly phrased, As I Lay Dead unless the participle is intended to redeem the pronoun from death, by saving it from the natural outcome of time and its story. The possibility is not without seriousness given that Addie's goal is Eden. I started with a riddle about language because the entire narrative depends on Anse's word: As I Lay Dying is based on a verbal contract, fulfilled to cancel out his given word. I started with Addie's riddle because, although her section is late, it reveals the extent to which she invented her family. Two children will make the point; Cash is conspicuously silent because Addie made him a reticent child, "Anse had a word too, love he called it ... (but) Cash did not need to say it to me, nor I to him" (p.136); Darl is a word-man because for Addie his conception was a matter of words, not of sperm.

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 tricked me, hidden within a word like within a paper screen and struck me in the back through it. (pp.136-137).

Above all I started with Addie's riddle of language, because it and the equations derived from it reappear constantly in Faulkner's work.

The general assumption that Faulkner and Addie share a mythology of language may be accurate, but if this is so it does not boil down to a mutual mistrust of words. Addie does claim that some words are arbitrary, but her every effort is to cure rather than to mistrust them. Her literalness persuades words back through the wall of language into the reality of

what they signify; this is an initial step; ideally she wants the words on the page (indeed, on all the pages) to drain through that hole in the text to the silence that is the original tongue. Since her linguistic and her sexual attitudes are inter-twined, verbal cancellations are attended by the reduction of sexual multiplicities. The redemption of silence is marked by the restoration of the hymen. Mentally she kills Anse, "And then he died, he did not know that he was dead" (p.138). With or without the theological subtext the "murder" is vicious. More dangerously it may sound like nonsense. I suspect, however, that by this stage Addie's voice has imposed its own logic so that when the reader hears how one death is insufficient and that the evidence of the children must be removed, he is more concerned to discover the sense than to point the nonsense.

I gave Anse Dewey Dell to negative Jewel. Then I gave him Vardaman to replace the child I had robbed him of. And now he has three children that are his and not mine. (p.140)

Addie's mathematics, like her maternal instinct, is eccentric; at various times she claims of Cash and Darl, "I gave Anse the children" (p.138) and, "My children were of me alone," (p.139). However, it is plain that if forced to split the family, Cash would be hers and Darl, towards whom she was always cold, would be credited to Anse. The cancellation in question refers primarily to post-Jewel pregnancies - of which two (Dewey Dell and Vardaman) go to their father, and one (Jewel) to Addie. Anse's three, presumably, are Darl, Dewey Dell, Vardaman; leaving Addie with Cash and Jewel. Cash ruptured but strengthened his mother's psychic hymen, and Jewel puts her repair to the test. As the child of a sanctified man, who was conceived in God's sight, he is his mother's "cross" and her "salvation" (p.133). The woman who claims of the natural birth of a first child,

"My aloneness had been violated and then made whole again by the violation" (p.136), can only believe that as Jewel is her Christ, so she is his Virgin Mother.

Addie's systematic purifications are at odds with the linguistic atmosphere in which Modernism developed. Ulysses, "The Waste Land" and The Cantos, depend upon an assumption about the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign. When Joyce declared the voices of his Dubliners "paralysed" and made it difficult to understand a word in Ulysses, except in relation to another word in Ulysses, he might have been dramatizing a remark by Ferdinand de Saussure:

In language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither idea nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonetic differences that have issues from the system. The idea or phonic substance that a sign contains is of less importance than the other sounds that surround it.⁶

The paragraph is an accurate summary of "The Waste Land" 's form. In January 1922 Eliot sent Pound the first draft of a narrative poem, shaped through Tiresias, the central narrator. The returned manuscript has been likened by Hugh Kenner to "a dense mosaic". Tiresias, whatever Eliot may say in the Notes, has been relegated to a short piece in one section - one of many pieces arranged in a relationship of difference. "The Waste Land" is not properly a mosaic; small coloured pebbles are generally set in mortar to describe an outline. Pound's pen cleared outline away, indeed his cuts are so scrupulous that what remains is at first glance random. The bits and pieces of "The Waste Land" do not refer back to anything behind or beyond themselves - whether to Tiresias or to a bundle of myths - their meaning, along with the meaning of each line and each word,

cannot be grouped outside "the play of signifying relations that constitutes language". Meaning as a fully constituted presence has vanished. Pound in his A.B.C. of Reading tells a story that makes the same point:

If you ask an average Westerner what 'red' is, he will tell you a colour, and then if you ask him what a colour is, he'll tell you that it is a vibration or a refraction of light, and then you ask him what that is and you get, "a modality of being, or non-being", or at any rate you get in beyond your depth, and beyond his depth.⁷

As an alternative, Pound proposes the Chinese ideogram for 'red' which combines the abbreviated picture of 'rose' 'iron' 'rust' 'cherry' and 'flamingo'. This is a proposition rather than a definition drawn up from a set of relations; it tells us what red means by giving us four different examples of ways in which it is manifested. Pound admits that language is metonymic; that is that it substitutes before it names. Eliot knew this; he simply lacked the confidence of his editor, who by 1922 had begun to practise the idea in The Cantos.

Individual lines in "The Waste Land" illustrate Pound's method and Saussure's theory, as well if not better than does the overall form.

These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe,
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih.⁸

The first thing to note is that the search for origins produces seemingly useless information. What are we supposed to think when an annotator, in this case Eliot himself, tells us that "Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe", comes from Kyd's Spanish Tragedy: that "Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.", means "Give, sympathise, control", and that:

line 433: Shantih. Repeated as here, is a formal ending to an Upanishad. 'The peace that passeth all understanding' is our equivalent to this word.

The information is true but it is like being told that red is a certain range of vibrations on the spectrum; we don't know what to make of it. Recognizing that there is a problem here, we may open a dictionary for a definition of "Upanishad", fetch a copy of Kyd's play, look out a second copy of Collected Poems so that we have the Notes constantly in front of us - and, balancing an embarrassing number of texts - still be no nearer an answer. The mistake is to try to make the words go back to a meaning at all. Eliot himself hints that meaning as nomination has gone away: "Shantih. 'The peace which passeth understanding' is our equivalent to this word".

"Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata." The relation between these three words and how Eliot is using their differences tells us how to read them. "Datta" means "Give", but if Eliot had written the line as "Give. Sympathise. Control." something very different would have happened. What difference is there between "Datta" and "Give"? Sound. The Sanskrit sounds older, more originally religious than English. But in the act of following up this hunch and saying "Dayadhvam", with resonance, the problem of pronunciation springs to mind: to imitate a Hindu is to try to be like him and at the same time to hear our difference from him. The pull is in two directions: we want to fill the word with sonorous power but feel embarrassed. The difficulty is not the link between the word and the meaning ("sympathise" is after all given in the Notes and is not much help), but the link between us and the word, and the word and those that surround it. The line, like the poem is about how language works.

"Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe." To make this fit the poem we must dismember the source text by extracting one scene and further extracting one line, or a speech or two or three. As Hugh Kenner points out in The Invisible Poet a great

deal fits. "Fruitless poetry" (Act 4:Sc.1, line 72) might stand as a gloss on "The Waste Land"; reference to the "profit" of "professors" in the following line could be Eliot's recognition that he, like Joyce, would be turned into an industry. The play's arrangement to play a play (line 84) confirms the part playing of the poem ("all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias"), while the fact that the parts are to be performed, "in unknown languages to breed variety", complements the linguistic agility of Eliot's text. There might even be a case for supposing that Balthazar's fears for Hieronymo's production are the critical position reached by most "Waste Land" readers - "This will be a mere confusion." In tracing, "Why then Ile fit you" to line 70, Act 4, Sc.1 of The Spanish Tragedy we have engaged over 110 lines and the decision to stop there is less exhaustive than exhausted. Wherever the line is drawn, the reader is dealing with words as intertextual manifestations rather than with words as signs towards the world.

Faced with "Shantih shantih shantih" stress in translation could fall on "peace" or on "which passeth understanding". Either way the conclusion that "The Waste Land" is about a refurbishing of The Grail legend, and the need for Christian positives, or that it is a comment on Post-War European sterility, must seem wrong when the poem has so consistently been about language, our relation to it and its relation to itself.

Addie's section is at odds with all this. "The linguistic sign unites not a thing and a name but a concept and a sound image" (p.66). Saussure's insistence separates the word from its referent, and prepares the way for the shift of attention in modern linguistics from etymology (which is the history of the origin of words), to syntax (which is the study of how words

relate to one another in their context) - from the source of the word to how the word performs in relation to other words. Frederick Jameson calls this the implicitly "lateral" movement of the Saussurean model, a movement which deflects from "the whole question of the ultimate referents of the linguistic sign."⁹ However, it should be added that Saussure's substitution of "concept" for referent and "sound-image" for name, has a second and equally important effect - it is liable to dematerialize the external world. Addie resists both developments. She listens to other people's words going straight up in thin lines "quick" "harmless" and arbitrary; she watches as they decreate whatever it is they claim to name, but she will not accept what she sees and hears as evidence of necessary truths. Instead she talks about the "older" words, attempts to redeem a natural language and to protect it with theology. Ideally Addie, by setting each word in a one to one relation with its ultimate referent, would cure the rupture language made in nature - restoring both to God. Or, to make use of the terminology of the linguistic philosopher Jacques Derrida, she would link every signifier directly to "a transcendental signified" whose meaning would be located outside the system of linguistic difference.

Addie's theories are not without supporters among modern linguists. Indeed Jacques Derrida¹⁰ accuses Saussure of committing just Addie's offence, when the Swiss linguist claims a privileged proximity to meaning for the spoken over the written word. Like Addie, the oralist grades words - by doing so, he implies an inner life, or pre-expressive sense, to which speech is closer than print. Saussure argues that writing is a violence against the first, the spoken language of man. Derrida believes the distinction false because language is precisely the system where "the central signified, the original or transcendental

signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences". There is no point of origin, no natural meaning, because sign "Anse", whether spoken or written, differs from the man Anse. In his essay "Speech & Phenomena" Derrida defines this difference. Two things happen when a word is used; the user "differs" that is he expresses a distinction or a non-identity with a thing; also he "defers", that is he imposes a delay, putting off until later the possible naming that is at present impossible. However, even here, origination is present in both Derrida's terms - "to differ" suggests a final affinity which "to defer" will only delay. Saussure's reverence for oral words and Addie's claims for old words share a semi-religious feel for the natural roots of language. This Derrida cannot dispel. Although signs are an arbitrary gathering of phonemes, the act of signification remains natural; for whether the user says "Anse" or writes "Anse" down, he is at least as likely to behave as if he is bridging a gap, as he is to believe that he is describing a schism.

Words then are both arbitrary and natural. Addie's riddle tries to resolve the contradiction. I would suggest that the oral condition of Southern culture and the demagogic practice of fundamentalist faith makes her antagonistic toward the arbitrary principle that has caught the imagination of the 20th century artist. Addie insists that words have an origin: this she discovers in the silence that precedes sexuality.

The nearest theoretical equivalent I can find for Addie's position is that of the linguist manqué Lévi-Strauss, who in Structural Anthropology makes the case for the naturalness of language by tracing a sexual root:

The position of women, as actually found in this system of communication between men that is made up of marriage regulations and kinship nomenclature, may afford us a workable image of the type of relationship that could have existed at a very early period in the development of language, between human beings and their words. As in the case of women, the original impulse which compelled men to exchange words must be sought for in that split representation that pertains to the symbolic function. For since certain terms are simultaneously perceived as having a value both for the speaker and the listener, the only way to resolve this contradiction is in the exchange of complementary values, to which all social existence is reduced.¹¹

The argument assumes the original and universal object-value of woman to primitive man: it runs - woman produced value, value produced sign, and the exchange of women within a kinship system produced the exchange of signs that is language. Language is as natural and original as sexual value. However, Lévi-Strauss' enthusiasm for origin impairs his logic: if woman had been a universal value, the sign "woman" could never have come into existence. Addie, in all things clinical, does not make this mistake - where the French anthropologist locates the word in female fertility, Addie discovers its source in the silence that precedes sexuality. Her adherence to an original version leads her to defeat, or at least to modify, her own sexuality: Anse/the phallus is murdered and pregnancy is aborted into the virgin birth. The cultural source of this elaboration on Lévi-Strauss is the Calvinist myth - a myth that acts upon Addie but one with which her creator spends a great deal of his career struggling. Faulkner accepts that words are female, but variously recombines their sexual and their linguistic elements, in an effort to mitigate a logic which must condemn the verbal artist to silence, and the female character to spinsterhood.

Feminine entanglement with the problematics of language extends far beyond As I Lay Dying; earth-women abound in Faulkner's fiction, not for random mythic purposes but because, no matter

how monosyllabic, they make men talk. The absence of the absent woman, a Caddy, an Addie or a Temple Drake, is as effective in this as the monosyllables of Jenny Steinbaur, Eula Varner and Lena Grove. Language at its source is a temptation offered by the female. In addition it is the primary medium for knowledge and therefore even for a lapsed Methodist is potentially criminal in expression as in source. This may explain why Faulkner sees a slight stain on consciousness, a stain which deepens the further a character moves from innocence and the more elaborate his thoughts become. The Faulknerian intellectual is male; he is a talker who, whether he knows it or not, talks endlessly about women. His pursuit of the subject leads him in two directions, he can become the comic (joining Janarius Jones, Fairchild and Jason Compson) or the victim (along with Joe Gilligan, Gordon and Quentin Compson). It is interesting that a second appearance by the comic guarantees his translation into the victim; witness the change in Horace Benbow between Sartoris and Sanctuary and the darkening humour of Gavin Stevens from The Town to The Mansion. There is no movement in the opposite direction.

One sure alternative to the stain is silence. Certainly the mute fascinates Faulkner; a surprising number of characters silent by birth, inclination or accident, populate Yoknapatawpha. Addie would approve their silence and Faulkner often marks it with Christ-like features ranging from the title that gives the early bellow of an unnamed idiot in "The Kingdom of God" a religious articulation, through Mahon's double paternity and Benjy's age, to Joe Christmas' initials. But a theological credential is a mixed blessing; all mutes are impaired mentally and some sexually - Mahon (impotent, war victim), Benjy (castrated

idiot), Tommy (murdered simpleton), Joe Christmas (castrated and lynched psychopath), Jim Bond (congenital idiot), Ike Snopes (idiot in love with a cow). It would seem from this list that although Faulkner adheres to Addie's pattern, pairing silence with virginity and language with fertility, his emphasis is very different. When the price of innocent silence is such conspicuous suffering, it must be better to talk - even about women. In As I Lay Dying, as in the other works that I discuss, Faulkner tries to pardon his artists for having to use all those words, by producing the model for an artist as acceptable talker.

Equally numerous, but more problematic, is the silent central woman. Caddy, Addie, Temple and Lena are, for very different reasons, given few words but each is the source of many. Their contradictory silence is as conspicuous as their contradictory virginity; each, again for different reasons, is seen as a virgin - Benjy and Quentin insist on their sister's innocence, and even Jason can think of her sexuality only at the risk of a headache; Addie tries to cancel out children and husband; the Jewish Lawyer makes a case for Temple as a Southern virgin; and the common man, Bunch, earns his artist's name, Byron, in his efforts to deny Lena's nine-month pregnancy. In fact, each woman is either precociously sexual or inescapably fertile. Caddy and Temple are high-class kept women. Addie is the mother of five and Lena, with only one child, clearly has a long way to go. The problem is yet another version of the riddle's equations, but the terms have been cross coupled so that virginity is linked to fertility and silence to language. This absolute contradiction (present in Addie's psychic virginity) is hardly noticeable here because these women are mythic and their lack of a personal psychology allows them to blur rather than to raise contradictions.

In The Mansion Faulkner plays his neatest trick on the Calvinist ethos and in so doing effects his most delicate piece of special pleading for the innocence both of language and of the sexual woman: Linda Snopes is rendered almost silent by a Spanish bomb which damages her palate; however Jefferson makes up all kinds of stories about her Spanish-Republican sympathies, while Gavin Stevens writes frantically on her note tablet. The same useful Spanish explosion kills her husband almost before he has arrived in the novel - an accident which leaves his young widow sexually mature and to all intents and purposes virginal. Linda is a quiet virgin in full possession of loud knowledge.

Clearly Faulkner is fascinated by the contradictory nature of language, but underneath all the variables what is he actually saying? Each recombination of Addie's equations shares two constants, a concern with the origin of words and a determination to declare that source a female place. Such a declaration made from within a Calvinist tradition, equates the fertility of language with sin, and it is this stain that Faulkner struggles to purify. Perhaps the most curious of his attempts to rewrite the Fall is his account of incest. Where language equals sin it is not surprising that words at their most precocious will be associated with the more precocious aspects of sexuality. The artists of the early novels are often sexually deviant, the form of their deviancy being most consistently incestuous. It is possible to discover literary-historical or personal reasons for this, to brand it 'ill-used inheritance' or 'obsession'. The poets of the 90's and the minor Symbolists turned language and sexual standards upside down in almost equal proportion. Faulkner did have an attractive step daughter. Both answers seem right, yet neither feels wholly satisfactory. The question

remains, why should a man without a sister be so concerned with incest? And why should that concern involve extreme linguistic experimentation? Lévi-Strauss has constructed an analogy between kinship and language as sign symbols.¹² He argues that despite its different manifestations among human groups, the incest taboo is the structural principle on which kinship is based. The circulation of women determines the shape of the family and so finally the shape of society. The taboo governing the circulation depends for its authority on a system of differentiating signs. For example, if there were no system of signs separating 'sister' from 'other than sister' - a man might, after an absence of some years and by mistake, marry his sister. Therefore, quite reasonably, matrimonial rules and language are one and the same thing - their source, the prohibition on incest. Lévi-Strauss does not deal with the universality or the origin of/taboo itself. In The Scope of Anthropology he acknowledges, without incorporating the fact, that the harmful consequences of consanguinial unions are a recent discovery. If pushed, he might concede that the taboo, which is not found in the animal world, contains an element of coercion, and that therefore the linguistic sign is an artificial division as well as original value - but Derrida would not be countenanced. The weight of Lévi-Strauss' thought provides language with a natural source in the incest taboo.

Despite its omissions this hypothesis can be interestingly applied to Faulkner. The character who contemplates incest seeks to upset more than his parents, he challenges the terms of his own identity. Lévi-Strauss notes "the double identity of Oedipus, supposed dead and nevertheless living, condemned child and triumphant hero".¹³ The remark has a wide application; the incestuous son wishes to be the father, as well as to be

the child - the incestuous brother desires to be both lover and blood relation. Certainly Quentin Compson in The Sound and the Fury claims to have created his own father, while, in Absalom, Absalom! as the central narrator, he effectively does so. At the close of Absalom, Absalom! the same character doubles for the incestuously jealous brother (Henry Sutpen) and the father (Thomas Sutpen). In As I Lay Dying, Darl's clairvoyance multiplies him into Jewel and Dewey Dell; indeed his sister fears him as she might fear a rapist. Such escapes from the unity of identity are achieved because both the characters in question experiment with language, and their deconstruction of themselves is part of their separation of words from a semi-natural basis.

However the deviant with his perverse words, stimulates Faulkner to a last-ditch redemptive effort. Incest was the Eden-crime. Edmund Leach makes the point with great clarity in his essay, "Genesis as Myth":

In order that immortal monosexual existence in Paradise may be exchanged for fertile heterosexual existence in reality ... Adam must acquire a wife. To this end Adam must eliminate a sister.¹⁴

At the gates of Eden one flesh Adam and Adam's rib, called Eve, had to become two fleashes. Since Genesis records no alternative partners, brother and sister became husband and wife - the Biblical account ignores its own implication that incest was committed in the marriage bed.

Incest was the first of many multiplications - one flesh/two fleashes, immortal/mortal, Eden/Earth, thing/word. It was the act that got man out of Eden into the world and as such it broke the silence in earnest. Language was no longer a God-given toy; it was instigated as a system of differences, where outside the garden difference would multiply requiring words to keep pace with it. It is easy to see how the redemptive

imagination might cast the incestuous hero as the champion of a monosexual Eden: attracted to his own blood he seeks to escape the social and sexual differences organized by language - and by recommitting the original sin to re-approach the original unity. Certainly Quentin and Darl although they multiply themselves do not go forth and multiply. The psychic union between sister and brother is not undertaken with children in mind; indeed Quentin contemplates self-emasculatation and Darl locked in Jackson is removed from temptation. Just as these characters do not procreate so their linguistic creativity, for all its ingenuity, is finally impaired. Silence intrudes; Quentin prepares for suicide by clinically purging his rhetoric; Darl foaming 'yes' is not only at a loss for words but has lost his voice. The redemptive twist is as laboured as it is unconscious. However its details are important in that they suggest that Addie's silent stories figure largely if silently in Faulkner's imagination. His use of incest is open to mythic explanation. Certainly in his works the crime often lacks an adequate psychological basis and is strangely without criminal stain. This is because it is the linguistic aspect of deviancy that intrigues Faulkner. Incest, for the Faulkner reader, whether or not he has access to the theology, feels like an innocent crime since, inescapably in the sub-text, it is the innocent crime.

Other perversions, though less consistently related to the central myth, reinforce the hero who desires to heal language. The incestuous brother is set outside social codes by his indulgence of additional sexual quirks. Quentin's latent ability to stimulate Shreve, coupled with his fascinated memory of Versh's mutilation story, establishes an opposition to sexuality

as fertility, Darl recalls an apparently casual moment of masturbation and Joe Christmas shares in both his onanism and in Quentin's submerged homosexuality. More dramatically Light in August links the castration complex to silence with a lynching in which the removal of the male member confuses social language and stimulates a perversely potent jet of blood, "(it) seemed to rush out of his pale body like the rush of sparks from a rising rocket".¹⁵ Jefferson will not easily account for the metamorphosis of a black phallus into a white phallus, and Faulkner's rhetoric celebrates the destruction of social codes as an obscurely religious triumph; the castrated man is potent because his ruined body has a positive place in the original myth of asexuality, and the siren wail that sounds at the end of the ritual "passes out of the realm of hearing" (p.350), not just because it is unbearably loud but because it marks the defeat of language, according to the old story.

At levels less perverse and more distinct, the carefully maintained bachelor status of the two major narrators of the trilogy, or Ike McCaslin's recovery from the wire-noose of his wife's sexual caress in "The Bear", are socially defensible modes of dismemberment. Nonetheless there is a case for saying that Faulkner's bachelors simply make apparent a hidden truth about the male seed: biology notwithstanding, the sperm will have nothing to do with the womb. Arguably, Ike McCaslin is the son of Buck and Buddy, that is of a male liaison in which Uncle Buddy is the female member. His official mother Sophonsiba Beauchamp had him late, died ten years later and is virtually unmentioned as an influence. In any case, Faulkner repeats that it is Grandfather Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin's male blood that carries the "curse" of miscegenation, central to Ike's life

and to Go Down Moses. All manner of female blood dilutes it, but the curse remains unweakened. Like magnets, 100 years after Lucius' incestuous liaison with his own black daughter, his descendants, Carother's Edmond and an unnamed black woman, meet and produce a son. The male seed carries an indelible stamp. Similar resilience is demonstrated by male-blood in Sartoris. Carol White and Narcissa Benbow make little impression on the perpetuation of a certain kind of Sartoris son. MacCullam has two wives and produces from both a line of sons who duplicate his features. The male-seed's powers of recovery go back to doubts about the female egg. Male Sartoris and male McCaslin may be "doomed", but they are not guilty in the way that the sisters of Eve are guilty. Better male fatality than female sin: so, Faulkner's sons resemble their fathers as the next best thing to cancelling out their mothers. The circumvention of the womb takes more conscious forms. Ike McCaslin, Stevens and Ratliff combine an escape from fertility with restorative quests that have pronounced linguistic dimensions. Ratliff and Stevens counter Snopesism by purifying the stories of the town. Their constant revision of Snopes' anecdotes sets words in the purer linguistic medium of oral discourse, whose constantly moving system of approximation disposes of words that do not adequately name. Moreover Ratliff is a master of silence, and in The Town instructs his collaborator in its usage as the foundation of all careful discourse. In private Stevens writes his own version of a silent language, while translating the Old Testament back into Ancient Greek: once the pure text has been re-established he will translate that into Hebrew, the purest text. By 1955 it seems that Faulkner has gained some access to his own deep plots, and is therefore able to explicate Addie's equations.

In The Mansion old words and virginity are specifically linked when Gavin's scholarship is described as, "restoring the Old Testament to its virgin's pristinity."¹⁶ More like Addie, Ike McCaslin pays off and hopes to cancel-out the children of his grandfather's miscegenations; in addition, he refuses to benefit from the sale of the wilderness to the timber companies whose locomotives penetrate his childhood garden like snakes.

Miscegenation and the big woods exist for Ike in an awkward relation. The woods are the home of Sam Fathers who is the nearest thing to Adam that Faulkner builds. He is Adam's son. His father was Du Homme/the Man, who in earning that name quite properly fell from the grace of his Chickasaw title and was subsequently known as Doom. Sam is the Man's son; given a generically named father, Sam's use of the term grandfather refers to God. Where God is Grandfather and His spirit walks the earth in animal form, the reader may be sure that the Delta contains Eden and the possibility of a pre-historical existence. Sam, master of the Delta garden, is a mythic creature residing at the edges of human settlement. He speaks a lost and virtually unwritten tongue that is older than The Book itself. Animals are his intimates; he calls a buck, Grandfather, and chooses to die not only with the bear but at the hand of Old Ben's killer (Boon earns his name by killing Sam. His Indian blood displays another mythic talent through its resolution of the animal/human opposition. Boon may not marry/^{Lion} but he shares his bed with him). Such amity derives from the absence of lapsarian marks on Sam. He exemplifies the Southern curse of miscegenation only to cancel it by containing three bloods innocently in one. Consciousness does not trouble him (he is "heart" and "instinct" and virtually silent). Predictably, sexuality is not one of his gifts (childless, he is the last of his race, and by example

teaches his adopted son celibacy). The importance of this kind of figure to Ike raises questions about Sam's status in Go Down Moses as a whole. The first story in the collection is "Was". Its celebrated opening offers an excess of genealogical relationships. Family trees interweave so that eventually kinship terms cancel one another out, leaving the reader to long for the simplicity of the "old times" when the terms were less numerous. Effectively he is primed to hear a story from a narrator located anywhere between 1850 and 1942, but given "Was" he is most probably moving in Sam's direction, expecting something from the "old days".

The "old days" so dominate Faulkner's perception of kinship links, that he habitually translates a variety of terms for family members into one term. Lucius Quintus is father and grandfather to Turl: it must have taken considerable genealogical ingenuity to manipulate birthdays so that McCaslin might stand in so many relations to Ike, (Sophon_siba does produce at miraculously late age). The reduction of kinship terms is given quasi-theological sanction by Sam Fathers, who fuses all animal names into one word, transcribed from the oral by Faulkner as "oleh". The Chickasaw term means "Grandfather", but where Adam is the father, God will be the Grandfather. Oleh might well be one of Addie's "older words": it derives from a quiet sexless garden in which all manner of things were named, only in so far as they partook of a single name - God. Presumably in this place the snake had legs like a buck. It is to this time that Ike refers when he addresses the rattlesnake as "Grandfather" in the last section of "The Bear":

he could smell it now: the thin sick smell of rotting cucumbers and something else which had no name, evocative of all knowledge and an old weariness and of pariah-blood and of death. At last it moved. Not the head. The elevation of the head did not change as it began to glide

away from him, moving erect yet off the perpendicular as if the head and that elevated third were complete and all: an entity walking on two feet and free of all laws of mass and balance and should have been because even now he could not quite believe that all that shift and flow of shadow behind that walking head could have been one snake.¹⁷

Ike smells rotting cucumbers and Faulkner links the snake to woman or rather to Woman. The reptile evokes "all knowledge" in a smell that embodies the tired wisdom of Pater's Mona Lisa. However, the manner of the snake's movement implies a nostalgia for pre-lapsarian times before such odorous comparisons had been earned, when a rattlesnake might indeed have been 'Oleh'.

Different times are much in evidence. On Ike's twenty-first birthday McCaslin shows him the commissary ledgers, and offers him an alternative inheritance (the plantation) involving a very different kind of history - Ike appeals to Genesis, that is to myth over and above history. Furthermore he does so not as a critical exegetist but as a Fundamentalist: Genesis is true and because its language is literal its words mean only one thing at one time. For example, God does not work through John Brown, he is John Brown and therefore, "He (God) said My name is Brown too" (p.217). For Ike no system of analogy must be allowed to translate and confuse God's intervention in Southern history. Consequently, there is only one Book and the ledgers are at best part of that Book, (as Brown spells God). Ike appeals to old and sanctified languages rather than to fallen texts. His appeal allows myth to discount history. If God's will is used as a system of explanation then Lucius Quintus is absolved of guilt. His miscegenation simply repeats the pattern of Genesis and the resultant "curse" derives from God not man. Reading from Genesis Ch.9 as though it were history, Ike might be forgiven for seeing the Civil War as the Flood:

(Ike) 'Well, maybe that's what He wanted. At least, that's what He got.' This time there was no yellowed procession of fading and harmless ledger-pages. This was chronicled in a harsher book and McCaslin, fourteen and fifteen and sixteen, had seen it, and the boy himself had inherited it as Noah's grandchildren had inherited the flood although they had not been there to see the deluge: that dark corrupt and bloody time while three separate peoples had tried to adjust not only to one another but to the new land which they had created and inherited too and must live in for the reason that those who had lost it were no less free to quit it than those who had gained it were - (pp.220-221)

And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.' (Genesis, Ch.9, v.21-25)

Edmund Leach's version of Genesis offers a useful way of relating these two passages, particularly since, unlike Addie, Ike is not re-writing the Bible but simply restating it. Leach, working from the assumption common in biblical scholarship that the phrase "to uncover the nakedness of" can mean "to have sexual relations with", argues that just as incest in Eden generated fallen man (the sons of Adam), so perverse incest after the Flood generated doubly fallen man (the enslaved sons of Ham). The link between Eden and Noah is that both stories are mythic accounts of creation; as such they obscure the problems that they seem to deal with; in this case - how did several families/races descend from one family/race. Significantly Lucius Quintus repeats the pattern described by Leach in Genesis. Noah is the father of the white world and via perverse incest (which stains the blood a different colour), the grandfather of the black world. Lucius is the father of a white McCaslin line, and via incestuous congress with his own daughter, grandfather

of a black McCaslin line. The stories differ importantly in that Noah was the victim of his son Ham's attentions, whereas Lucius was the violator of his daughter Tomasina. What is odd is that this doesn't seem to matter to Ike, who presents Lucius as a curiously benevolent figure taking women into the bed of his old age, even as David took a young girl to keep him warm, though in this case the woman in question is Tomasina, his daughter.¹⁸ As always for the Faulkner character, incest seems innocent and even miscegenous incest returns divided bloods to a single source, uniting separate races under a single name. Nominally, if the 'innocent' model is valid, miscegenation within the family would constitute the purest form of the crime, healing both the sexual and the racial division. However historical guilt confuses the mythic case, as Charles Bon says to Henry Sutpen, "So it's the miscegenation, not the incest, which you can't bear" (p.294). Confusion is compounded in that where white incest is uncommitted (much less, fertile), miscegenous incest occurs and is fruitful. Furthermore, each recurrence demonstrates the poverty of the mythic solution: when Roth produces a son by the octoroon descendent of Tennie's Turl - all that occurs is history, a guilty liaison between the members of two races who happen, at several removes, to be members of the same family. The union is fruitful and divisive and invalidates the innocence of incest.

Ike cannot face this [whether the crime is committed by Lucius (1833) or Roth (1939)]⁷. Rather than pursue the historical evidence he turns to an alternative myth, to Sam Fathers, as a sign that multiple miscegenation can generate innocence. He inherits the Big Woods rather than the plantation. There is a sense in which Faulkner hangs on to what Ike stands for. Of

course he sets the facts of miscegenation on the threshold of the shrinking wilderness: in "Delta Autumn", as Ike catches his annual first glimpse of the old land, the car brakes savagely - Roth has seen his octoroon mistress standing by the side of the road and carrying his child (p.254). But part of him continues to protest the innocence of incest in the face of historical disproof. Incestuous miscegenation is attended by hesitant overtones of apocalypse, as though Faulkner confronted with a historical problem was tempted to retreat to a metaphorically simplistic answer, and to start talking about The End. In 1833 when Turl was born of Lucius and Tomasina "stars fell", prophesying millenium. The South would be purged and miscegenous incest become a stage in the divine plan for The Kingdom. In 1939 white and black McCaslin again transgress; a son is born and no stars fall. But 1939 has about it a purgative ring, particularly from the perspective of 1942 (publication date of Go Down Moses). Incest it seems is intimately connected with wars that might be holy. If so, it retains over and above history, a taint of innocence; indeed, it is part of a plot to restore an innocent place called among other names, New Eden.

Each example, whether masculine or feminine, repeats and re-organizes the terms of Addie's equations, in order to return language to at least a graduated purity. Faulkner shares mistrusts and modifies Addie's restorative impulse - an impulse that informs such seemingly diverse concerns as psychology, style, theology and sexuality.

Narrative is an important and inescapable addition to the list, for if Addie's Eden is silent and sexless it is also, more traditionally, timeless. Addie saw the Fall of

her first pregnancy as three distinct penetrations of her virgin status. To heal her hymen she excluded the three intruders:

My aloneness had been violated and then made whole again by the violation: time, Anse, love, what you will, outside the circle. (p.136)¹⁹

"Anse"/the phallus and "love"/ the word, are enemies that have already been discussed, but "time" is another prime offender against the Edenic metaphor. Addie counters it simply by reversing the historical elements of her life. She denies her children and arranges to re-traverse the geography of her growth from infancy to adulthood by returning to Jefferson. Faulkner's positioning of the section reinforces the opposition to time. A reader faced with the late occurrence of a voice which the generally/sequential narrative has declared dead, can do one of two things. He can locate the monologue before the death as an example of the permissible literary device - a death-bed utterance, or he can choose to listen to a voice talking from a coffin [Darl and Vardaman offer a late sanction for this in their discussion of Addie's physiological conversation with God outside Gillespie's barn (p.170)]. The first case upsets the time of the novel with revelations that necessitate the interruption of the forward reading flow: I suspect that after hearing Addie many readers go back to check individual sections, and find themselves suddenly aware of the book as an anthology and not as the history of an action. If the second more startling rationale is used, time itself is challenged by a dead-voice which proclaims the history of its life less important than the a-historical achievement of its death. In this case Faulkner tricks the reader's voice into the imitation of a dead voice, a device that exposes him (like the gap in the text)

to a sense of the peculiar inappropriateness of language, leaving him with the taste of silence on his throat. The second explanation is suited to Addie's imagination; she has studiously attended to "a voiceless speech" talking from "the dark land" (p.139) and so presumably knows about sound in normally silent places.

Faulkner's positioning supports Addie's escape from time. Just as many aspects of his work have been seen as an investigation of her submerged Eden-story, so Faulkner's sense of narrative is rarely free from Addie's anti-historical feeling. It is of course possible to read this historically as a Fugitive impulse, but its unprogrammatically expression indicates that it stems from something more fundamental than a mistrust of the economic, political and social councils of North America. The potential disruption of discourse which shadows most of Faulkner's narrative takes theological rather than historical shape, so that his defeat of history where it occurs is more total and less historical than the defeat of the South. For example, to place a narrative in the mouth of an idiot is a conspicuous risk; the representational truth of the bellow is always likely to swallow up the stories that Benjy Compson and Ike Snopes tell, and the limited time that their discourse organizes may, with any moment of readerly inattention, collapse into a timeless present. Similar risks are involved in Faulkner's habit of getting female characters pregnant and sending the father off to Texas and the mother out of the novel. In effect the reader is encouraged to forget or ignore nine months and to respond to the child as an asexual miracle. Obviously this has sexual roots, but it is not without temporal consequence: although not every novelist uses pregnancy as a paradigm for real time - the disguised pregnancy of Caddy Compson or Lena

Grove and the mythologized swelling of Eula Varner, positively defeat time by making it irrelevant. The moment of Linda's Varner's conception, as Ratliff tells it in The Mansion occurs when an earth mother lies down with a horse; while the human suitor looks on with a broken arm. The story is comic, since participants in monstrous births have little place in a natural or a historical time sequence.

These are simply two recurrent character features, whose working out has apredictable and an a-historical consequence for narrative. To make my point I have removed them from the modifying effect of their contexts but no such violence is necessary to see how the overall narrative shape of certain novels complements or explores the Eden metaphor.

Addie's terms offer a way of reading The Sound and the Fury and an account of its structure. In the beginning is a garden and in the garden is a mute idiot content only in the presence or the remembered presence of the virginal sister who loves him. When she leaves or he recalls her departure, he "tries to say", and so his language (albeit a bellow) protests the division of the pure garden union of brother and sister. Each Compson brother repeats the pattern. Quentin leaves the garden for Harvard and an apprenticeship as a freshman Stephen Dedalus, but his final analysis and loss of the obsession with Caddy's virginity silences literary exuberance in suicide. Jason fails to protect the honour of Caddy's daughter by keeping her locked in the garden; subsequently, and as a result of his speculation, the garden is divided into building lots. On the proceeds of the sale Jason sets up house with a woman who made a profession out of her fall.

To leave the garden is to risk knowledge. Caddy and Miss Quentin climb down the apple tree and the drain pipe to become prostitutes. Benjy opens the gate and, accused of assaulting a school girl, is castrated. Quentin departs to study the knowledge that will kill him. Jason - more Bascomb than Compson, and so never fully at home in the Compson garden - suffers debilitating migraine whenever he thinks about the fallen Caddy. However knowledge (like language) is inevitable, consequently the silent garden is from the outset threatened. The Sound and the Fury records a history of land sales,²⁰ while Benjy retains his mute innocence in an ever shrinking Eden. Nonetheless, idiots keep turning up in Faulkner's gardens. The gardens are spoiled and the idiots have vocal defects, as a reflection upon Eden rather than as a commentary after the manner of I'll Take My Stand on the industrial ruination of the rural South. Three novels in particular offer less systematic evidence of the curious affinity between vocally defective simpletons and ruined gardens. Tommy (vocabulary almost non-existent, largely made up of nouns) is shot in the overgrown garden of The Old Frenchman's Place for defending Temple's virginity (Sanctuary^a). The desolate cabins and vegetable lots of Sutpen's Hundred are guarded by Jim Bond (linguistic capacity, a bellow); repeated attempts to drive him away fail (Absalom, Absalom!). Ike Snopes, (speech slurred and limited to the reproduction of his own name), runs away with his love - a cow (The Hamlet). Bestiality like incest has a redemptive perversity in that it over-rides man's sense of the difference between human and animal, asserting affinity in even stronger terms than a brother and sister's exploitation of likeness. Symptomatically Faulkner's language employs Symbolist poetics to defeat

nomination. As in Swinburne's "Anactoria", sound patterns deform the differences between words so that signification gives way to a music in which semantic charge is dispersed. Sound takes the cognitive sin out of words as Faulkner rewrites his own poetry (ref. Poem III A Green Bough), and employs the Decadents to prove a point about "innocence":

light, is not decanted on to earth from ^{the}sky, but instead is from the earth itself suspired ... it wakes, up-seeping, attritive in uncountable creeping channels: first, root; then frond by frond, from whose escaping tips like gas it rises and disseminates and stains the sleep-fast earth with drowsy insect-murmur; then, still upward-seeking, creeps the knitted bank of trunk and limb where, suddenly louder leaf by leaf and dispersive in diffusive sudden speed, melodious with the winged and jeweled throats, it upward bursts and fills night's globed negation with jonquil thunder.²¹

Differences are resolved at many levels. The cow rising "hindquarters first, backing upward out of invisibility" (p.180) seems to emerge from "the female earth" (p.181). It is natural that smells of milk should attend her, but Faulkner loses no opportunity to describe the process by which the milk is made - her "warm breath" is ever "visible among the tearing roots of grass" (p.180). If Eula could be described as the fertile essence of Frenchman's Bend, her bovine successor might be termed the soil's humus. The opposition between organic and inorganic is settled every time she lies down:

first the forequarters, then the hinder ones, lowering herself in two distinct stages into the spent ebb of evening, nestling back into the nest-form of sleep, the mammalian attar. They lie down together.(p.186)

As he squats beside her, eating from the same basket, Ike becomes "herbivorous" losing the culinary habits of the "upright kind" (p.182). Observations like this put the man into the cow at a more than sexual level. The product is a monster who, depending on how it is told, will be beautiful (Zeus, mating with Io), or monstrous (a red-neck coupling with a stock-beast), but who like mythical creatures from the Virgin to the Sphinx will blur

an awkward transition, in this case between animal and man. Faulkner presents Ike's love as an innocent love. The couple escape from the hamlet into the hill country which turns into an idyllic park as they move through it. Ultimately they are discovered and the cow is butchered. However, Benjy, Jim, Ike and to a lesser degree Tommy, each ensures that voicelessness and crippled innocence are lasting notes in their novels. It is as if Faulkner can permit no word, or narrative arrangement of words, to escape silence and the shadow of a timeless Eden.

The shadow is firm in The Sound and the Fury, each section marks a progressive removal from the Garden. Spoilure is plain even by horticultural standards - the smell of trees grows fainter. The golf course can still revert to a meadow for Benjy, but at Harvard Quentin struggles to turn New England back into Mississippi, while for Jason geography is urban, the country being a place where the unwary will inevitably discover poisoned oak beneath the hand and a snake underfoot (p.215). It is in this place of back-lots, dirt roads and failed cotton fields that the final section occurs. However, dispossession is plainest in the time scheme. The narrative records the expansion of history from timelessness: Benjy's present, Quentin's past and Jason's future plot the fatal intrusion of time into the circle of Caddy's virginity. The novel, having described a sexual and linguistic fall, while exemplifying the temporal lapse by expanding as narrative, uses the timeless moment of the Easter service to put its readers briefly back in Eden. Shegog is the gift bringer, as a deus ex machina he ruins the plot by preaching about salvation on a waste-lot. His words move from those of a "white man" through the "negroid" to a collective exhalation "beyond the need for words" indeed beyond individuation:

And the congregation seemed to watch with its own eyes while the voice consumed him, until he was nothing and they were nothing and he was not even a voice (p.261)

The sermon, at times pure incantated breath and not language, gives to an old woman and a castrated man a contradictory potency:

In the midst of the voices and the hands Ben sat, rapt in his sweet blue gaze. Dilsey sat bolt upright beside, crying rigidly and quietly in the annealment and the blood of the remembered lamb. (pp.263-264)

The sexless are shown again to have access to the original fertility. At each of Addie's levels, linguistic, sexual and temporal, Eden is obliquely restored. Of course the denial of time by the subversion of narrative is momentary, but I hope that the evidence offered suggests the important presence of an Edenic strain in Faulkner's narrative-imagination.

The reader need know nothing of Eden to be aware that fictional time in The Sound and the Fury suffers from constant interruption. Temporality is a struggle that the reader feels as he comes to terms with Benjy's section. Quentin learns during June 2nd 1910 that successiveness has to be won from the past before a future - even one that consists only of suicide - can be meaningfully projected. As long as Jason buries his past in headaches, chronology to him will be a financial deal, based on the hope that a cotton market killing or a real-estate sale will transform 'now' into 'future' via the successful outcome of the next fraud. Each Compson brother demonstrates that time is an invention and that living it is difficult. I suspect that few readers of The Sound and the Fury would deny this difficulty as their attempts to chronicle the decline of a Southern family, or to list a series of events in a psychological order, begin to seem more and more worthy, and less and less relevant. Headaches, the smell of trees, and glimpses of

a stream, keep getting in the way, because history is only part of the exercise, that part which has to be denied. Sound and the Fury - time is not measured as a sequence of days and years but in distances from Eden. As a result April 7th 1928 comes before June 2nd 1910, and April 6th 1928 (in narrative terms long after the day before), is diverted from its movement into 1929 and 1930 by the moment which makes April 8th, or any calendar date, seem like an irrelevant piece of historical book-keeping. It could be argued that Eden has less claim on these days than Easter; Carvel Collins has carefully located each of them in relation to the New Testament Calendar ²²; however, his exercise strikes me as secondary. The reader faced with specific dates is less likely to hunt for a calendar than he is to feel the force of the present tense. April 7th 1928/June 2nd 1910 depict the presentness of their days and, as Joyce recognized with his "dailiest-day" in Dublin, "now" is the least historical of times - one of particular appeal to a writer who opposes history. It might be objected that on April 7th in 1928 Holy Saturday fell, or that June 2nd happened to be a Thursday in 1910 - the day of The Last Supper - but just as Faulkner sets Christ-like features on an idiot to serve an Edenic rather than a New Testament vision, so Easter is being used for Biblical rather than theological resonance. The Sound and the Fury is not redemptive in a Christian sense, neither its dates nor its sermon offer a programme for grace; grace, as an oblique Eden, simply descends to defeat the development of the book.

Inevitably the book returns to time - it closes with Jason a figure obsessed with the future. Benjy's bellow on the square is silenced because by threatening Jason's good name, it indirectly threatens his future. However, the restoration of spatial order is a disruption of temporal order - Benjy gazing

at his flower is back in Eden. The flower is a broken narcissus, emblem of flawed solipsism and Benjy is an idiot, but nonetheless the last moment of The Sound and the Fury is his moment - it is silent, timeless and the shadow of Eden is in it:

The broken flower drooped over Ben's fist and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and facade flowed smoothly once more from left to right; post and tree, window and doorway, and signboard, each in its ordered place. (p.284)

Even Faulkner's novels have beginnings and ends: my point is that there is a great deal in them working to deny it. This can take the form of the a-historical narratives inherent in certain repeated character groupings; the idiot and the pregnant woman have already been discussed. More typically Addie's rage to origination expresses itself in the Faulkner ending. Frank Kermodé has suggested that a reader's sense of an ending is often dependent upon his projection past the end of an expectation about that end, which the narrative goes on to fulfil:

Plots have something in common with prophecy - they must appear to adduce from the prime matter of the situation, the forms of a future.²³

However, when some of the prime matter of the author's imagination is Edenic, 'futures' will be difficult, 'middles' uncertain and 'ends' constantly prey to the submerged wish that the whole thing had never begun. The evidence is in the endings themselves. Benjy's gaze makes Jason's future the least of our concerns. The last remark in As I Lay Dying, "Meet Mrs. Bundren" (p.208) is liable, momentarily, to turn the novel's geographical line into a circle, bending the future back into the past so that the journey is designated a regular mythic occurrence. The circle tightens on Light in August when Lena Grove repeats the formula with which she closed the first chapter of the novel, "My, my. A body does get around." (p.25), on its last page, and Bunch

repeats the flight of Burch along the seemingly endless roads of Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee. Directions are different, a child has been born, and the name has altered by the shortening of the second upright of one letter - but the reader may feel at least temporarily persuaded of a timeless constancy, in which pregnancy is miraculous, words are limited and change is by and large unobserved.

Poe described the circle as the symbol of eternity; to this Faulkner adds that it is the outline of the Edenic enclosure, the hymeneal shape and the topography of the incompletable journey, undertaken by the Compson carriage, the Bundren cart and any number of furniture waggons at the close of their respective novels. But finally this is just critical hair-splitting to reinforce the central recognition that in Faulkner narrative lines, both of time and space, become circular. What happens at the plot level happens to the single word. Here I can only generalize trusting for evidence on several critical pieces spread through the thesis. Faulkner's words have various typifying characteristics; some are extremely referential and, by setting the reader in a physical universe, they erase themselves - making a hole in the text as though preparing a niche for the signified as object (the model is Addie's molasses jar). Others are abstract; Faulkner's opponents have spent much time drawing up and extending the list - "imponderable" "inviolable" "unfathomable" "serene" "uncontrovertible" "paradoxical" "irremediable". What has not been noticed is how many from the list are negative based. "Inviolable" works by negating what it asserts, that is "violable" is cancelled by "in" (although the word remains in typographical evidence), so that the prefix can be spoken of as making a hole in the suffix (the model is the gap in Addie's

section). Over used such words clutter a sentence with the dead weight of abstraction; well used they can shatter a passage with the problems of their own interior struggle. However, Faulkner's words whether referential or abstract have an oral bias, the syntactical shape of his general sentence and a phonetic account of dialogue guarantee the presence of the speaking voice in his texts. The spoken in the novel creates the illusion of rubbing out the printed artefact - even as the reader, hearing a word, releases it from the page (the model is Addie's voiceless speech).

The erasure of the text is a trick. The turning of the narrative into a circle is brief and unsustained. But Addie Bundren proposes a programme for these various devices of the Edenic imagination, and As I Lay Dying applies that programme in Faulkner's most sustained experiment with fictional narrative and the expendibility of narrative time. Frank Kermode in The Sense of an Ending argues that time does not exist without some form of coercion: ideological, theological, historical or fictional narratives invent history, as tick-tock invents time:

Let us take a very simple example, the ticking of a clock. We ask what it says: and we agree that it says tick-tock. By this fiction we humanize it, making it talk our language. Of course, it is we who provide the fictional difference between the two sounds; tick is our word for a physical beginning, tock our word for an end. We say they differ. What enables them to be different is a special kind of middle. We can perceive a duration only when it is organized. It can be shown by experiment that subjects who listen to rhythmic structures such as tick-tock, repeated identically, 'can reproduce the intervals within the structure accurately, but they cannot grasp spontaneously the interval between the rhythmic groups', that is between tock and tick, even when this remains constant. The first interval is organized and limited, the second not ... The clock's tick-tock I take to be a model of what we call a plot, an organization that humanizes time by giving it form; and the interval between tock and tick represents purely successive, disorganized time of the sort that we need to humanize. (pp.44-45)

Fictions of considerable complexity can be perceived through this

analogy. Narrative may be said to work when it ensures that the time-space between chapter and chapter, paragraph and paragraph, word and word, does not empty itself into the undifferential gap between tock and tick. Narrative could be defined as invisible writing; we are fully aware when reading a novel or watching a film that narrative is going on but probably find it difficult to define the occurrence, since its energy dwells in the space between the fictional units or the cinematic images. The concept is more available if the interval between tick and tock is visualized as the typographical space between chapters or words, a space in which we think of connotations and mentally note clues. Addie Bundren locates that space as a theological place, perceiving in it the dim outlines of a Garden whose features mark the end of the narrative. She hears the clock clearly enough to hear through it, to the recognition that our sense of time is balanced on the imminent sense that time is a falsification, and that there is really only the unmeasured space between tock and tick, and the gap of the white page between word and word.

Addie is one among many voices; her section competes with 58 others, but at the very obvious level of sectional arrangement As I Lay Dying draws attention to the spaces between the largest units of its narrative. These need not be interpreted from Addie's extremely a-historical viewpoint, but it is difficult to ignore her theological model for the gap, in the presence of so many gaps. Nonetheless, As I Lay Dying is a compelling historical narrative. It describes a firm geographical line whose topography is a form of history (Addie's past organizes the Bundren present and impels it towards a predictable future - Jefferson); its central character keeps time in front of the

reader's nose, and sequentiality, despite Darl, is by and large observed. However, excitement at the journey undertaken or contentment with the end achieved, depend upon how the reader relates the conspicuous pieces of the text; and this cannot be done without some sense of the gaps that lie between them. I suspect that finally most readers are disconcerted by the spaces and try to ignore them - a close encounter with Addie makes this difficult but not impossible.

To return to Kermode's clock analogy. It seems to be that the tick and the tock exist only in what can usefully be called a narrative relation, where their interdependence is more than mechanical. In other words, narratives form where some conviction (realized only as half-formulated writing which is therefore without dogma or programme) coerces words, episodes or images into a necessary relation with itself. Fictional narrative is a testing place for nascent ideology; its tension is generated by the struggle between the spaces (invisible writing) and the materials (Language). If this is the case, the force of any particular narrative will exist in relation to the ideology's need to be written. Narrative development will or will not reduce contingency, as the random and the circumstantial are set within an order whose value they at once test and articulate. A sense of an ending will depend upon the extent to which, and how early, the suspected becomes known. Perhaps this is just another way of saying that time exists in proportion to belief.

The nature of the narrative impulsion differs from author to author and may consist in several strands, but I believe that in Faulkner Addie's submerged theology is compulsive and important. This is particularly true of The Sound and the Fury

and As I Lay Dying, although in subsequent novels versions of her story motivate the text. Applied to As I Lay Dying the argument suggests that this particular and peculiar narrative structure grows from a necessary tension between gap and monologue (recurrent in the sentences, between silence and word), as each aspect strives to modify the other. In The Sound and the Fury the struggle was shadowy, but here, with Addie Bundren's help, it takes place more openly.

I would stress that I have been going out of my way to find holes and circles in order to offer an account for the atemporality of the Faulkner novel - an atemporality which can be experienced during the most relaxed reading as an interruption of the forward reading flow. However, the flow reasserts itself compulsively. The first-time reader of The Sound and the Fury or As I Lay Dying will doubtless complain that he does not know what is going on; he may even put the book down in disgust, but generally he feels obliged to get to the end and he gets there. In the previous chapter I discussed the resilient narrative as an aspect of Faulkner's oral-inheritance. An adequate sense of the Faulknerian narrative depends on the recognition that the atemporal (holes, silence, circles) is balanced by the temporal (the voice, the story line, endings); their interpenetration provokes a narrative. The ending makes visible a certain stage in the theological argument between a submerged myth, asserting a comprehensive and anonymous beginning, and an emergent voice which seeks to differentiate itself from timelessness and silence. It would be schematically satisfying to link the voice to Addie's repressed equation, fertility = language = the Fall. However, I hesitate to do this because, as has been noted, oral language is an approach to the purity

of silence. In addition individuation by voice can depend on the speaker's borrowing certain terms from the Edenic equation - Joe Christmas takes silence, Quentin Compson takes virginity. Clearly Addie is a purist in ways that Faulkner is not; nonetheless he is aware of her equations and quite conscious in his manipulation of their fictional consequences. Time for him does equal language, but the paired equation, timelessness = silence, is not one that a novelist can readily accept. Faulkner, ever pragmatic, modifies Addie's account so that timelessness = silence, becomes, the suspension of time = oral language as it approximates to silence. The degree of Faulkner's control can be seen in two novels Sanctuary and Light in August each of which explores one of the time equations.

Sanctuary is a book about metaphor's invention of reality. In it the logic of language takes over from social, moral and even pathological systems. Understandably a novel trying to establish language as a total presence has no place for Edenic silence and may even go some way to contain its ally, the spoken voice, within perceived fictional stereotypes. Where language is so authoritarian, time will have to be fully accounted for (there being no time for timelessness). So, in Sanctuary, Faulkner works within the most deterministic of literary forms, the detective thriller. His American models were the Erle Stanley Gardner or Ellery Queen series or the hard-boiled novels of the Black Mask school. In each case, the product is one which takes scrupulous care of time. The detective thriller is a series of clues - blondes, locations, guns - whose random connotive possibilities are rigidly limited to serve the denotive purpose of discovery. Human events, places and times are turned into objects on the defence attorney's table. The case they establish was known from the first by the author. His detective

may weigh imaginative possibilities but the gesture can last the book and still be a hesitation, because the reader knows that the author knew all along, and that by opening the book he accepted his author's comprehensive organization of fictional time. In the detective thriller history is a total presence because each moment of time bears an absolutely causal relation to the next, and all the moments prove a case. Nobody sweats unless the author wants a calculated pause. If the phone isn't answered it's a clue, not an event full of everyday - indeed the phone is probably ringing to establish somebody's alibi.

The hard-boiled novel is a number of stills, each a mini-narrative which stops once it has justified the reader's confidence in the authority of the operative (the man he has bought to explain three hours of the day). The still may be extended, to enclose all Philip Marlowe's verbal skills or an entire raid by the Continental Op, without changing its status as a still, since the conversation or the attack remains a framed gesture whose time span makes one point - that of the operative's control. Finally, it doesn't matter how the stills inter-relate. Who killed whom in The Big Sleep is unimportant; the fact that Chandler couldn't remember when Hawkes needed to know,²⁴ and that Faulkner's script does not clarify the matter, simply confirms that there is little narrative compulsion in the genre. Getting to the end of a Hammett, a Chandler or a McCoy has less than might be expected to do with discovering who did it, or even how it was done or why. Instead it revolves around justifying again and again our initial and simple acceptance of the narrator's authority over history. It might be objected that the whole point about these genres is that they have narrative pace. However although a great deal seems to be going on this

is often because the same thing is going on repeatedly. The pace is that of the reader running on the spot. Tick and tock are speeded up by turning the undifferentiated space between them into stream-lined history; this permits only what happens to seem possible. As a result fictional time rushes to its predestined end, known variously as "solution" or "apocalypse". The latter (heard loudly at the close of McCoy's They Shoot Horses Don't They? and No Pockets in a Shroud) is the authoritarian threat concealed in a heart-cry of despair, 'There, I told you so!'

The ideological writing in the hard-boiled novel and in the novel of detection is known, but unconfirmed, from the outset. It is the reader's contract of submission to an authoritarian imagination, involving a sub-contract of partnership with an authoritarian figure. The novels prove what we knew from Marlowe's first simile, or from the earliest appearance of Sam Spade's jaw-line, that we are in good hands. However, Edmund Wilson simplifies when he declares the authority of these books incipiently fascist.²⁵ All novels involve some degree of submission to the novelist, and even within this genre there are several kinds of authority. The physical viciousness of the Hammett hero is granted institutional validity. Chandler's detective is self-employed; his social power is almost nil - the police don't like him, the cases don't pay and the big-fish stay in business. Marlowe exerts a purely private control through his skill with the hard-boiled phrase. But L.A. is a hard-boiled place where others have good lines too, so that Marlowe's final authority rests in being the failure who knows how to deal with failure. He polices himself so that the fullness of failure need never be seen. In They Shoot Horses Don't They?,

McCoy's narrator is the Judge's echo. His story, slipped between the pauses in the death sentence, complements the cadences of the voice of authority, by proving from the dock that the life was a number of clues to that inevitable execution. The individual is a subtext servicing a judicial text that most readers will be able to complete as soon as they hear the first phrase, "The prisoner will stand". I would describe only Hammett's hero as a fascist; nonetheless, each of these heroes imposes an absolute authority on the time that he fills and explains.

Sanctuary employs these models because its declaration about language involves a declaration about time. Where metaphor is an effective enclosure, time, coerced by it, will be a static and authoritarian presence. Narrative, as a process of discovering time through writing, will not exist - having been determined from the start by a fully constituted image of history.

In the final chapter of Light in August, Faulkner re-engages the language/history relationship, but from the point of view of Addie's second equation, silence = timelessness: Sanctuary established that a closed language will invent a closed time, and thereby a problem for any novelist unwilling to work in the arenas of literary code and coerced narrative. How is he to release language and in so doing to prevent fictional time hardening into a dogmatic account of history? Light in August offers the furniture dealer as a tentative answer. Since the spoken-word does not take on the rigid outline of print and can slip the authority of grammar, the story that it tells may be able to avoid History. The story, for the furniture dealer, is an anecdote - it can and will be repeated in beds, barber shops and women's circles - but despite its apparent casualness the anecdotal form bears a double relation to Addie Bundren's

equations. It marks Faulkner's conscious attempt to incorporate an Edenic imagination at a level that will permit the continuance of fiction. First, the spoken form is, as has been seen, a modification of Silence: second, the anecdote is a version of Timelessness. To counter narrative as a full and static History, it resorts not to the undifferentiated space between tock and tick (Eden-time) but to changeability which consists in the anecdote's ability to absorb different kinds of narrative impulses - for example, Faulkner's theology and the furniture dealer's sexual innuendo. By this means it metamorphoses itself into narratives whose number need never be closed.

In his approach to time/timelessness, language/silence, Faulkner demonstrates that he is aware of what can and cannot be done in a novel. Addie's solutions to the riddle of language and the falsifications that it involves, have considerable implications, but just as subsequent novels modify her linguistic attitudes, so, in As I Lay Dying, Faulkner reappraises her riddle.

1. William Faulkner, "Address upon Receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature," reprinted in Essays, Speeches & Public Letters, ed. James B. Meriwether (Random House, New York, 1965), pp.119-121.
2. William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973), p.137. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
3. Olga Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner (Louisiana State University Press, 1959), p.8.
4. George Whitfield, "The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent," collected in Selected Sermons of George Whitfield (The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1959), p.85.
5. Mark Twain, Extracts From Adam's Diary (Harper, New York, 1904), p.3. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
6. Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics (McGraw-Hill, London, 1966), p.120.
7. Ezra Pound, A.B.C. of Reading (Faber, London, 1958), p.19.
8. T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," Collected Poems (Faber, London, 1963), p.79. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
9. Frederick Jameson, The Prison House of Language (Princeton University Press, 1972), p.32.

10. Jacques Derrida, Speech & Phenomena: and other essays on Husserl's theory of signs (North Western University Press, Evanston, 1973), particularly the essay, "The Voice That Keeps Silence". I am also indebted to an unpublished essay by Walter Michaels, "Displaced Persons: Derrida and the Modernists". While I disagree with the conclusions he reaches, I am thankful for his help both in this essay and in conversations about Derrida and Pound. Walter Michaels now teaches at Johns Hopkins University.
11. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology (Penguin Harmondsworth, 1968), pp.61-62.
12. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, Part I, "Language & Kinship".
13. Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Scope of Anthropology (Cape, London, 1971), p.36.
14. Edmund Leach, Genesis as Myth & Other Essays (Cape, London, 1971), p.15. With an obscurity as great as Leach's clarity Faulkner records in the last lines of a sonnet, the same unsistering. (A Green Bough, XXXIX, p.62):

Like to the tree that, young, reluctant yet
While sap's but troubled rumour of green spring;
Like to the leaf that in warm bud does cling
In maiden sleep unrefit though passionate;
Or like the cloud that, quickened and shaped for rain
But flees it in a silver not despair;
The bird that dreams of flight and does not dare,
The sower who fears to sow and reaps no grain.

Beauty or gold or scarlet, then long sleep:
All this does buy brave trafficking with breath,
That though gray cuckold Time be horned by Death,
Then Death in turn is cuckold, unawake.
But sown cold years the stolen bread you reap
By all the Eve's unsistered since the Snake.

The poem is a riddle poem. Its first stanza offers the second half of six similes, and the reader is required to recover their presumably common subject. He has to guess what is like a young tree, a furled leaf, a sleeping virgin, a vanished cloud, an unflying bird and the sower who does not sow. The contorted syntax of the second stanza does not make the riddle or the poem any less tiresome. However, clues can be explicated. The first four lines imply that Time cuckolds life's "brave trafficking with breath", but is in turn cuckolded by Death. The sequence is conventional but a suggestion that Death is himself cuckolded while asleep has the merits of a tortuous intrigue. It raises the question, who could possibly give the horns to Death? With the unravelling of the last two lines the riddle is answered.

But sown cold years the stolen bread you reap
By all the Eves unsistered since the Snake.

The syntax is devious, but the lines begin to make sense if Eve is taken as the subject, who sowed "cold years" when she ceased to be Adam's sister and became his wife or euphemistically met the Snake. "You", the reader, are born and so "reap" time as a direct result of this first sexual encounter, endlessly repeated by Eve's sisters. The bread is "stolen" because "time", along with the apple, was stolen from Eden. Eden is the answer to the riddle.

Death, the great cuckold, could only be cuckolded by Eden - a deathless place which it can dream of but never enter. Eden is the endless spring, the permanent bud, the virgin bed and the temperate zone. There are however problems with the flightless bird and the farmer who doesn't sow.

"The bird that dreams of flight and does not dare". Presumably in the Garden birds had no enemies, but might for all that have resented their cage.

"The sower who fears to sow and reaps no grain". Adam was required only to "dress" and "keep" Eden. He did not work the land until after the Fall. Like the bird he may have been less than happy with bliss on these terms.

The last two explanations are guaranteed to try the ingenuity of the most committed riddler and the patience of all Eden hunters. However, the discontent shared by the bird and the farmer, joins the cloud's despair and the virgin's restlessness as an indication of Faulkner's ambivalence towards the unnamed solve-all Eden.

15. William Faulkner, Light in August (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967), p.349.
16. William Faulkner, The Mansion (Chatto & Windus, London, 1969), p.392.
17. William Faulkner, Go Down Moses (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967), p.251.
18. Faulkner is defensive about the combination of miscegenation and incest. Ike pays off his grandfather's black children but does everything possible to clear his grandfather's name. His citation of the Noah story is typical. Disturbingly, Faulkner seems to sanction it by granting Ike's voice omniscience at just this point. All other stages of the commissary discussion are marked by a rigorous differentiation between author, Ike and McCaslin.

A debate occurs between three distinct voices. But from, "this time there was no yellowed procession..."(p.220) to, "bind for life them who made the cotton to the land their sweat fell/on" (p.224), voices and terms fuse.

The Noah story refers to "three separate peoples" living in the "new land" of the post-bellum South. The presence of Noah and his sons (particularly Ham) suggests that the allusion is to white, black and cross-breed, although the over-presence of Sam Fathers points to white, black and red. The voice corrects these guesses, insisting that the races are black, Southern (white) and Northern (white). Further unexplained shifts of racial grouping occur - they are however consistent in one aspect, they move toward stereotypes. White Southerners become non-slaveholders, blacks are likened to children, and Northern whites metamorphose rapidly from Union horsetraders, to Snopes, to Klansmen, to "Jew". The logic is as impeccable as the history is dubious. The voice wishes to establish that the Southron lost a promised land called The Anti-Bellum South, and that this was God's will. It therefore of necessity shifts the offending Northern White race through stereotypes towards the type of landless-pariah, "Jew". Kermode in a discussion of typology offers the useful formulation, "types are a great instrument for the defeat of temporal flux" (The Classic, Faber, London, 1975, p.62), and adds that "an author conscious of standing on a watershed between past and present might well be interested in typology" (p.90). Ike's interest is unhealthy. From racial types he moves rapidly to a justification of miscegenation on the evidence

of animal types (the mongrel fyce). Previously unheard terms, "doom" and "endurance", help to transform historical guilt from a divine "curse" to "a truth of the Heart". Keats, Old Ben and Sam Fathers are lined up as evidence. By this stage the voice has been identified as Ike's but not before Faulkner has lent seeming authorial weight to Ike's misrepresentations. In 1940 with the publication of The Hamlet Faulkner made it plain that Snopes were indigenous to the South. Ike is not interested. In "The Bear" someone claims that the type "Snopes" is the spawn of the Union army. A confusion over who is saying what and to whom, suggests that Faulkner is ready to forge historical facts for the sake of tidy mythic solutions. It is invidious to protest that the "yellowed" pages of the ledger are "harmless", when in fact they are "harsher" than the book of myth and type to which Ike appeals. For the most part Faulkner acknowledges this - it is therefore particularly revealing that he should choose to forget it when Noah is mentioned.

19. Addie is talking about the conception of her first born, Cash. Faulkner may have been encouraged in his account of Addie's sexual pathology, not simply by the virgin-birth, but by classical precedent. Juno conceived Hephaestus on her own, in a fit of pique about Jove's singular conception of Athena. Hephaestus, otherwise known as Vulcan, shares artisanship and a limp with Cash.

20. If one commits ^{the} fallacious step of appending the Appendix to the novel, the Compson history becomes still more

clearly a history of land sales. Ikkemotubbe's forest declines into Jason Lycurgus Compson's "park". Jason II struggles to preserve the square mile that is his inheritance, but mortgages and small land sales divide the estate. As a result Quentin Compson's father inherits "ruined lawns" and does a deal with the golf club. The final sale is made by Jason IV, to a countryman who turns the house into a hotel patronized by mule traders. With fine irony Faulkner restores the geographical integrity of the square mile in a form that vitiates forever its mythic boundaries. The Old Compson Place becomes a housing tract, crammed with "jerrybuilt individually owned demiurban bungalows".

21. William Faulkner, The Hamlet (Chatto & Windus, London, 1964), p.181. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
22. Carvel Collins, "The Pairing of The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying," Princeton University Library Chronicle, XVIII, Spring 1957, p.119.
23. Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending (Oxford University Press, New York, 1967), p.53. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
24. While Hawkes was making The Big Sleep (one of Faulkner's scripting credits), he and Bogart argued about whether a character was murdered or committed suicide; "They sent me a wire asking me, and dammit I didn't know either."
[Chandler quoted by D. Gardner and K.S. Walker in Raymond Chandler Speaking (Books for Libraries Press,

New York, 1971), p.221_7

25. Edmund Wilson, The Boys in the Back Room: Notes on California Novelists (Colt Press, San Francisco, 1941).

Chapter 5

"As I Lay Dying" : Addie Bundren and her Sons

Re-writing the story of the Fall is a regressive occupation unless versions can be found that avoid the sterility of Addie's stories. In the novel's re-interpretation of its central text two voices are particularly influential - Cash and Darl. Jewel is likewise special, but his silence reduces his impact. Cash and Darl are opposed in the reader's mind from the outset. The first section walks him gradually into the sound of Cash's adze, but the approach to coffin making is the unmaking of a cotton house. Darl's first monologue reads like an application of Picasso's instruction to the painter of a table - first measure it. Measurement involves figures and angles, inner and outer perspectives, a one hundred and eighty degree surveillance of the subject, and as in a cubist canvas the result is a re-invention of the pictorial procedure. The Bundren cotton-house will never be the same; it has been displaced from linear perspective and made strange. Meanwhile above the cotton-house Cash, the carpenter, continues to make good the angles of Addie's box. Darl's cubist exercise results in several canvases of which the most conspicuous might be entitled 'Man with a horse'. At all times his eye is painterly. There is more to it than seeing a few boards as pigment or the night-sky as a canvas (p.61), space itself is for Darl tactile, and in it sound can hang like a feather. Braque spoke of "tactile space" in nature, "which I might almost describe as manual", and saw as "the governing principle of cubism ... the materialization of this new space which I sensed".¹ Darl's manipulative eye takes on its subject from as many angles as possible, multiplying the surface facets so that the expected outline is lost in a welter of new space. 'Man with a horse' embodies these principles:

When Jewel can almost touch him, the horse stands on his hind legs and slashes down at Jewel. Then Jewel is enclosed by a glittering maze of hooves as by an illusion of wings; among them, beneath the upreared chest, he moves with the flashing limberness of a snake. For an instant before the jerk comes on to his arms he sees his whole body earth-free, horizontal, whipping snake-limber, until he finds the horse's nostrils and touches earth again. Then they are rigid, motionless, terrific, the horse back-thrust on stiffened, quivering legs, with lowered head; Jewel with dug heels, shutting off the horse's wind with one hand, with the other patting the horse's neck in short strokes myriad and caressing, cursing the horse with obscene ferocity. (pp.13-14)

John Berger describing Picasso's human figures might be writing about Darl's canvas:

It was not the presence of the figure as a person of flesh and blood which they now stressed: but the physical complexity of the structure of that figure. At first it may be quite difficult to find the person; or when found he or she may have little connexion with the sensuous experience of a body. But the structural arrangement which the body inhabits is made as tangible and precise as the architecture of a town.²

Darl's telepathic ability to master several simultaneous perspectives allows him to experience the discontinuous space that is organized by the angles of the cubist painting into "the physical complexity of structure". However the danger is that discontinuity will result in chaos. The artist who adheres too closely to Picasso's claim, "I paint objects as I think them not as I see them", is liable to allow thought so to recreate sight that his canvas will become a conceptual diagram, the rules of which are unavailable to others. Darl shares the risk with Gris.

Darl's visual habits have fictional antecedents. During the early 20's, particularly in Paris, cubism and literary innovation were often equated. As early as 1911 Apollinaire in a monograph called The Cubist Painters claimed, "geometry is to the plastic arts what grammar is to the writer".³ Stein and Hemingway were soon to put theory to practice. The 1914 collection Tender Buttons provoked Sherwood Anderson to delayed

eulogies when in 1922 he proclaimed, "Here were words laid before me as the painter laid colour pans on the table in my presence".⁴ Given her Picasso-book and paintings by Gris and Braque on the walls of 27 Rue de Fleurus, the school is not difficult to locate. Perhaps learning something from Miss Stein's walls, Hemingway laid the blocks of In Our Time together as though imitating the angularity of the newspaper montage that formed the cover of the 1922 edition. Indeed in 1920 he thought of a book of sketches made up of pages framed in newsprint. Braque, upon occasion, painted directly on to newspaper and he and Picasso produced collages using shapes cut from printed surfaces. Doubtless Apollinaire's equation of visual perspective and grammatic expectation is as naive as Anderson's unthinking fusion of the pictorial and the linguistic sign, but the historical point remains - there was during the 20's a tradition linking the cubist and the literary experimenter. At the centre of the experiment lay the idea that visual and verbal signs achieve meaning through relational value - as Braque declared, "I do not believe in things; I believe in relationships".⁵

The Paris of the early 20's was available to Faulkner in New Orleans - 1925. By 1922 Anderson had visited Stein; he and Faulkner shared a practical interest in painting. Darl may be a child of the Anderson/Faulkner friendship, alternatively his visual habits may have been picked up when Faulkner lived in a room near the Luxembourg Galleries between August and September of 1925. In either case, Darl is a cubist; his brother is a carpenter.

The artist/artisan opposition is heightened by the fact that Darl talks and Cash is silent. Predictably Addie is at the root

of this. Cash was the first born with whom she shared a mute love - Cash therefore is silent. Darl was a child conceived in linguistic sperm - Darl therefore is words. In many ways the novel is a struggle for authority between the two brothers. It would be simplistic to claim that Cash champions the first equation and Darl the second (the evidence of the previous section shows that the equations are not easily separable). Nonetheless, there is much to suggest that Faulkner, operating loosely from within Addie's equations, is putting the bones of her theory to the test of narrative.

In a novel divided into fifty nine monologues, delivered from the viewpoints of fifteen characters, it is noticeable that Cash has only five sections, the first occurring after seventeen monologues when the reader is already one third of the way through the novel. Cash plainly resents the expenditure of words. His first utterance is typical:

I made it on the bevel.

1. There is more surface for nails to grip.
2. There is twice the gripping-surface to each seam.
3. The water will have to seep into it on a slant. Water moves easiest up and down or straight across.
4. In a house people are upright two-thirds of the time. So the seams and joints are made up-and-down. Because the stress is up-and-down.
5. In a bed where people lie down all the time, the joints and seams are made sideways, because the stress is sideways.
6. Except.
7. A body is not square like a cross-tie.
8. Animal magnetism.
9. The animal magnetism of a dead body makes the stress come slanting, so the seams and joints of a coffin are made on the bevel.
10. You can see by an old grave that the earth sinks down on the bevel.
11. While in a natural hole it sinks by the centre, the stress being up-and-down.
12. So I make it on the bevel.
13. It makes a neater job. (p.66)

"I made it on the bevel", is a carpenter's axiom that would normally be self-explanatory, but the circumstances of Addie's

death have disturbed his reticence. Cash is using the exercise of accounting for a rule to prove there are such things as rules, that the rules can be explained and that therefore, and this is very important to him, in future the rules can be left unstated. His approach is mathematical; the language is as physical as Addie's, filled with "nails", "joints" and "seams", punctuated with "grip" and "stress". But the list won't hold together. By the time he reaches rule 6 Cash is in deep trouble. He finds himself balancing his thirteen points on the exception that disproves the rule, "Except"/"A body is not square like a cross-tie". Addie's corpse challenges the rule book and Cash's imagination is forced to encounter the image of his mother's subsiding grave. The encounter shakes him from his normal lexicon. "Animal magnetism" can refer to a spiritual force by which certain individuals exert a hypnotic influence over others: Cash controls the occult with common law, but plainly disturbed by Addie's mesmerism he hurries the proof in order to fall silent again.⁶ Number 12, "So I made it on the bevel" has all the overemphasis of a Q.E.D. that fails to convince even the speaker, while number 13, "It makes a neater job", rests uncomfortably on its uneven and unlucky number.

Cash wanted his only words to be, "I made it on the bevel". He believed that the axiom would stand alone, supported by implicit and natural law, but the situation called for a fuller exploration and the words once spoken, even though "gripped" and "nailed" into thirteen points, cannot be made to prove the rule. His silence has been broken even as the unity of the rule has been broken.

Nonetheless Cash remains, until his two long sections at the close of the novel, a predominantly silent figure, whose reli-

ance on the tools of his trade on barns to repair and coffins to make, repeats the domestic precision with which Addie cleans her house. Addie's model is dominant in other ways. Her silence was equated with virginity - that is with a purity at once attractive yet sterile; likewise the value that Cash puts on silent labour is positive, but has about it a static and remorseless quality which is in the last analysis impotent. Addie's willed sterility is analogous to Cash's recumbant position in the novel: he spends most of his time lying on his mother over a wagon-bed. Mother and son are still. As she decomposes in her box, his leg corrupts in its concrete case. (Interestingly, he limped before the accident at the ford, as the result of an earlier injury sustained while shingling a church. It would seem that any approach to a fundamentalist God, in practice as in theory, puts life at risk). Cash's role will always be conservative. He maintains the fabric of the institutions central to his small, isolated community - the church, the court house, the barn. Indeed his voice, when it is heard, is the voice of that inarticulate community, struggling with cliché to uphold the values of property and public opinion. Darl is sent to Jackson not because he burned Gillispie's barn but because Gillispie knows and because of what "most folks will say" (p.185). Cash, living up to his name, must know that the Bundren's will not be held financially responsible for the actions of a committed lunatic. Cash then is largely silent and static, features that link him in Addie's equation to silence and virginity. Indeed, he is more snug in his name than Addie could make Anse.

Darl is very much the artist of the novel. He has nineteen sections and is fascinated by words. Faulkner invites identification giving him five of the first twelve sections, encouraging

most readers I suspect to accept Darl as a medial character. However his language is so fertile that he can multiply even his own identity. Darl is not just Darl, he is Dewey Dell and Jewel, with whom he has a telepathic sympathy. He can be in one place and imagine events in another with a precision normally reserved for the omniscient narrator. This ability to become other people, existing inside their several names, apparently free of spatial limitation, challenges Addie's attempts to pour the man Anse into the name Anse and to locate every word by referring it to a static object. Addie wants proper nouns that are natural enough to keep quiet, while Darl proves that even a proper name speaks with an improper number of voices.

Critics tend to dismiss the challenge as cruelty, ignoring its source. Darl is cruel primarily to force brother and sister from the confines of their language. For example, Jewel in keeping with his hard-bright name is constantly characterized as "wooden" featured, his spoken words are "wooden" consisting for the most part of expletives - a phrase like "goddam your thick nosed soul to hell" is neither listening nor adequately articulating the nature of its feelings, instead it protects a silence. So that when Darl tells him of Addie's death by saying, "It's not your horse that's dead, Jewel" (p.75) he is not being wilfully vindictive, rather he is challenging the unspoken and wooden metaphor "my mother is a horse" upon which Jewel organizes his world. The insult insists that Jewel come to new terms with why he is undertaking the journey.

The principle of opening a dialogue also informs Darl's relationship with Dewey Dell. Darl is the only member of the family who knows that she is pregnant, and in the wagon three miles outside New Hope his look insists that she acknowledge her

changing physical shape as a fact that will change her world.

The result is the disruption of Dewey Dell's imagination:

I rose and took the knife from the streaming fish still hissing and killed Darl.
When I used to sleep with Vardaman I had a nightmare once I thought I was awake but I couldn't see and couldn't feel I couldn't feel the bed under me and couldn't think what I was I couldn't think of my name I couldn't even think I am a girl I couldn't even think I nor even think I want to wake up nor remember what was opposite to awake so I could do that I knew that something was passing but I couldn't even think of time then all of a sudden I knew that some thing was it was wind blowing over me it was like the wind came and blew me back from where it was I was not blowing the room and Vardaman asleep and all of them back under me again and going on like a piece of cool silk dragging across my naked legs. It blows cool out of the pines, a sad steady sound. New Hope. Was 3 mi. Was 3 mi. I believe in God I believe in God. (p.94)

In the proximity of the wagon Darl's eyes rest on Dewey Dell's "tightening dress"; she feels "naked" under them and understandably her day-dream is one of revenge. The murder weapon was used in an earlier crime to dismember Vardaman's mother substitute. A precedent has been set by Vardaman's "My mother is a fish" (p.67). If a son can kill a mother, a sister may be forgiven for killing a brother; scarcely disguised logic hands her the same knife to commit a second crime of the same nature. But the double load of guilt brings a nightmare instead of relief. Dewey Dell, accessory after the fact of one killing, murder^ess in a second, is being cast in roles she cannot understand. The dream further challenges her identity by separating her from her physical senses. She is, as her name implies, almost exclusively a physical being, so that Darl by attacking those senses upon which she depends is in effect demanding that she formulate a different language for perception. The attack is successful; to avoid it Dewey Dell retreats to the onset of her puberty - a time when she could still sleep with her younger brother. The historical location of the dream, at once the source of her sexual self and the origin of

her name, suggests how fully she is challenged. Significantly the dream suspension is described as a loss of language - her own name and the word for her sex are not available to her, pronouns slip away and when she tries to think of time without the terms "night" and "awake" time itself vanishes. Dewey Dell escapes confusion only by using a tangle of sheets and the orgasm they stimulated, to return the physical to its dominant position in her consciousness. This move effectively sets God back in his heaven and, more important, returns her to the physicality of her name⁷.

In both these cases Darl confuses character out of a silent static and easy relationship with its own identity and language. Such behaviour is dangerous. Darl's reality is so multiple, so linguistically fertile that at times he dematerializes himself. By this I mean that a character who cannot see the world for the words is in danger, not simply of re-writing the language of others, but of making his own reality vanish into language. At times Darl so separates words from mimesis that he almost deconstructs himself. Derrida might approve of the following sequence:

In a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep, what are you. And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were. I don't know what I am. I don't know if I am or not. Jewel knows he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not. He cannot empty himself for sleep because he is not what he is and he is what he is not. Beyond the unlamped wall I can hear the rain shaping the wagon that is ours, the load that is no longer theirs that felled and sawed it nor yet theirs that bought it and which is not ours either, lie on our wagon though it does, since only the wind and the rain shape it only to Jewel and me, that are not asleep. And since sleep is is-not and rain and wind are was, it is not. Yet the wagon is, because when the wagon is was, Addie Bundren will not be. And Jewel is, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am is.
How often have I lain beneath rain on a strange roof, thinking of home. (p.65)

For a moment, Darl who can exist inside other names and in other places, loses contact with his own name and cannot say 'I am'. His own first-person-pronoun is unavailable to him and he is forced to slide from name to name and from tense to tense looking for it. Faulkner's skill is that he does not allow this to become an exercise in 'the alienated character'. Darl's de-centering is part of a dramatic nexus of moods: nostalgia, provoked by the strange room, slips through doubt toward de-materialization, but recovers on a note of maudlin poetry. Darl may lose his sense of self but the reader never loses his sense of Darl. Nonetheless judging from this moment it would be easy to say that Darl's confusion - a product of his linguistic fertility - illustrates the equation, language = sin, and affirms that Addie was right-minded to suppress it. It gives further weight to the suggestion that Faulkner mistrusts the lateral linguistic model adopted by many of his contemporaries. However, Darl's involvement with this model is too sustained for an easy dismissal. Indeed a great deal of As I Lay Dying works on Darl's premises. The multiple-monologue structure obeys Darl's habit of many voices. Just as Darl uses telepathy to persuade characters to re-appraise themselves, so As I Lay Dying is for the reader a continual act of re-appraisal. This can work in several ways, to listen to a monologue is to make a number of approximate assessments, each insufficient in itself, each waiting for the voice to stop before judgement can be derived from suspicion. The divided monologue makes additional demands upon revision - Jewel is heard once, very early in the novel, but he may speak again and so we are liable to give him the benefit of some doubt.

In addition Faulkner organized the sections of the novel to create a system of interdependence, whereby one section will often comment on that which follows or precedes it. The reader by interfering with the monologues is imitating Darl. The best way that I can illustrate this is to return to Cash's "I made it on the bevel" (p.66). His section is followed by Vardaman's "My mother is a fish" (p.67), a remark that stands alone at the top of a blank page exactly paralleling Cash's "I made it on the bevel". In visual terms Cash fills his empty page, Vardaman leaves his blank. Cash attempts an objective account of a rule, Vardaman utters a subjective remark which he does not understand. Cash's list arranges for stillness, whether in a house, a coffin or a bed. Vardaman's words are emotionally turbulent, they turn a dead body into a fish. Earlier I argued that Cash just wanted to state a rule and fall silent, Vardaman longs for someone to explain his remark, preferably with a list of simple rules. I don't know if I'm typical but his blank page in my copy of the text is covered with writing, pointing out that each word needs explanation, and incidentally proving that Addie's gap in the text can become a fertile place. "My mother", but Addie cancels Vardaman out and so denies the possessive pronoun, and her attitude to motherhood, to say the least, qualifies the applicability of the word "mother" to her. "My mother is", but she is not, she is dead. "My mother is a fish", Vardaman doesn't mean "a" fish, he means the fish that he caught and which the family ate. In this case the word fish (so right for Vardaman and so wrong for anyone but a confused 8 year old) is filled with tenuous symbolic possibilities. The fish is a Christian symbol, a secret sign for a community made strong through their communion in the blood of Christ. Demeter,

transformed into a dolphin and much discussed in The Golden Bough, may have a place. Faulkner was reading Frazer during the late 20's. Given Tull's glance towards Vardaman playing juvenile Fisher King beside a slough that "hadn't had a fish in it never" (p.74), Eliot joins Frazer and fertility in the connotative currency that rises from the word 'fish' once its denotative force is doubted. Cash longs for a blank page and silence. Next to him Vardaman requires more words and preferably a full page. The section that precedes them both has Darl de-materializing himself because his language has been too fertile. Dematerialization. Silence. Literalness. Three positions on language, each in its way inoperable. The interrelation of the sections is a dramatic presentation of the novel's central concern, and of the difficult need to solve the riddle of language, operably.

The principle by which the reader realizes this, that of moving between sections, is Darl's, and is a direct contravention of Addie's account of the gap. Her theology makes the gap the static centre of the novel. Darl's telepathy persuades us that it is there to be bridged, even as his re-creation of whole scenes fills the spaces in the narrative and impels it and us towards Jefferson and an ending. It might be argued that Darl, unhelpful at the river and down-right obstructive at the barn, halts the narrative and that it is Jewel or Anse who forces the action. But Jewel is there to carry a coffin through water and fire to a grave, and Anse to keep a word and get some teeth. Their plots are comparatively predictable. Dentures and a hole in the ground join a failed abortion, a clockwork train and a gramophone as predetermined "endings". Even the second Mrs. Bundren, after the shock of her introduction, merely establishes

that to all intent and purpose Anse never left the farm. Darl alone goes for no apparent reason; his plot is unwritten and therefore impels the reader to formulate the unrealized writing of its narrative line, an activity which since it involves language and time, is a double offence against Addie.

Sustained opposition to Addie leads in Darl's case to madness. The lateral model will not do. Faulkner's manipulation of pregnant women and idiots suggests how far he is prepared to go to find ways round Addie's attitude to words, but Darl's position is not the solution. However the riddle remains, its need for a solution is intensified by Darl's failure. The solution that As I Lay Dying offers has a great deal to do with the nature of that failure.

By the river, in front of a burning barn or on the Jackson train, Darl uses words from outside his own vocabulary. "Infinite" and "myriad" are not the words of Anse Bundren's son - artist or not. It is possible simply to accuse Faulkner of being carried away by his own rhetoric; certainly the monologue form does raise expectations of psychological realism which one misplaced "myriad" too many is liable to violate. But having noted the failure it is interesting to think about why Faulkner fails so conspicuously. A common critical response is to cast doubt upon his ability to give life to voices outside his own: but As I Lay Dying is full of voices, the reader has only to listen to hear. Anse's mumbled, "I do the best I can" is Anse; Vardaman's cry "He kilt her" is Vardaman and Jewel's curse "God-damn your snub nose soul to hell" is Jewel. The point is that Faulkner can create voices that belong peculiarly to their speakers. When he fails to do so and draws attention to his failure, it is because he does not believe that character has the prerogative of its

own easy relationship to language. The post-Freudian novelist knows about the unconscious, he will have learned from Joyce that it can be trapped by language, but that in it language does not behave. Dreams, slips, free-association and psychosis transform words so that they break the rules of ordinary communication. Joyce, Faulkner, Dos Passos, indeed all novelists who experiment with stream of consciousness techniques, find their own way of dealing with the important non senses that sound at certain levels in consciousness. Even so, Faulkner's "myriad" is not unlike the repeated "away" of "Proteus" and his "infinitesimal" could be compared to the string of "ness"s used in "Sirens". The difference being that where Joyce employed non sense to block psychological growth, Faulkner adopts literary terms to pin-point psychic confusion.

Yoknapatawpha words are shadowed by silence. Words multiply themselves and enclose the speaker in a linguistic box. Language exists in a tremulous balance with identity, a balance that a flooded river, a fire or two male nurses can upset. Faced with these events Darl retains his voice only by retreating to the Authority of a Literary language. The important point is not that he is thinking in words which are unavailable to him, but that he is impersonating a voice in order to have a voice at all. The passage does not give the impersonation word for word, since its contents are outside everyday words: instead it suggests the rhythms of a particular state of mind. "Infinitesimal" and "myriad" dramatize a crisis of interior authenticity. Their presence would be defined by Addie Bundren as a sin - moving as they do away from the vernacular with its natural overtones and its links to the purity of silence. Darl's desperate hunt for more words constitutes the sin of excessive signification.

However, given Faulkner's modification of Addie's stories, the idea of "myriad" as a sin seems exaggerated. "Myriad" sins for the reader, and for Faulkner, quite simply because it sounds excessive and out of place. The word is the authoritative signpost indicating Darl's struggle for voice, a struggle intensified by the lateral model which locks its user in a linguistic logic as remorseless as Addie's. To think of words as words increases the word-user's sense of words as print; to think of words as print increases the word-user's sense of print as literature. Somewhere in the sequence the speaker became the writer and the writer became the artist, and at some point in this progression Darl ceased to exist. "Myriad" marks the point - or one of them.

It could be argued that even if the explanation works for Darl it does not cover the odd "components" in Vardaman's throat, or Dewey Dell coming out with "stertorous". However the moments of undisguised rhetoric in As I Lay Dying are never spoken moments, they occur as a character strains to achieve or to retain an interior voice. In this sense the pre-oral efforts of Vardaman, disguised under a word like "components" are not unlike the post-vocal deterioration of Darl depicted by "myriad". The rhetoric is not Faulkner's rhetoric, it is a particular literary device adopted by Faulkner to present an uncontrolled stage in cognition. The device operates when a voice emerges or collapses. In either case its use is a sign of failure: the voice fails because it has been driven to find a desperate measure of safety in Literature, or it fails because it has been framed by, rather than framing, language. In both instances the absence of voice is demonstrated by words of a conspicuous and anonymous literary status:

Jewel and Vernon are in the river again. From here they do not appear to violate the surface at all; it is as though it had severed them both at a single blow, the two torsos moving with infinitesimal and ludicrous care upon the surface. It looks peaceful, like machinery does after you have watched it and listened to it for a long time. As though the clothing which is you had dissolved into the myriad original motion, and seeing and hearing in themselves blind and deaf; fury in itself quiet with stagnation. Squatting, Dewey Dell's wet dress shapes for the dead eyes of three blind men those mammalian ludicrousities which are the horizons and the valleys of the earth. (p.130)

Darl's words grow progressively less suitable, "violate" and "severed" may be within the compass of a returned Dough-Boy but "ludicrous" and "infinitesimal" stretch credibility. Faulkner carefully marks the credibility gap with the introduction of a mechanical simile; the river is turned into a circular saw and the swimmers are severed. Darl is no longer watching Jewel and Vernon; he is misrepresenting them. Literature takes over from this point, busily creating coherence out of crisis. The simile solidifies into a metonymic relation that assumes an "original motion" in order to blur the difference between Darl's pumping blood and the flooded current. The anthropomorphic device is credible only where hearing and sight are dull - a move which once achieved is the ideal prelude for the introduction of a universal symbol. Violence is reduced to inertia by the discovery of breasts at the centre of creation. The fact that Dewey Dell's chest has in the process grown "mammalian ludicrousities" shows how totally Literature has control, and to what loss. Faulkner does not use "mammalian ludicrousities" under the illusion that Darl is thinking it. The phrase reproduces Darl's habit of mind, his tendency to rely on words and art, even when the art is inappropriate and the words are missing.

The rhythm of a thought struggling with language is likewise caught in Vardaman's section as he sits near Jewel's horse on

the evening of Addie's death:

'Then hit want. Hit hadn't happened then. Hit was a-layin' right there on the ground. And now she's gittin' ready to cook hit.'

It is dark. I can hear wood, silence: I know them. But not living sounds, not even him. It is as though the dark were resolving him out of his integrity, into an unrelated scattering of components - snuffings and stampings; smells of cooling flesh and ammoniac hair; an illusion of a coordinated whole of splotched hide and strong bones within which, detached and secret and familiar, an is different from my is. I see him dissolve - legs, a rolling eye, a gaudy splotching like cold flames - and float upon the dark in fading solution; all one yet neither; all either yet none. I can see hearing coil toward him, caressing, shaping his hard shape - fetlock, hip, shoulder, and head; smell and sound. I am not afraid.

'Cooked and et. Cooked and et." (pp.47-48)

Vardaman's thoughts move through several layers as they come to terms with loss. He talks aloud in the dark (Faulkner records, with due attention to dialect), his thoughts fall silent but retain a spoken phrasing (the sentences are simple), however with "not even him" language confuses his already confused state. To whom does the pronoun apply? Although a rapid gloss of possibilities - Peabody, Peabody's team, Jewel's horse, the fish - indicates that the horses are the obvious choice, one shifting word is enough to upset Vardaman. "Integrity" "unrelated" and "components" are outside Vardaman's conceptual range, but they are a measure of how far he is outside his depth, even as his need to touch and make lists of what he touches measures his efforts to regain a voice and to use it out loud. Language used laterally can only carry him away from his voice; by taking an "n" from "neither" and adding it to "one" he gets nowhere, but Faulkner uses the phrases "all one yet neither; all either yet none" as he used "mammalian ludicrosities" to suggest a thought pattern rather than to dramatize its contents. The pattern is countered and articulacy regained when Vardaman's list adds up to a literal record, at which point the first-person-pronoun

reforms from the anonymous words and a strident and particular voice is heard, "Cooked and et. Cooked and et."

"Myriad" and "components" perform similar functions. As abstract words, of a similarly impersonal status, they establish how nearly characters are the same. Given what some have called "Faulknerese" as the only clue to the identity of each of the characters in As I Lay Dying, naming would be difficult. One "myriad" is very much like another "myriad". The voice is the distinguishing feature. Faulkner suggests that identity is no easy achievement, and achieved is an unstable gift; voice is its major characteristic. Just as a novelist's voice (or idiolect) takes several novels to form, so the individual's voice is an extended and uncertain creation. Each monologue is an act of self creation out of silence, and the words even at their most abstract are involved with this difficult creation.

Addie's original stories offer a linguistic theology by which words are evaluated as more or less sinful on a grade that rises from silence through literalness and speech, to abstraction. However although her model motivates words it also stains them. There is a space in it for the speaking voice, this side of damnation, but the place is an insecure one. Only the disruptive energies of Darl's language can break the grip that silence has on the Bundrens; it is his linguistic fertility that challenges Jewel and Dewey Dell, and finally persuades Cash to talk. However, his fertility produces a particular kind of breakdown and reader identification with Darl becomes increasingly difficult as the novel progresses. Faulkner makes schizophrenia explicit by splitting Darl's voice into two voices during his closing section. A clinical

viewpoint can, with the benefit of hindsight, produce a clinical labelling of Darl's gifts. His telepathy is "a perceptual disorder" with an appended note on the primacy of auditory hallucination - most typically the hearing of voices. The ease with which he adopts the horse and the fish as images for Addie is evidence of a bizarre personalized symbolism, and along with additional stylistic habits - double and triple adjectives, syntactical disorder, frequent alliteration - can be regrouped under the heading "disturbances of thinking". "Emotional blunting" is the clinical phrase applicable to the lack of response with which he greets Addie's death and to his attitudes to Jewel and Dewey Dell. It would be observed that physical trauma will in such cases intensify symptoms.

'Is it the pistols you are laughing at?' I said.

'Why do you laugh?' I said. 'Is it because you hate the sound of laughing?'

They pulled two seats together so Darl could sit by the window to laugh. One of them sat beside him, the other sat on the seat facing him, riding backward. One of them had to ride backward because the state's money had a face to each backside and a backside to each face, and they were riding on the state's money which is incest. A nickel has a woman on one side and a buffalo on the other; two faces and no back. I don't know what that is. Darl had a little spy-glass he got in France at the war. In it it had a woman and a pig with two backs and no face. I know what that is. 'Is that why you are laughing Darl?'

'Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes.' (pp.202-203)

All the categories are in evidence, but the clinical phrases are inappropriate because Darl's struggle for a sense of self appeals directly to Addie's equations and to the novel's concern with voice. The imagery spins like the spun coin that is its controlling principle, from face to backside and from beast to man. The presence of the coin is an unstated accusation, "Cash by name, Cash by nature. Cash sold me into Jackson". Darl cannot accuse his brother (just as the reader finds it difficult to blame him), because he senses that part of himself

is sick. The sickness may be hazardously diagnosed - Darl lacks a myth for language. His thoughts at this point suggest a recognition of loss. Associations of perversity ranging from homosexuality through incest to bestiality are prominent. This is Eden material but the connotations are far from religious. The coin and the French spy-glass cheapen the innocent crimes of Addie's mythology into pornography. Darl reaches back towards his mother's original stories but cannot become part of them. The diagnosis may sound strained, but facing the trauma of the river crossing Darl made a similar appeal to the culture-memory of a divine-signified. His thoughts gave up their lateral bias, deserting the system of language to discern under the surface of the stream a cat fish big as Moby Dick, and in Cash's eyes a secret old-territory not unlike Addie's dark earth:

Before us the thick dark current runs. It talks up to us in a murmur become ceaseless and myriad, the yellow surface dimpled monstrously into fading swirls traveling along the surface for an instant, silent, impermanent, and profoundly significant, as though just beneath the surface something huge and alive waked for a moment of lazy alertness out of and into light slumber again. (p.111)

or:

he and I look at one another with long probing looks, looks that plunge unimpeded through one another's eyes and into the ultimate secret place where for an instant Cash and Darl crouch flagrant and unabashed in all the old terror and the old foreboding, alert and secret and without shame. (pp.111-112)

Darl's appeal to the myth is hesitant and clearly he cannot remain Darl on the strength of it. His final strategy is to identify the self by talking to it - a question might elicit an answer and so prove a presence, "Is it the pistols you are laughing at?" (p. 202). This is, I think, very important. Darl remains Darl only for as long as in the confusions of his madness he can discover a voice. Voice, it would seem, is the

decisive element in differentiating an identity, and Darl is about to lose his voice.

Jewel had no voice to lose, and so offers no solution. He enacts a total schism between word and deed, and so repeats Addie's false graph "┘". Cash finds a voice which mediates the seeming impasse between innocent silence and fallen language. He moves from inarticulation into a limited articulation. It is his voice that finally decides for the sake of family and communal unity to commit Darl to Jackson. A peculiar detail in his penultimate section suggests that he will never again relapse into silence. Cash tells us that the Bundren wagon pulls up outside a house in Jefferson, so that Anse can borrow a shovel to bury the body. Cash says "he pulled up at Mrs Bundren's. It was like he knowed". (p.187) But how can Cash know that this strange house is the home of the second Mrs. Bundren? Unless Cash's last two sections occur outside the main events of the novel, long after the second Mrs. Bundren has settled in the hill farm. This would suggest that months, even years later, Cash is still thinking about the journey and the rejection of Darl - still trying to come to his own terms and to achieve a voice.

At the centre of this reading of As I Lay Dying's interpretation of its own central text is a transference. By the end of the novel the reader's uneasy identification has switched from Darl, the artist whose lateral words become too fertile and therefore sinful, to Cash, the inarticulate artisan whose silence becomes too sterile. Transference, if viewed as a particular event, occurred on the river bank; Darl loses his voice into Literature and sin, when Cash recovers his tools from the

flood. As plane, square, hammer, chalk line and rule are gradually and with great labour fished from the river, Addie's equations, language = sin, and, silence = Eden, are solved in such a way that Faulkner's Edenic imagination can operate outside the straight-jacket of a Calvinist mythology, to sanction Cash and the spoken word. The final language model and social model mutually reinforce one another. Cash will use his carpentry to repair the institutional buildings around him; his voice will, if it seeks change, seek change slowly.

One word on the novel's last page captures the delicacy of this exchange and the care with which Faulkner realizes his language plot. It is easy to read "graphophone" as "gramophone", or to assume that the two are synonymous⁸. In fact, the word names an instrument which, unlike the gramophone, performs two functions - it records as well as reproducing sound. All shut up in Mrs. Bundren's little grip is a machine that both speaks and inscribes language. The oral and the scriptable are crossed in a box. Thanks to his new step-mother, Cash will spend his winter evenings playing with one solution to Addie Bundren's inoperable linguistic theology.

1. Quoted by John Golding in the essay "Cubism" from Tony Richardson's Concepts of Modern Art (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1974), p.60.
2. John Berger, Success and Failure of Picasso (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965), p.59.
3. Guillaume Apollinaire, The Cubist Painters (Wittenborn and Company, New York, 1944), p.12.
4. Sherwood Anderson, A Story Teller's Story (Case Western Reserve University Press, Cleveland, 1968), p.261.
5. Quoted by Jonathon Culler in Saussure (Fontana Modern Masters, Glasgow, 1976), p.116.
6. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of The Church of Christ Scientist, believed in "malicious animal magnetism", as an explanation of the world's evil. Mary Douglas argues that Christian Science invented an ad hoc demonology to supplement its inadequate approach to evil. "Animal magnetism" was employed to explain lapses in 'good', thus preserving the symmetry of the church's rule system. Cash borrows a face saving term to preserve his own set of laws - he may, quite literally, be duplicating Eddy's evasiveness. However, I have not been able to establish the currency of her ideas in Mississippi during the 20's. Her church and its journal were instituted in 1876 and 1883 respectively.
See Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger (Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.2067

7. I have isolated a conflict in the approach to Addie's linguistic theology, dramatizing its extremes as Cash and Darl. There are however other accounts of the origin of words; they are by and large unsustained in the novel but their presence suggests the extent of Faulkner's thought. Addie cannot separate language and sin, but for a moment in the barn female sexuality stands as an uncomplicated analogy for a natural model of language:

The cow in silhouette against the door nuzzles at the silhouette of the bucket, moaning. Then I pass the stall. I have almost passed it. I listen to it saying for a long time before it can say the word and the listening part is afraid that there may not be time to say it. I feel my body, my bones and flesh beginning to part and open upon the alone, and the process of coming unalone is terrible. Lafe, Lafe. "Lafe" Lafe. Lafe. I lean a little forward, one foot advanced with dead walking. I feel the darkness rushing past my breast, past the cow; I begin to rush upon the darkness but the cow stops me and the darkness rushes on upon the sweet blast of her moaning breath, filled with wood and with silence. (pp.51-52)

The passage is difficult, not because Faulkner is imprecise, but because the problem is difficult. "I listen to it", "it" is the word Lafe entering Dewey Dell's consciousness, but the pronoun is placed so that at least until the proper noun is heard, "it" must apply to the cow moaning in the stall. The proper noun forms for the reader on the sweet blast of the cow's milky breath. In addition, it occurs for Dewey Dell as her flesh parts in a "process of coming" that is both sexual and maternal. Few words can have had better credentials for naturalness: "Lafe" is born and milk reared to potency. The passage can be read as a moment in a stream of consciousness when a girl recalls her lover. However the careful stress laid on the man as a word, deepens the naturalistic reading. 'Lafe' is repeated five times in an orgasm that is as verbal as it is physical.

The milk-fed word is rare in As I Lay Dying, but its presence should be noted as further evidence for Faulkner's mistrust of the surface simplicity which led Addie to substitute "doing" for "words".

8. I misread in just this way and would like to thank Charles Swann, both for correcting me and for indicating the importance of the brand-name.

Chapter 6

"The Sound and the Fury" : Caddy Smelled like Trees?

One day it suddenly seemed as if a door had clapped silently and forever to between me and all publishers' addresses ... Whereupon I, who had three brothers and no sisters and was destined to lose my first daughter in infancy, began to write about a little girl.

I did not realize then that I was trying to manufacture the sister which I did not have and the daughter which I was to lose, though the former might have been apparent from the fact that Caddy had three brothers almost before I wrote her name on paper... There is a story somewhere about an old Roman who kept at his bedside a Tyrrhenian vase which he loved and the rim of which he wore slowly away with kissing it. I had made myself a vase, but I suppose I knew all the time that I could not live forever inside of it. (Unpublished introduction to The Sound and The Fury: William Faulkner, 1933).

It began with a mental picture. I didn't realize at the time it was symbolical. The picture was of a muddy seat of a little girl's drawers in a pear tree where she could not see through a window where her grandmother's funeral was taking place and report what was happening to her brothers on the ground below. (Interview with Jean Stein, 1956).

And so I told the idiot's experience of that day, and that was incomprehensible, even I could not have told what was going on then, so I had to write another chapter. Then I decided to let Quentin tell his version of that same day, or that same occasion, so he told it. Then there had to be a counterpoint, which was the other brother, Jason. By that time it was completely confusing. I knew that it was not anywhere near finished and then I had to

write another section from the outside with an outsider, which was the writer, to tell what happened on that particular day. And that's how the book grew. That is, I wrote the same story four times. None of them were right ... I was still trying to tell one story which moved me very much and each time I failed ... And that's the reason I have most tenderness for that book, because it failed four times. (Nagano, 1955).

Question: Mr. Faulkner, in The Sound and the Fury the first three sections of the book are narrated by one of the four Compson children, and in view of the fact that Caddy figures so prominently, is there any particular reason why you didn't have a section with - giving her impressions of what went on?

Answer: That's a good question. That - the explanation of the whole book is in that. (University of Virginia, 1957)¹.

I

But is this the case? If so why didn't Faulkner pause to explain to the perceptive graduate student? Gathered together the podium and prefatory statements from Nagano to Virginia contain strikingly little about the girl. Faulkner seems as reticent as her brothers. Like them he says a lot that doesn't add up to much: a pair of soiled drawers and a Tyrrhenian vase are an unsatisfactory biography. A glossy photograph is added in the Appendix. It shows an anonymous lady standing next to a German Staffgeneral. Her face, "ageless and beautiful, cold, serene and damned",² merely confirms what is known already - the symbology of the drawers and vase. Caddy, if this is she, has had a chequered career in which sex and death have been close enough bedfellows to make her Keatsian serenity remarkable. Beyond this there is very little. Yet any reading of The Sound and the Fury needs to come to terms with Caddy, and to do so while acknowledging that for the most part she is a blank, connived at by Faulkner:

Caddy was still to me too beautiful and too moving to reduce her to telling what was going on.³

Before attempting an account I would like to add a question from Sartre to that of the Virginia student. "Why is the first window that opens out on this fictional world the consciousness of an idiot?"⁴ Together the questions constitute what Sartre might call "the central complication" of the text. It may be sufficient to say that any novel is the sum of its parts and that by April 8th 1928, Caddy stands revealed as an embodiment of the decaying Compson household. Certainly the novel's underlying movement seems to be towards clarification: from silence to articulation, from idiocy to omniscience, from discontinuous to continuous time, from the Old to the New South, even from id to super-ego. The interpretations proliferate but the consensus

has it that formally The Sound and the Fury reveals itself. In which case, why make exposition so difficult by starting with an idiot?

At the risk of sounding like Jason - Benjy is Faulkner's star idiot. Timeless and wordless, he wants only his sister. Hardly an auspicious way to begin writing about a little girl. On the face of it there would seem no better place to hide her than in the consciousness of such a man. Yet if the idea of persona as hiding place is pursued, each monologue begins to sound as mute as the first. On June 2nd 1910, Quentin kills himself, setting the reader a formal problem - at what point during the day did he think his section?. Does all that occur in a split second between bridge and river? Or is it necessary to appeal to the convention about the lives of drowning men? Leaving aside structural issues, what Quentin actually says contains a great deal on the matter of whores and hymens, and rather less on Caddy. Jason sounds altogether more direct but dwells on Caddy's daughter. Furthermore I would hesitate to call him a reliable witness, particularly as his compulsive straight-talk is addressed to no one special. His language for all its volume is private. Indeed there are moments when his mouth moves so fast that he cannot be hearing what it says. Walter Ong comments on vocalization:

Every human word implies not only the existence - at least in the imagination - of another to whom the word is uttered, but it also implies that the speaker has a kind of otherness within himself. He participates in the other to whom he speaks, and it is this underlying participation which makes communication possible ... When we speak, we invite response. If I expect no response, no Yes, no No, no riposte of any sort, at least internal, I do not normally speak at all - unless I am losing hold on myself, am distraught, or am not in my right mind.²

Jason is communicating rather less than might at first be imagined.

The Compson boys are impaired speakers, in the habit of talking about their sister through indirection only. Therefore, when Faulkner takes a day for himself, "to gather the pieces together and fill in the gaps",⁶ it is a shock to see him spending it on an itinerant preacher from St. Louis. The shock goes when the author is seen to be duplicating the reticence of his narrators. Reverend Shegog enters The Sound and the Fury - a novel about a small and much loved girl - to preach on Divine Love in a language "without words".⁷ His sermon is magnificent but as a black girl from Tennessee put it, "I don't think the preacher ought to try to preach you into heaven",⁸ especially not when you are expecting enlightenment on quite another subject. Shegog is Faulkner's protégé; by introducing him the author seals a silence which, from Nagano to Virginia, he has declared with pride to be his failure. Once complicity is recognized the novel's process becomes secretive rather than expository. Benjy is the first of four collaborators to undertake the conscious suppression of the sister.

II

I attribute consciousness to Benjy with no excuses. Too many readers have listened to the dismissals of the Appendix and the Paris Review Interview; or have allowed any initial uncertainty to be shaped by critical accounts falling into one of two camps. The first sentimentalizes Benjy as a moral touchstone, a vessel of the heart uncontaminated by intellect. To the second he is a machine, a camera with a tape recorder attached. Mystic hearts and machines are alike indifferent to time. "Timelessness"⁹ is a fine preservative, so Faulkner credits Benjy with it and adds for good measure that he is "an animal".¹⁰

Whatever his creator may say, Benjy is not "impervious to the future", nor as a language-user can he "be the past".¹¹ It might be objected that to extend Benjy's sense of time on the grounds that he thinks in narrative sentences, merely points up a formal limitation. The argument goes - novelists have after all to use words, and Faulkner seems to have used the simplest available. Why then, if his interests were exclusively pre-linguistic, didn't he adopt an external viewpoint? The shambling idiot who walks into Dilsey's kitchen on April 8th, 1928, is a far more convincing linguistic blank than the first section's approximation to imbecilic consciousness. Faulkner did not want a tabula rasa; as early as 1868, there were linguists who could have defended as scientific his gift of words to a mute, "Loss of speech is the loss of power to propositionalize ... Speechlessness does not mean entire wordlessness."¹² I cannot accept that Benjy is a literary device whose linguistic habits, where they exhibit any degree of complication, are simply expressing technical limitations.

Benjy balances on the brink of silence but he uses words. This language is our only access to his imagination and the first clue to the small girl hidden there. Once again evidence is limited. Benjy lacks many things - syntactical variants, tense changes, conjunctions, synonyms, negatives, exclamation and question marks, are just a few of them. At his disposal he has the scaffolding of thought - ambulatory verbs, a few nouns, the simple past tense, "and", the occasional adverb, full stops. Poverty or passivity are not the only conclusions that can be drawn from this list. Irena Kaluza is doubtless right to resolve her study of Benjy's sentence structure with the statement:

(his) idiolect may be equated with what is usually described as kernel sentences, "simple, declamative, active, with no complex verb or noun phrases" (N. Chomsky), in short the barest essentials of the mechanisms of language.¹⁵

To deduce further that he is "monolithic" and capable only of "mechanical identification" (p.85), betrays the linguist as an uncritical reader. Benjy is as rich in small sisters as he is poor in linguistic resources. Having no question or exclamation mark, he sets Caddy beyond enquiry and outrage. A basic sentence format denies complication. He has no negatives with which to exclude his sister, no temporal terms to temporalize her, no causal words to explain her, no propositions to distance her, no adjectives to divide or synonyms to multiply her. Benjy's language is tailor-made to preserve a singular sister.

The fact that the idiot occasionally deviates from basics indicates that linguistic meanness is his chosen, rather than his necessary, way. Elaboration is usually associated with Caddy. She and some of her possessions are said to be, "like leaves", "like trees", "like when she says we are asleep". These similes are often associated with comforting moments that elicit adjectival expression - "bright," "smooth," "cold". Together Benjy's similes and adjectives reveal a great deal about the workings of his imagination. Linguistic modification generally takes the form of saying again: this is true of language itself, which since it is metaphoric, broadly repeats its referent. A simile or adjective imports certain qualities in order to explain a word again and better. Benjy's favoured adjectives are interestingly clear; one might almost say that they are clear as glass. My point is that their translucency defeats textual density. Unlike most modifiers, "bright," "smooth," and "cold", do not draw attention to the amplifications they introduce:

I could hear Queenie's feet and the bright shapes went smooth and steady on both sides, the shadows of them flowing across Queenie's back. They went on like the bright tops of the wheels. Then those on one side stopped at the tall white post where the soldier was. But on the other side they went smoothly and steadily, but a little slower. (p.18)

The passage is an early one, but already "brightly" and "smoothly" are recognizably Caddy's words. They contain the sister as a secondary meaning. When a word has two meanings Benjy will choose to hear the first: his selective listening does not import the sister as an intruder, but imposes her as the only presence. When he uses "bright", Benjy sees, and causes us to see, Caddy handing him the glass box or opening the oven door. The same motive takes him to the golf-course fence, so that he can hear the first word in the sound "caddie". This proper noun still hurts him because, despite its originality, as language it is a secondary account of that which it describes.

The linguistic gift automatically involves its user in metaphoric duplicity. Many absent signs hover above the chosen sign. Numerous synonyms and antonyms are implicit in most words; to edit them out would require a sustained effort, amounting to a reversal of the process by which language is acquired. Benjy is a systematic and partially informed editor. Because he is capable of analogy, he must be tentatively aware of what he is editing out. "Like" is part of his lexicon, although he handles it selectively. For example, the simile, "she smelled like trees" is so loaded with loss that the second signification (be it "trees" "leaves" or "when she says we are asleep"), cancels out and becomes inseparable from the original term. As table is to leg, so by the end of April 7th 1928, "tree" is to "Caddy" - the word trees means Caddy. This kind of simile defeats the

premise of analogy and encapsulates a style: Benjy's idiolect makes words work against their habitual inclination which is to generate more words. Another way of expressing the duplicity that Benjy cuts, is to see it as connotation. Connotation can be personal or historical in so far as the substitutions it imposes are derived from collective representations as much as from idiosyncratic individuals. Benjy actively deletes both kinds of memory as part of a campaign to stop Caddy growing up.

An idiolect implies an historical model because its linguistic habits organize the space of time in which they operate. If the organization is habitual, it will gradually reveal the speaker's account of time. Anyone who makes a simple statement is committed to all the tenses. By existing, his sentence implies a present in which it was composed. For example, "Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting", begs the question - when on April 7th was this thought? Complete, the statement enters the past, it can do so only because a prediction about the future permitted completion. The future is even part of sentences written in the past tense: "they were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence." (p.11), depends upon departures and predicts arrivals; it implies therefore a sequence of actions, before and after, without which the statement could not have been made. Arguably all words are temporally predictive, though some predict further than others. Verbs more than nouns, nouns more than abstract nouns, prepositions more than articles and so on. Words have a complex temporal existence because they are part of a continuing system, implied by the occurrence of the very smallest among them. Obviously the time "contained in" a word will vary in everyday usage. By stating temporal implications in this way, I am making the lang-

uage I describe sound like a foreign tongue. My sanction is Benjamin.

Listening to a voice that cannot be heard as it uses words that it does not have makes me sensitive about how carefully that voice works. Since I know that language has a future and a present, Benjy's tense decision is striking. He sets two tenses aside to work exclusively in the past. More accurately, his goal is an ur-time outside time, with Caddy. My point is that this is not a passive "timelessness" but a contrivance for which he labours. Caddy at the branch, with Maury alone, is an artefact that has to be invented. Benjamin is the mechanic. Most critics miss his energy. Failing to see the artifice under the plainness, they speak of "an objective view of the past"¹⁴ or "an entirely faithful glass".¹⁵ The greatest factor behind this assumption is passivity:

Benjy is incapable of association of ideas; therefore his memory is stimulated by a physical sensation - a sound, or a motion, or the sight of an object either in the present, or in a scene being relived.¹⁶

I chose Edmond Volpe simply because he is representative. More recent criticism echoes him:

whatever he experiences flashes in and out of existence, because he is totally devoid of the consciousness that is the prerequisite for an overall field of perception which would guarantee a pattern for these experiences.
(Wolfgang Iser)¹⁷

or:

(Benjy) lives in a psychologically timeless realm where memories mix freely and equally with present life.
(Mark Spilka)¹⁸

Note, "memories mix"; the phrase does not suggest how actively Benjy mixes them. A time shift is an act of analogy that brings one time into conjunction with another: the result could be expressed as a simile in which Benjy prefers the original to the secondary term. In any comparison he will incline towards

the earlier aspect; therefore of the 106 pieces that make up April 7th 1928, the majority occur before 1910. If further evidence is needed for Benjy's habit of living behind himself, Edmond Volpe points out that each important incident begins at its beginning. By implication Benjy would rather not begin the 13 scenes where he does; he would prefer to start earlier (perhaps before Caddy climbed the tree), or not to start at all. But Volpe does not discuss the idiot's reserve nor does he face the problem of how Benjy keeps a time sequence straight in his head, unless he has a basic narrative. From what does his plot derive? A notional plot, even if termed 'deep-structure', disposes of Iser's idea that everything Benjy sees is patternless and equally present. There must be some differentiation expressed in his preferential analogies.

Chomsky has argued that when a child repeats a word his repetition does not represent acquisition by rote, rather it is a creative application of rules. The child responds to changed circumstances with an old word : effectively he has taught himself a new word via the drawing of an analogy. The idea serves as a useful introduction to the part played by objects like the slipper, the cushion and the gate in Benjy's life. Benjy goes repeatedly to these places and to these things; according to Chomsky his habit is not mechanical, it expresses an active association between different times. However where Chomsky's child employs analogy to increase his lexicon, Benjy reverses the process. Having deployed considerable energy in reaching the gate or getting the slipper, he imports a gate or slipper from an earlier time. Like a petulant child Benjy exerts great ingenuity in refusing to create language and in blanking out historical perspective.

It is not important that such energy is beyond the resources of the thirty-three year old idiot with a mental age of three, who grows up in Faulkner's podium statements. As long as Benjy is convincing, his exact I.Q. does not matter. It is nevertheless interesting to speculate why Faulkner chose three. Doubtless the mathematical symmetry of all the threes appealed to him. More important considerations about dates set aside mere neatness. Benjy was born in April 1895, Damuddy died three years later in 1898. The date of her death is conspicuously marked by Caddy's subversive tree climbing. It would seem that Benjy stopped when he saw his sister's muddy drawers. At a mythic level Benjy refuses to grow beyond the point at which the fall into sexuality and death is symbolically located in his life. No word in the section ante-dates 1898, because mythically speaking the natural, lacking knowledge and language, lacks the where withal to remember. In 1897 he was the blank towards which for thirty years he has been trying to carry his sister. I hasten to add that all talk of mythic threes would be irrelevant, were Benjy's monologue not a convincing portrait of a grown up child.

I have overstated the case for Benjy's imagination to counter what I take to be a wrong-headed mechanistic consensus. Therefore, before going further, I shall attempt a less polemic account of his consciousness. April 7th 1928, like any day in Benjy's life, is full of cues, some of which enable him to switch back towards an ur-time. Others, because they might carry him forward to a more recent past or to the present, necessitate evasive action: action which he frequently fails to take or which proves unsuccessful, leaving him stranded in April 7th. The alternative explanation is that every day Benjy suffers a stream of mechanical black-outs, over which he has no control and thanks to which he finds

himself randomly anywhere from 1898 to 1928. My reading is located between the two. Benjy's control, although spasmodic, is consistent enough to be spoken of as his control. How else to explain the curious congruity of Caddy's loss of virginity and Versh's story about second hand impregnation among bluegums?

Caddy came to the door and stood there looking at Father and Mother. Her eyes flew at me, and away. I began to cry. It went loud and I got up. Caddy came in and stood with her back to the wall, looking at me. I went towards her, crying and she shrank against the wall and I saw her eyes and I cried louder and pulled at her dress. She put her hands out but I pulled at her dress. Her eyes ran.

Versh said, Your name Benjamin now. You know how come your name Benjamin now. They making a bluegum out of you. Mammy say in old time your granpa changed nigger's name, and he turn preacher, and when they look at him, he bluegum too. Didn't use to be bluegum, neither. And when family woman look him in the eye in the full of the moon, chile born bluegum. And one evening, when they was about a dozen them bluegum chillen running round the place, he never come home. Possum hunters found him in the woods, et clean. And you know who et him. Them bluegum chillen did. (p.67)

Late in the summer of 1909 Caddy lost her virginity. Benjy saw it. This need not involve mysterious intuition. He does not stare at eyes because he has insight, but because like fire and glass the eye moves and reflects light. At this moment Caddy's eyes are probably moving far too fast. The important point is that Benjy goes back almost nine years to November 1900, when his name was changed. A mechanical reason can be found, "dress" and "eyes" with their burden of "s's" and "e's" could be made to sound like "Versh". I suspect that with enough effort all Benjy's transferences could be put down to physical responses. However, in this incident the senses cannot explain away evidence of a narrow imagination drawing prohibitive analogies. Caddy's sexual change is associated with Benjy's name change: an equation involving two impurities is produced - loss of virginity = loss of maiden name. It would seem that the sister's sexual knowledge has forced

her brother to recognize linguistic duplicity. Benjy counters by recalling a particular story about multiple names. A bluegum is a negro whose gums are blue rather than pink. Such men are held to be conjurors with a fatal bite and are consequently treated with fear and reverence. Versh's bluegum has the additional gift of magic eyes, a gift that seems to have resulted directly from a name change. Simply by looking at his congregation the bluegum preacher can make them bluegum. Even unborn children are liable to conversion. The recollection of this peculiar story enables Benjy to claim paternity over any child that his sister may have conceived in 1909. If he is bluegum too and can look into Caddy's shifty eyes, he will re-impregnate her in an innocent incest which involves no penetration. According to the story Benjy is the father of Caddy's child. But stories from the old time are unsatisfactory. For once Benjy cannot make the second term of his analogy become the first. Being a bluegum, capable of innocent incest, does not protect him from the unpleasant end of Versh's story. He cannot edit out the guilt and death that his culture associates with sexuality ("Possum hunters found him in the woods, et clean").

I am unable to explain so much material in mechanical terms. The analogy is too motivated to be fortuitous, yet its complexity serves a simplistic end and remains the convincing product of a childish mind - Benjy wants his small sister for himself. Time and time again on April 7th the brother confounds the sister's growth with earlier memories. One particular cluster of episodes resists all his attempts at re-plotting: Damuddy's death and Caddy's wedding are inseparably associated. At a deep level the equation is between fatality and sex, and constitutes a collective representation strong enough to stamp the impaired mind of an

adult child. To say that Benjy is without history is to ignore his efforts to erase this particular cultural imprint.

In 1898 Caddy climbed a tree, against the express instructions of her father. She saw evidence of death. A snake slipped from under the house. Satan's name was heard. These details make up the image which Faulkner claims as the source of his book. They are original in another sense, since what happens here is plainly another Fall. And Benjy will not have it. His resistance resembles Addie Bundren's: she tried to erase her life by returning to Jefferson, where dead and resting under her maidenname, she felt that she might obtain a pre-sexual and pre-linguistic peace. The symbols she elected to stand for her calm were a hymen and a blank space in the text. Benjy wishes to erase the first soiled moment in the garden and all that it implies. Given his way he would wipe his own memory clean, keep Caddy small and effectively tear up the source and reason for Faulkner's novel. More than his section would be as pure as white paper. Benjy does not have his way, though not for want of trying. The Fall like time is one of the skeletal facts of Faulkner's language and Benjy is not exempt from it; it is part of the inheritance even of three year olds. When Frony whispers to the tree-climbing Caddy, "What you seeing", Benjy answers "a wedding", that is to say he remembers Caddy's wedding:

"What you seeing." Frony whispered.

I saw them. Then I saw Caddy, with flowers in her

hair, and a long veil like shining wind. Caddy. Caddy.
(p.42) 19

The verb "to see" may be the mechanical switch that throws him through twelve years; if so, it leaves the timeless machine with an embarrassingly good ear for tenses. Alternatively,

Benjy's Southern imagination associates funerals with weddings, and rapidly co-opts language into the symbolic nexus. As he stands on a box, staring through the parlor window at his sister's reception, Benjy grows self-conscious about the noises that come from his mouth, "my throat made a sound ... my throat kept on making the sound" (p.42). For the man who is unaware that he has been castrated unless he looks at himself, this is a moment of unusual perception. Funerals give way to weddings. Weddings induce words. Working backwards, language, sexuality and the Fall are linked.²⁰ Benjy resists their linkage. As soon as he encounters the wedding cues, a "shining veil" and the scent of 1910-flowers, he converts them into a hat and some perfume worn by Caddy in 1906 - when, according to Jason, she only thought she was grown up (p.43). At fourteen²¹ Caddy could still wash most of her knowledge away and restore the smell of trees. Knowing that Benjy has had to negotiate with time to recapture his favourite odour, makes the phrase, "Caddy smelled like trees", urgent, and the word "trees" particularly so. During the 20's Faulkner read the single volume edition of The Golden Bough, but hardly needed a Victorian anthropologist to encourage his interest in dryads. Virgins and poplars go together in his mind as early as The Marble Faun.²² The innocent girl transformed into a tree is a mythic creature mediating the opposition between man and nature, animate and inanimate. As such the image fits comfortably into Benjy's imagination which, in its more peaceful moments, fails to distinguish between people and things. However, according to the story within whose influence Benjy was born, the tree and the woman combine in far from peaceful circumstances. The tree

bears the fruit Knowledge and the woman is Eve. This tree is central to linked stories - Eden and The Fall. Its word points two ways. Its odour is sweet and stale. "Caddy smelled like trees" is not a mechanical catch phrase, it is a difficult exclusion involving harsh editing.

When one word projects diametrically opposed plots and implies two temporal layers, it is not surprising that Faulkner's attempts to mark the time shifts occurring during April 7th fail. A distinction between Roman and italic script cannot convey the awkward niceties of Benjy's time scale. It is doubtful whether a range of coloured inks would have done much more than help the reader to an earlier sense of the major episodes. The idea was discussed by Faulkner and his editors,²³ and dropped when printing techniques and cost proved prohibitive. But had the method been adopted would Faulkner have printed "trees", in two colours and if so where would the division have occurred? The absurdity of the question emphasises the limitation of any typographical answer.

For several years I read the different print faces as encoding different times. Only gradually did it dawn on me that where the italics are brief (of not more than two or three lines), they signal a transference, and that having done this the new time reverts to Roman type.²⁴ As I grew more familiar with the text certain anomalies stood out. Unmarked shifts in continuous Roman passages. Typographic change without temporal change. Initially these seemed to be errors, certainly careless and probably wilful. My annoyance diminished with a growing sense that Benjy's idiocy was more interesting than the techniques which expressed it. By crediting the idiot with imagination, I

found that anomaly became subtlety beyond the register of type face. Edmond Volpe has listed five unmarked shifts of scene; there are more, although given that their number is not legion it is not important. Faulkner employs print surfaces only as a guide line. Having introduced the problem, he leaves the reader to discover for himself the ramifications of shifting time:

"I like to know why not." Frony said. "White folks dies too. Your grandmammy dead as any nigger can get, I reckon."

"Dogs are dead." Caddy said, "And when Nancy fell in the ditch and Roskus shot her and the buzzards came and undressed her."

The bones rounded out of the ditch, where the dark vines were in the black ditch, into the moonlight, like some of the shapes had stopped. (p.37)

Frony is the clue, the passage is about Damuddy's death. There is however one difficulty - how does Benjy get from Dilsey's cabin to his own bedroom? While the children talk about Damuddy, Benjy is looking out of his window at the ditch that contains Nancy's bones. Clearly there is a shift from 1898 to some other time, which Benjy's subsequent and rare negative, "It wasn't Father" (p.88), identifies as 1912 - the date of Mr. Compson's death. Fourteen years pass unregistered because Benjy is in a panic. Since his first encounter with an association between Damuddy and "funeral"²⁵ he has been trying to quit 1898. The result has been a sequence of deaths. Five jumps have yielded four bodies in the space of less than one page; "undressed" is the point of greatest confusion - the word is a clue pointing several ways, to "the smooth bright shapes" that come when the child Benjy has been undressed and put to bed with Caddy, to the stained drawers that Dilsey strips from the small girl, to the increasingly fancy clothes of his sister's adolescence. Unable to orientate himself and use the clue advantageously, Benjy jumps. He travels fourteen years to discover another

death. Not surprisingly, with the bones of Damuddy, Roskus, Nancy and Mr. Compson rising from every available ditch, it is not clear to Benjy that he has moved at all.

My reading stipulates that for the most part Benjy is actively aware of the two sides to any temporal comparison: his aim is that the peaceful side should cancel the less peaceful. Peace for the most part being synonymous with events before 1910. Often the hope is unrealized. Nonetheless each interpolated memory is an attempt at the perfect simile which will render all time synonymous with ur-time. The perfect simile is a metaphor whose two terms have forged a unity such as "chair" and "leg" can only hint at, a unity in which the word and that for which it stands are one. The only way for the temporal simile to imply pre-lapsarian unanimity is for it to incline to the past. Occasionally perfection occurs. Studying the fire or near to "the smooth bright shapes", of sleep, Benjy will forget time and fail to register the words and events that happen around him. When this occurs, momentarily he is with Caddy in the garden. Because his ur-time is beyond comparison, it disposes of all analogy, including the analogy of language. Necessarily it makes no mark on the text and results in an invisible gap - the perfect unscribed simile.

She led me to the fire and I looked at the bright, smooth shapes. I could hear the fire and the roof./
Father took me up. He smelled like rain.
"Well, Benjy." he said. "Have you been a good boy today."
Caddy and Jason were fighting in the mirror. (1900:p.63)

or:

Quentin and Luster were playing in the dirt in front of T.P.'s house. There was a fire in the house, rising and falling, with Roskus sitting black against it./
"That's three, thank the Lawd." Roskus said. "I told you two years ago. They ain't no luck in this place."
"Whyn't you get out, then." Dilsey said. She was undressing me. (1912:pp.34-35)

Benjy does not notice Mr. Compson enter the library or hear the fight. In Dilsey's cabin the fire absorbs whatever occurs between the idiot's entry and his preparation for bed. The intervals involved are probably considerable. By marking two gaps in the text "/ " I have contravened Benjy's imagination. The discovery of a gap requires that a case be made for how Benjy was able to quit time. An unrecorded transference, once found, raises a question as to why Benjy thought two discontinuous events, one event. Faced with this issue the editorial task very rapidly becomes historical. To see differences in undifferentiated detail is to see cause and to suppose a history that is both personal and cultural. All of which is the exact opposite of what Benjy works for. By giving the reader so much to do, Faulkner absolves himself from the stain of taking Benjy's innocence. The degree to which any reader invents Benjy's consciousness, is the degree to which that reader is stained with the fall that cognition implies.

My own response to the task is inseparable from a more general reaction to Benjy's language. I spoke earlier about how words contain projections: it seems to me that they do so in direct proportion to their materiality. A semantic weight locates a sign in historical processes that are more than personal (be they social or economic). Benjy's words are so full of materiality that they positively deny themselves linguistic density. However, the material that they contain is consciously withdrawn from history, and as a result Benjy's language gives a simultaneous impression of potential^{and} waste. The combination is a problem for suspicious readers. A thirty-three year old with a three year old mind will have the imagination of an active child;

by discovering how his imagination works we narrow its potential. Furthermore the enumeration of Benjy's wasteful perceptual habits, seems against the wishes of character and author alike. Faulkner and his first narrator collaborate in the "manufacture" of a sister and the hope that their product will confine herself to "a single mental picture". The processes of language, history and consciousness are against it. In spite of the odds and perhaps in spite of the reader, Benjy's monologue works. It works best if its governing consciousness is left unstructured, as a hiding place.

III

Initially the secret seems safe with Quentin, whose linguistic duplicity and symbolic elusiveness create mazes through which he pursues several versions of his sister. As a Mississippian Stephen Dedalus he employs Symbolist readings to promote verbal gymnastics and cruel women. "Whores", "little girls", "Belles Dames" are so numerous that, for a long time, there is no Caddy to be seen. Indeed some critics never see her, complaining that only Quentin Compson is on show. Generally they add that the performance leaves much to be desired. The consensus has it that the eldest brother is a fascinating weakling: "a clinical case", "a Romantic Keats figure", an aristocratic victim "still living in the attitudes of 1859 or 60", a tormented and self disguising "ego", whose weakness is rooted in a "supperating impotence" of body and spirit.²⁶ By all accounts Quentin is morally reprehensible and afflicted by a passivity that rivals Benjy's. This catalogue derives from two misconceptions. Firstly, critics have allowed themselves to read the novel through the Appendix. Although in 1946 Quentin may have struck Faulkner as one who "loved death above all" (p.9), on

June 2nd, 1910, suicide is not to the forefront of his mind. Plans have been made, including the purchase of two flat irons, but I would guess that for the first, second and even third-time reader, provisions for death pale before the Boston Italian community, child abduction, court cases, and Caddy. Quentin's attention is on his sister and not on the Charles River. If this is the case, reasons beyond Quentin's pathology are needed to explain the 1946 entry under his name. Faulkner, the little girl "manufacturer", has a vested interest in censoring any too scrupulous enquiry into his *idée fixe*. Necessarily Quentin's name must be blackened and the Appendix affects the slander by by presenting him as an impotent solipsist:

Quentin III. Who loved not his sister's body but some concept of Compson honour precariously and (he knew well) only temporarily supported by the minute fragile membrane of her maidenhead as a miniature replica of the whole vast globy earth may be poised on the nose of a trained seal ... [but who was] loved not only in spite of but because of the fact that he was himself incapable of love. (pp.9-10)

Trusting the teller is a mistake. Faulkner loves Caddy, and Quentin makes discoveries about brother-sister love in the South which Faulkner is not prepared to countenance. It is the creator not the creature who religiously preserves "the minute fragile membrane". Indeed Faulkner once compared The Sound and the Fury to a hymen; writing of the Appendix - his fifth attempt at Caddy's novel - he observed, "It was too late then though. The book was done. It was last year's maidenhead now".²⁷ Author, character-distinction are difficult to define, given that the creature is an extension of the creator. In this instance the problem may be reduced if June 2nd 1910 is looked upon as the day when Quentin found out more than was good for him, and in so doing challenged the premises of the Southern imagination.

The Italian girl, the country court and Gerald Bland are central to the challenge. Each is a surrogate employed with

increasing insight by Quentin as a means of discovering the past. On June 1st Quentin probably believed, as did his father before him, that the past was a fait accompli: a mausoleum containing the given in which the present lives - "was the saddest word of all there is nothing else in the world its not despair until time its not even time until it was" (p.161). Mr. Compson's claim paralyses time by insisting that all tenses take their form from a falsely inflexible past. The rubric designates that history is absolutely determinate and that typologies of race, class and money are fixed. Little in The Sound and the Fury makes an alternative case. Although the cotton index fluctuates and Versh takes the freedom road as far North as Memphis, historical forces keep a low profile. The decline of the Compsons is presented as a moral event, and the portico rots because love and not finance runs out. However, it is a mistake to adopt Sartre's position; Mr. Compson does not explicate Faulkner's idea of time.

On June 2nd, in a thrall to "was" and prepared to die for it, Quentin learns, half by chance and half by curiosity, that the past can be reinvented. His first act on getting up is to dismantle his father's watch. Presumably he wants to escape from time. However the inner parts prove annoyingly well made and the watch continues to tick. Quentin's day gives intellectual substance to the initial symbolic act, so that the sound of clocks takes on new meaning; by the time Quentin returns to his room, "the mausoleum of all hope" (p.72) inherited from his father, and his father's father (indeed from Southern history), sounds like something "temporary". The word punctuates the end of June 2nd, and refers to a great deal more than Quentin's life.

With it the son insists on the flexibility of the past and casts his father's determinate "was" as material for a dead language. Quentin counters all Mr. Compson's claims with the reiterated observation that they are "temporary". When history can be seen as a process of revision, the contours of the past are unfixed. Tick and tock cease to be "the reducto absurdum of all human experience" (p.77) and become a mechanical noise whose significance depends on the historian. Quentin is a historian who takes his sister as his subject. The difficulty for Faulkner is that the new sister, arising from the day, promotes a new account of the cultural issues centred on the institution of virginity. In effect he pushes a personal history to the brink of a larger history, for which he is not yet prepared. Arguably Absalom, Absalom! is an attempt to supply the impersonal materials, necessary to a properly historical account by the same hand. Whether and why Quentin fails there, is not my concern. I simply wish to record the stages by which he rescues Caddy, and incidentally puts a Tyrrhenian vase at risk.

The Appendix and the critics have obscured how well Quentin is equipped for insight. He is the clever son for whom the pasture was sold to buy a Harvard education. Mr. Compson's classical and legal researches provide him with what would now be called a literary home environment. The freshman year in Boston extends his reading to the New Psychology. Freud and Jung lectured there in 1909, a way having been cleared by Ernst Jones who gave several meetings during 1908 and concluded, "New England was by no means unprepared to listen to Freud's new doctrines".²⁸ The colloquiums of 1908 involved Hugo Munsterberg who subsequently took charge of the Harvard Psychological Laboratory, a position he held during Quentin's freshman year.

There is no way of knowing whether Shreve's enquiry, "Did you go to Psychology this morning." (p.94) alludes to the Lab. or reflects its director's interest in the everyday application of his science.²⁹ But since Quentin is sufficiently informed to make glancing allusions to, "your natural psychologists" (p.91), it is a safe bet that he knew about the Lab. and its work. Psychology seminars during the 90's had encouraged students to try out theories on one another. Gertrude Stein enrolled: her research on motor automatism involved testing over forty subjects. In Everybody's Autobiography she notes, "Sidis was interested in studying subconscious reactions".³⁰ Boris Sidis pioneered the scientific study of subconsciously motivated behaviour in America. He remained at Harvard until 1908 and his influence was probably reflected in the academic courses of 1910. We know that Quentin took one psychology seminar; it may be fairly assumed that since the seminar was at Harvard, he gained an introduction to the New Psychology and was perhaps encouraged to test its claims against himself.³¹

Although Quentin is far from being a clinical analyst, it is difficult to see how he could miss the surrogate potential of the Italian girl, and her loaf:

The road went on, still and empty, the sun slanting more and more. Her stiff little pigtails were bound at the tips with bits of crimson cloth. A corner of the wrapping flapped a little as she walked, the nose of the loaf naked. I stopped.

"Look here. Do you live down this road? We haven't passed a house in a mile, almost."

She looked at me, black and secret and friendly.

"Where do you live, sister?" (p.124)

"Stiff" pigtails, "crimson" ribbons and Elizabethan puns on "noses", make the bread so "naked" that phallus finding promotes an analogy hunt. The Italian "sister" is as quiet, untranslatable

and apparently lost as her Mississippian twin. At first Quentin will accept neither the responsibility nor the parallel. He runs away from the echo in his own question, "Where do you live, sister?" But the child has grown so used to her indigenous position just under his elbow that she reclaims him, forcing Quentin to accept the task of finding in her mother his mother, and of learning at her "brokengate", what lay behind his "rotting portico". Having undertaken the twins, Quentin grows in awareness. New England's present opens a dialogue with Mississippi's past. The landscape is dotted with "secret places", the significance of which will be missed by readers who infect Quentin with death. He is a suicide looking for transcendental significance in river beds. He is also a pasticheur elaborating Shelley's observation that, "Incest is, like many other incorrect things, a very poetical circumstance".³² Behind the poses, the river attracts him because it recalls the branch. The current's noise carried him towards a meaningful "secret" to be contrasted starkly with the discontinuous and "meaningless" birdsong. Quentin's inflexion is not yet analytic, but the increased weight of analogy indicates that he is the collector and not the passive recipient of loaded detail. Caddy and Natalie are on the edge of his words to the Italian girl. "O hell, sister", addresses the Mississippian twin on the subject of damnation. The wet breast and the problem of drying the bread recall the incest attempt, which ended with Quentin crying against his sister's "damp-blouse" and resting his head, "against her damp hard breast" (p.138). The broken crust revives Quentin's interest in Versh's mutilation story, only for the guilt of dismemberment to give way to childish experiments with sex. "Hold it like this" is an exact echo of Natalie's early efforts at sexual aid. The Italian girl is as

obedient as the boy Quentin was in the barn; troubled by guilt, Quentin uses his initial description of the loaf as a "dead pet rat" (p.117) to remind himself that a rat moved in the crib when he played with Natalie.

At this point Quentin does not see the story of the loaf as a sub-plot about his own sexual loathing: the Italian girl is not yet an active surrogate. Julio activates Quentin's psychology seminar. After the court case even the fine points of the loaf are clear to him. As Bland's party drive away from the court, their car passes Julio's sister:

... the little girl stood by the gate. She didn't have the bread now, and her face looked like it had been streaked with coal-dust. I waved my hand, but she made no reply, only her head turned slowly as the car passed, following us with her unwinking gaze. Then we ran beside the wall, our shadows running along the wall, and after a while we passed a piece of torn newspaper lying beside the road and I began to laugh again. (pp.133-134)

The child stares at the car without recognizing Quentin. Her appeal is that she is someone's sister - an object lesson to Quentin, instructing that he give up his symbolic account and recover Caddy. The little girl never seemed to blink in his company, yet all he did was cover his eyes. Her final stare insists on honesty; its quality is heightened by contrast with the "mysterious", and "veiled" looks of Gerald's lady friends. Quentin responds, the symbolic potential of the shadows on the wall is ignored for the diminutive image of the torn newspaper: instead of compiling further shadow selves to trick, he picks a version of the spoiled crust from the gutter, and reminds himself that sister-obsession is a grubby absurdity.

Before his arrest, Quentin's analogies tended to be secretive rather than analytic; Julio effects the change. The events leading up to the trial and the trial itself are an external presentation of an inner drama whose events have

previously only been glimpsed. He who has never been satisfactorily punished for meditated incest, is beaten up by Julio for child molestation. He who so frequently begins a thought with "Father I have committed", finds in the sheriff an authority who will turn him into a pervert, [] "He aims to charge you with meditated criminal assault" (p.128) [] The suspect goes "peacable", prepared to risk "anything, just so I can find someone" (p.128) who will record all the details, "name, age, occupation" in some "huge, dusty book" of Law, thereby establishing "order in the court" (p.130). The local place of justice exaggerates his obsession into a pantomime and requires that he quietly witness the nerves of his love singly exposed. Judgement begins in earnest when Spoadé is called to speak for the defendant - he lies, describing Mr. Compson as a Congregational minister. A perfect lie which turns a cynic into a confessor. Quentin, who has compulsively mumbled, "I have committed", at last confronts a suitably judicial face ("fierce iron grey hair" plus steel spectacles). With farcical rapidity the public is shown that the assault did not take place and that, by analogy, Quentin failed with Caddy. The whole case is inconsequentially dismissed for \$6. A radical cheapening of the image through which he has perceived leaves Quentin no option, other than to find terms for the sister that will explain the smallness of the fine. From this point on, the critical complaint that Quentin's monologue "contains nothing but symbolism" is invalid.³³

There is a measurable shift in tone between pre- and post-trial voices. Judged, Quentin strains for associative control and the application of his critical training; unjudged, he uses informed analogy as a bolt hole. The avenues available to him are legion: his voice is so full of voices - textual, mythological, or just plain talkative - that his supply of non-sequiturs seems endless. Trained, Quentin's good-ear and recall will become the gifts of a historian. Untrained and afflicted by sources diversive enough to include a talking broken leg, he finds it all too easy to excuse himself for listening to the wrong voices, saying the wrong words about the right things.³⁴ For example, soon after encountering the Italian sister, he makes a conscious effort to come to terms with Caddy's adolescence, only to end up in a verbal maze built by his father's voice.

Because women so delicate so mysterious Father said. Delicate equilibrium of periodical filth between two moons balanced. Moons he said full and yellow as harvest moons her hips thighs. Outside outside of them always but. Yellow. Feet soles with walking like. Then know that some man that all those mysterious and imperious concealed. With all that inside of them shapes an outward suavity waiting for a touch to. Liquid putrefaction like drowned things floating like pale rubber flabbily filled getting the odour of honeysuckle all mixed up.

"You'd better take your bread on home, hadn't you?" (p.118)

Hesitation alone belongs to Quentin. Three sentences are interrupted and one never starts, "Outside outside of them always but. Yellow. Feet soles with walking like." Initial repetition measures the extent of his exclusion by women. As a virgin he doubts his potency but, rather than pursue the idea, he reverts

to the devices of the Nineties and to his father's misogynist rhetoric. Blame is to be laid elsewhere. Impregnation is associated with disease, so that the fertility of the female harvest moon can be corrupted. The transitional term, "yellow" is discoloured in a way that permits a comparison between grain and the dried skin on the underside of feet. The measure of Quentin's evasion is his recourse to two puns, one implicit ("corn"), the other explicit ("soles"). Worried by the strategy, he tries to use the second pun as a way back to the adolescence-argument, and to whether or not its onset is a fertile or corrupt sign. He fails. Although he can move from feet to "soles" he cannot reach "souls", and so is left with a sensual image which forecloses the sentence, "with walking like". Mr. Compson would complete the simile by alluding to Selene or any number of fatal women. A list is extant but Quentin hesitates; he would like to say "Caddy" ("with walking like Caddy"), except that to do so would confess his attraction. Instead he dismisses the anonymous subject as a whore full of "concealed" clients. However, he still wants to "touch", and snatches back from a clear view of his own complicity only by breaking off the sentence. Calvinist rhetoric about diseased females allows him to forgive himself, while accusing Caddy of contaminating him. His case would appear to be that he has been forced into a death by water decision, in order to expiate her putrefaction. The passage climaxes in a lyrically clotted image of used sheaths floating in the branch. Unable to make sense of the discordant voices in his head, Quentin sweetens the confusion by, "getting the odour of honeysuckle all mixed up". His first thought on scrambling out of memory is to dismiss the threatening surrogate, along with her accusatory load, "You'd better take your bread away hadn't you?".

The passage is in complete contrast to the later style, a large portion of which takes the form of stark and unbroken dialogue. Coming to the scene at the branch on the evening of the day when Caddy lost her virginity, may be likened to turning a page in "Proteus" and finding "Hills like White Elephants". Symbolist prose gives way to naturalism, as Quentin removes incest and the hymen from poetic pathology. Stylistic change records the re-origination of the incest obsession; the relief that Quentin feels on encountering original evidence, free of confused voices, is almost physical:

I ran down the hill in that vacuum of crickets like a breath travelling across a mirror she was lying in the water her head on the sand spit the water flowing about her hips there was a little more light in the water her skirt half saturated flopped along her flanks to the water's motion in heavy ripples going nowhere renewed themselves of their own movement I stood on the bank I could smell the honeysuckle on the water gap the air seemed to drizzle with honeysuckle and with the rasping of crickets a substance you could feel on the flesh (p.136)

For a moment Quentin forgets exactitude. The simile of breath on a mirror is a Symbolist device. Syntactically unfixed, it takes as its subject a running man, the cricket's song and the dress on water. Each evaporates like condensation on a glass; we cannot see, feel, smell or hear any of it distinctly. Yet, despite the fact that Hemingway would not have approved, the image is one of refreshing psychological accuracy. The reflection in the mirror, blurred by grammar, becomes Quentin and Caddy. John and Salomé's twin profiles enter the text as more than decoration: Beardsley's illustration³⁵ marks the beginning of a fresh complicity between brother and sister. Unlike the Decadent artists whom he emulates, Quentin is about to allow his artefact her own voice. So strong is the phonographic urge that "rasping" is restored to the crickets and a smell's sound is recorded as "drizzle".

A stylistic decision gives Quentin access to a dialogue that is in effect a transcript of his obsession. As a historian he studies the document without comment, before making his case. The reader may perhaps permit himself one or two intuitions while the historian actualizes his material. Quentin comes to the branch in order to call his sister a whore. Instead they talk and motives emerge. The brother is physically jealous of Dalton Ames and wishes to take his place. Impotence prevents him and provokes the substitution of a childish suicide pact for the sexual act about which he knows so little.

I held the point of the knife at her throat
it wont take but a second just a second then I can do mine I
can do mine then
all right can you do yours by yourself
yes the blades long enough Benjy's in bed by now
yes
it wont take but a second Ill try not to hurt
all right
will you close your eyes
no like this you'll have to push it harder
touch your hand to it
but she didnt move her eyes were wide open looking past
my head at the sky
Caddy do you remember how Dilsey fussed at you because
your drawers were muddy
dont cry
Im not crying Caddy
push it are you going to
do you want me to
yes push it
touch your hand to it (p.138)

One detail is particularly revealing; Caddy ever practical asks if Quentin will be able to cut his own throat; Quentin's reply is an apparent non-sequitur, "yes the blades long enough Benjy's in bed^{by}/now". Several elements are involved - Quentin's resentment of Benjy, who slept with Caddy until he was thirteen; fears of sexual inadequacy tied up with the innuendo that all idiots are sexual giants, and a glimmer of self-recognition. Benjy's howl has been one of Quentin's customary ways of voicing his own confusion, that blanket noise is now silent. The knife like the howl is a substitute; moreover, it is a literary utensil, quite

possibly culled from Villiers de I'sle-Adam's play Axel, in which the hero and his mistress commit suicide rather than stain the purity of their ideal with physical love making. Like the howl, the knife and its text fall away.

dont cry poor Quentin
but I couldnt stop she held my head against her damp hard
breast I could hear her heart going firm and slow now not
hammering and the water gurgling among the willows in the
dark and waves of honeysuckle coming up the air my arm and
shoulder were twisted under me
what is it what are you doing
her muscles gathered I sat up
its my knife I dropped it
she sat up
what time is it
I dont know
she rose to her feet I fumbled along the ground
Im going let it go
I could feel her standing there I could smell her damp
clothes feeling her there
its right here somewhere
let it go you can find it tomorrow come on (pp.138-9)

Lulled by Caddy and innocent memories, Quentin rests. The startling disjunction between the smell of honeysuckle and a cramped arm, can be simply explained as an interval of sleep. Caddy's sudden "what is it" indicates an interrupted stillness. The disturbing factor is Quentin's sexual response. Sleep relieved him of guilt and restored his potency. Caddy resists by questioning what she has already physically acknowledged, "what are you doing her muscles gathered". "I sat up" is at once an embarrassed male reaction and an attempt to disguise that reaction. The duplicity is contained in the knife play. Sleep rendered the symbol unnecessary, so he "dropped it" and woke to discover the absolute redundancy of the Freudian knife. However the symbol is easier than the reality of standing straight, and Quentin fumbles. As they walk away Caddy seems sexually stimulated, "she walked into me ... she walked into me again". Her arousal probably derives from an intermingling of thoughts about lover and brother. Quentin controls it, "she looked at me

and then gave over", but when he tries to extend his control a sexually charged fight occurs, "she was motionless hard unyielding but still". Dalton Ames arrives to force Quentin back into the brother role while Caddy, safe and sexually alert, flirts between sister and mistress - commanding, "Come here" and kissing Quentin. His extreme rejection ("look out"), scares her into requesting a liaison that inclines towards an assignation, "wait for me at the branch ... I'll be there soon wait for me you wait".

After such evidence, Quentin cannot retreat into his father's misogyny or his mother's Honour Code. Theology and the manners of his culture will not explain his own response: if she was an adolescent whore, then he was her adolescent client. On the new information his sister was a confused girl with the hots, no more or less loving than many. Furthermore he was party to the family's rejection of her. Faulkner was less honest than this during the 50's: at Virginia and Nagano he compounded an initially evasive instinct by recreating Caddy as the image of grace and disinterested love. He cannot have listened to the dialogue at the branch for many years.

I have interpreted a transcript, and it has been my suggestion that Quentin, with scholarly perseverance, is likewise engaged. In fact he is being severely beaten by Gerald Bland. My hypothetical MSS., consciously recovered as part of a programme of surrogates, could be an uncontrolled flashback. The notions are not mutually exclusive. Thanks to the trial Quentin knows what he is doing when he hits Gerald Bland; nothing is being repeated least of all anything compulsive. A past event is being claimed back for reappraisal. A punch thrown in 1910 recaptures 1909 and wipes away months of misguided interpretation.

The fight and lengthy mopping up operations give ample time for the dialogue to be more than a flash of insight. Above all, the effect of the document on Quentin's monologue argues against any claims for it as the unconscious record of a moment.

After the fight Quentin's tone relaxes, and as his monologue draws to its close actions are described objectively in words which seem to empty themselves for silence. It is as if, having heard the obsessive pitch to his voice, the speaker blunts its idiosyncratic edge. The fiction of pathology returns a special meaning to language: in Genet, or Mailer's "The White Negro" single words are re-motivated by singular obsessions. Their force is partially derived from the institutions of a criminal sub-culture, but the homosexual thief and the hipster lack a genuinely collective context - their linguistic edginess depends on a sub-group of one. Quentin's words have lost a pathological sanction and he is able to approach areas that previously he would have avoided.

Tonal transformation is clear from single phrases. On a tram back to the university, the throughdraft fills "with the odour of summer and darkness except honeysuckle. Honeysuckle was the saddest odour of all, I think. I remember lots of them." (p.153) All morning Quentin has been nauseated by the memory of honeysuckle, by mid-afternoon he catalogues it among other smells and is undecided whether to grant it any special intensity. Indifference also typifies his second post-fight reference to Caddy; he includes her in a list but not at its head, "Mother Father Caddy Jason Maury" (p.157). There is no attempt to place the sister; she is simply slipped among familiar and scarcely differentiated names. Quentin seems at several

removes even from himself, with the result that he is prepared to comment dispassionately on his symbolist habits:

Sometimes I could put myself to sleep saying that over and over until after the honeysuckle got all mixed up in it the whole thing came to symbolize night and unrest I seemed to be lying neither asleep nor awake looking down a long corridor of grey half-light where all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical all I had done shadows all I had felt suffered taking visible form antic and perverse mocking without relevance inherent themselves with the denial of the significance they should have affirmed thinking I was I was not who was not was not who. (p.154)

The memory is a nightmare that has been controlled. Previously it would have been returned to as experience, now its details are reported and weighed in a discursive structure, "neither ... nor ... all ... all ... all". His tone is tired: it dismisses painful memory by underplaying the pain, "the whole thing came to symbolize". The jumbled past tenses merely stimulate an earlier style; having emptied "was" of its oppressive weight, Quentin can afford to look back on a once tormenting phrase. Very soon he will consign the phrase to the precise grammatical distinctions of the dead language. "Non fui.Sum.Fui.Non sum." are the "Peacefullest words" (p.157), because they possess the peace of a museum exhibit.

Once "was" is an anachronism, the books and institutions that support it are at risk:

When I was little there was a picture in one of our books, a dark place into which a single weak ray of light came slanting upon two faces lifted out of the shadow. You know what I'd do if I were King? She never was a queen or a fairy she was always a king or a giant or a general I'd break that place open and drag them out and I'd whip them good It was torn out, jagged out. I was glad. I'd have to turn back to it until the dungeon was Mother herself she and Father upward into weak light holding hands and us lost somewhere below even them without even a ray of light. (pp.156-7)

The dungeon is one of many forbidden rooms in the Old Compson Place. By 1928 Mrs. Compson walks its corridors dressed in

black and carrying a key ring of gothic proportion. In earlier times her methods had been less picturesque but more effective. Her children spent a great deal of their time excluded from the house. If they were not banished to the kitchen, they were playing at the branch or in the front of Dilsey's cabin. Several rooms were locked or private. Grandfather's office opened only on certain days and his desk was on no account to be touched. The novel's central image is that of a small girl trying to see into an upper room of her own house. Caddy's action in ripping out the representative illustration, is analogous to what Quentin has done, and is doing, to his personal past. His childhood is a dungeon guarded by both parents: on throwing wide the door he discovers himself and his sister. However, spiritual incest lies in the dark room at the centre of more than one Southern house, and several foundations shake at its disclosure. The house of Usher subsides as Madeline collapses on Roderick; Sutpen's Hundred burns soon after Quentin speaks to the incestuously guilty Henry. Dr. Bledsoe's red brick campus, and indeed Mr. Norton's entire philanthropic empire, crumbles as the benefactor listens to Trueblood's story of his indiscretion with Matty Lou Trueblood (Invisible Man). The Compson Place is better built, but after the exorcising of the incest spectre it stands merely as prime property for Jason's land speculations. Incest declared brings down plantation houses, because it touches one of the silent assumptions on which Southern culture rests. The family is the region's central institution; through it land is inherited and the code transferred. Historical isolation caused the system to turn inwards; however, necessary self-reference grows unbearable when imaged as incest. It would seem that in Yoknapatawpha, at least, the myth of the

pure Southern woman, "supposed not to know she was a virgin until she ceased to be one"³⁶ guards her from brothers as well as blacks.

Quentin releases incest and virginity from the dungeon of the parental account, not surprisingly the whole house shakes:

It used to be I thought of death as a man something like Grandfather a friend of his a kind of private and particular friend like we used to think of Grandfather's desk not to touch it not even to talk loud in the room where it was I always thought of them as being together somewhere all the time waiting for old Colonel Sartoris to come down and sit with them waiting on a high place beyond cedar trees Colonel Sartoris was on a still higher place looking out across at something and they were waiting for him to get done looking at it and come down Grandfather wore his uniform and we could hear the murmur of their voices from beyond the cedars they were always talking and Grandfather was always right.

The three-quarters began. (p.159)

The patriarchal structure is something that "used to be", its constraints, imaged as lines in genealogical tables and thresholds to prohibited rooms, are down. With the collapse of "was", time regains flexibility - "the three-quarters began".

During the second half of April 6th, Quentin obtains an abundance of what is effectively new information. It is arrived at via the dismantling of his own historical model. Two central typologies go. Time re-emerges from type and the creative responsibilities of the historian begin. Why then does Quentin kill himself? Answers are generally unsympathetic because Caddy's story is often read at the personal level alone. "The loss of Caddy's virginity means nothing ... Quentin is forced to see that he has spent his life in a meaningless abstraction."³⁷ If this were the case, Quentin's death would be the act of a "romantic", "selfish", "adolescent". Mr. Compson would be right in assuming that his son dies to keep Caddy as she was and to preserve his own "despair or remorse or bereavement" (p.161). But the pure Southern sister is not an abstraction; finding out her impurity means altering the received past and challenging

the shape of the regional mind. With "was" gone, Quentin has no meaningful context in which to place his new information. At a loss for history, not oppressed by it, he kills himself. Lord Acton recommended that the historian rise above his social and historical situation. Carried to its extreme his suggestion reads like a suicide note:

History must be our deliverer not only from the undue influence of other times, but from the undue influence of our own, from the tyranny of the environment and the pressure of the air we breathe.³⁸

The letters which Quentin leaves are not shown, doubtless they do not resemble Acton's Lectures on Modern History, but equally I am sure they are free from romantic self-pity.

Faulkner goes to some lengths to protect the suicide from that element of hysteria attendant on self inflicted death among nineteen year olds. Twice during his final hours Quentin's tone ceases to be flat, without reverting to evasion; his moments of disjunction are picked out in italics; together they dramatize the jump. A projection of what it will be like to drown is used as a test of nerve.

seeing on the rushing darkness only his own face no broken feather unless two of them but not two like that going to Boston the same night then my face his face for an instant across the crashing when out of darkness two lighted windows in rigid fleeing crash gone his face and mine just I see saw did I see not good-bye the marquee empty of eating the road empty in darkness in silence the bridge arching into silence darkness sleep the water peaceful and swift not good-bye (p.156)

While making final preparations in his room, he thinks about the tram journey back into Boston and uses it as a model for the return journey to be undertaken in the early evening. He stares at other passengers mirrored in the tram window, but even the woman with the funny hat must not deflect him from self-scrutiny. The Narcissus posture accedes to the Narcissus plot as Quentin's reflection moves from the glass to the surface of the river. For

a moment on the bridge parapet in his mind, he see-saws above the current before jumping. Understandably, the paragraph is solipsistic, but its solipsism is wryly perceived. Quentin jumps because he cannot translate autobiography into the larger history that informs it. Nonetheless he appreciates the narrowness of his preoccupation. Later, going to the bathroom to clean his teeth, he smiles at narcissism. A lavatory bowl and a tumbler are seen as jokes to catch a solipsist: one is "the throne of contemplation" (p.157) and the other is a trick glass that won't reflect. His use of the domestic articles cluttering the sink is right enough to warrant close inspection. Tap, glass and water jet allow a surrogate understanding of future events:

hands can see /in a dark room a glass can be found by touch /cooling fingers /contact is made/ invisible swan throat /allusion almost sweeps Quentin back into mythic bad habits. The tap's iron work recalls a swan's neck and with it Bland's Zeus delusion ("Leda whimpering and moaning for the swan" p.151). Sexual arrogance is tempered by a second-level throat connotation: when he asked his sister about her love for Ames, she told him, "put your hand against my throat". The word plot continues, in so far as "throat" contains an earlier allusion to self discipline: at the time of his arrest the sheriff told Quentin to get a grip on himself, Quentin complied by "tightening (his) throat" (p.128). This particular associative sequence is justified by the words that follow /where /is strictly locational and puts Quentin back in the bathroom/ less than Moses rod the glass /symbolic pretensions are exposed. The glass is no mythic rod to discover water and divide the stream into which its owner is about to leap. Quentin is not Moses - he is a man turning a tap on/ touch tentative not to /break the glass/ drumming lean cool throat drumming /his fingers drum on the glass/ cooling the metal the glass full overfull /in the dark the glass overflows/ the fingers flushing /he runs his hands under the tap to get rid of the petrol, and tries to wake up by splashing water on his face/ sleep leaving the taste of dampened sleep in the long silence of the throat /a taste that will taste different, as he comes up for the third time/ (p.157)

Having risked a dramatization of his own death, Quentin is ready to make a last confession, itself the final stage in a judicial cleansing instigated by the county judge. The blood stains have been removed from the shirt. The mouth is rinsed.

Any remaining pathology has gone from the language. His consciousness is level. Quentin's hypothetical conversation with his father,³⁹ is best described by a phrase of Roland Barthes', it is "language degree zero" - the whitest thought of the day.

Since waking Quentin has looked for an Authority to whom to confess; finally he finds that authority in himself. The dialogue with Mr. Compson is a monologue in which Quentin takes both parts - a device by which he identifies those attitudes from which he is now distant. Quentin's imitation of his father's voice is heavy with type, aphorism and the vocabulary of fixity (apotheoses, symmetricalities and Fate), all of it credited by the father to the son. The inheritance is refused, as the edifice of the paternal account is set between the chimes of the local clock; the choric "temporary" is scarcely necessary. However, recognition is incomplete. The skill with which the best mimic guys his subject depends on his ability to disguise his own voice; inventors of false dialogue are at a similar loss. Quentin can recant in silence (his last recorded action is to clean his teeth), but having no voice he cannot construct a new past from the past that he has levelled.

Faulkner has his reasons for keeping Quentin and Benjy quiet. It would be fair to say that he is as complicit in the death of one as he is in the idiocy of the other. Caddy is the cause, or rather two Caddys - a child, and a German Staff-general's mistress. Faulkner is interested in preserving her innocence while he appears to acknowledge her experience. The trick is the glossy photograph, which comes as no surprise and implies that Caddy had but one choice: as a treasured innocent who grew into the deserted mother of an illegitimate child, she could become only a prostitute. All is forgiven. This, even

in 1910, even in Mississippi, is nonsense - but it is important nonsense. The Candace Appendix entry is not a misogynist Q.E.D., proving that the fruit of sexuality is death; it is a brief apology for the Fall. Faulkner is committed to the emblematic hymen since virginity is a state of mind whose structure, language and history he admires. Alternative realities have however to be acknowledged, albeit years later and with precious few words. A woman is shown standing by a Nazi officer: she is damned. By withholding her name Faulkner balances experience and innocence. His conservatism, like the manufactured little girl whose absence dominates the novel, is a delicate contrivance.

Faulkner is honest up to a point and his dishonesty, coming as it does to the defence of a central Southern type, makes it difficult to locate his stature as a historical novelist. Too often he has it both ways: while maintaining critical access to regional myths, he assumes that the confidence those myths bestow continues to be his. The image of the hymen broken, as the hymen remade, catches his double expectation. When Addie says of Cash's birth, "My aloneness had been violated and then made whole again by the violation"⁴⁰ she does not refer simply to her own sexual isolation, or to theological exclusion, but indirectly to the Mason-Dixon line. Faulkner continues to practise the re-grown hymen trick that he learned from Swinburne's "Anactoria" and Mallarmé's "Hérodiade", because it embodies a malleable innocence. At historical as well as sexual levels, what was formerly a decadent motif, allows him to stretch innocence to contradictory lengths and see no flaw. Despite frequent approaches to the iconic line, the thresholds of the regional imagination are rarely breached for very long. Often,

Faulkner will take characters to the limits of a personal history, and having caused them to suspend belief in their own beliefs, he will quit them. Colonel Sartoris ("An Odour of Verbena", The Unvanquished), Young Bayard, Hightower and the Quentin of Absalom, Absalom! join Quentin Compson as cases in point. Historical alternatives, if they are perceived, are dimly perceived.

IV

Two faced innocence continues to motivate Faulkner's choice of personae. The dishonest idiot and the honest suicide, are followed by Jason and Shegog: a brother who talks to himself about everything except what is on his mind, and a preacher who offers a version of Revelations that reveals nothing, and an ending that is too apocalyptic to satisfy. Jason is the more effective deceiver; his lies to himself serve a second-level deception, that misdirects the reader. By 1928 Caddy's name is forbidden in the Compson house and Miss Quentin's activities are so distracting that "the little girl" is scarcely missed. Jason addresses himself to guardianship, as though to a contract - his responsibilities are strictly legal. When not pursuing his niece, his mind is fixed on the cotton index and filled with the vision of an economically stable future, dependent on a right combination of figures. April 6th 1928 seems therefore to be a day full of law, economics and Miss Quentin. It is hard to see how Jason's legalism could fool anyone: his voice may be punctuated with contractual rules but behind the objective jargon the language of genealogy flows. Jason is the "head" who defends his name because he is "the nearest thing to a father" left to the family. "Blood", not propriety, spurs him. The economics of April 6th are as unsound as its law, based on market fluctuation and a sequence of thefts. However, if sanity is equated

with system, Jason is sane. Order is his rhetorical goal: stereotypes, time-tables, numbers, indices and aphorisms abound. Each is a form of nomination, concerned to declare unambiguously the type, number, cost and status of the given material. There is no room in such a system for Quentin's multivalency or Benjy's silence (silence implies that something cannot be accounted for). The displaced materiality of the idiot's world does not exist for Jason, because to the store-keeping cotton speculator everything is tagged. Stereotype is legion, reducing April 6th to a sequence of big-hearted whores, field niggers, sassy town niggers, red-neck farmers, bitches and Jews. Although the effect is comic, our laughter confirms the outline of the racial or sexual type on display: Jason's jokes are comic at first and second time of asking, but to Job and Earl there can be few less funny men. Should human behaviour escape the precedent of type, Jason's battering mouth will insist that it declare itself and get into line; consequently he has none of his mother's hesitancy about her granddaughter:

"When people act like niggers, no matter who they are the only thing to do is treat them like a nigger."
"I'm afraid you'll lose your temper with her," she says.
"Well," I says, "You haven't had much luck with your system. You want me to do anything about it, or not? Say one way or the other; I've got to get on to work." (p.164)

Systems that work, clear declarations, telegrams, cheques and cotton market reports - divide and organize his day into an elaborate construction that serves a forger. Jason's central activity is the misappropriation of monies, sent by Caddy to her daughter. Censored mail and dud cheques fool no one except Mrs. Compson and quite possibly the forger. From sheriff to store keeper, doubts about Jason's financial credibility are

rife. It is ironic that his idiolect features nomenclature and yet is motivated by misrepresentation. Still more ironic is the frequency with which the irony is missed: Jason is "sane", Jason is "comic", Jason is "vital", Jason is the Compson for whom excuses can be made, Jason's bitterness is explicable, and it is just this ability to explain him that promotes misreading.

After Benjy and Quentin it is a great and genuine pleasure to hear, "Once a bitch always a bitch" (p.163). The reader knows where he is and over reacts by seeing Jason's self-deception writ plain, too plain. More than Caddy's signature is being forged. The section introduces an adult Caddy - someone in a black/veil comes to Mr. Compson's funeral; a woman who cannot control her upper lip offers money to see the baby; sympathy is gained but under a false pretence. The reader is persuaded that he has seen the little girl as a grown woman, whereas in fact he has been shown a selection of caricatures - a leper (p.186), a clockwork jaw (p.187) and an overwound toy (p.188). Caricature extends the logic of typology, by subdividing a stereotype and exaggerating the subdivision until the whole is unacceptable. Mechanical energy disguises falsification so that a caricature stands in relation to its subject, as does a machine to one of its moving parts. When a production process is ignored for the study of a fast flywheel, false energy is observed. The Sound and the Fury is an energetic structure of partial views. Jason's cartoons resemble Benjy's fragments and both serve Faulkner's interest in one part of one little girl. Awkward questions about Caddy's post adolescent life are not encouraged, particularly by a section which seems so genuinely concerned with a coherent future. When he is disingenuous, Jason is to be mistrusted. His future is as

fixed as Mr. Compson's past and both are ideal hiding places for piece-meal history.

Time on April 6th is primarily economic and, since Jason is a speculator, seems future orientated. Southern economics proves the impression misguided when crash after crash demonstrates the short sighted nature of cotton speculation. Futures on this particular market are limited affairs. Moreover Jason's perspective is a limited inheritance; the notional East Coast Jew who fixes the index price in his mind bears a striking resemblance to his father's Diceman - spinning the fatal ivories or turning the cosmic trick. The fragments of Caddy are in good and traditional hands.

Indeed, it is quite possible to hear the entire monologue without being aware that Caddy is its central preoccupation. The daughter is substituted for the mother, but in this case the surrogate is used negatively to blot out the past. So successful is the device that Jason hardly knows that Caddy and not Miss Quentin causes his migraines; only when his defences are down does the thought cross his mind. On April 8th, in pursuit of his niece, robbed of the money on which he has orientated his life and without camphor, Jason strains to distract his own attention:

"Maybe I can drive slow," he said. "Maybe I can drive slow, thinking of something else -"
He got in and started. "I'll think of something else," he said, so he thought about Lorraine. He imagined himself in bed with her, only he was just lying beside her, pleading with her to help him, then he thought of the money again, and that he had been outwitted by a woman, a girl. If he could just believe it was the man who had robbed him. But to have been robbed of that which was to have compensated him for the lost job, which he had acquired through so much effort and risk, by the very symbol of the lost job itself, and worst of all, by a bitch of a girl. (p.272)

A rationalization replaces a problem but briefly since the

choice of Lorraine as an uncomplicated pleasant thought, is unfortunate, summoning sexual objects nearer to home. In order to exclude the family, Jason strikes his best, butch, "bust 'em in the jaw" role. The ploy is only partially successful, resulting in a picture of sexual supplication. Unsatisfied, Jason returns to his principal dodge - money - with no great success. "Pleading" and finance combine to resurrect his sister and the bank job: Jason believes that Caddy lost him a vital clerical position and is on the brink of saying as much. The forbidden name is almost heard. Slips of the tongue protect him, "he had been outwitted by a woman" i.e. Caddy, is hastily corrected to "a girl" i.e. Miss Quentin, before the safe word is found, "if I could just believe it was a man". "Man" is not entirely danger free: its referent could be either Head or "the red tie", and as a shifting nomination it hesitates between the bank and the broken strong box.

Jason is generally more confident, and it is typical that his least guarded moment should occur outside the monologue. Omniscience gives Faulkner a chance to speculate about areas that his characters will not face. However, speculation is limited and despite a clear sense of Jason's self-deception, the reader is probably uncertain about what causes the black outs. Something provokes migraine; on the surface it is Miss Quentin. The niece has many of her mother's habits with few of her saving graces; nonetheless, knowing the centrality of Caddy in matters-Compson, it is easy to see the mother in the daughter and to shift from Quentin in the tree to Caddy in the tree, from Quentin at the swing to Caddy at the swing, and so on. The transition is liable to become automatic, causing the reader to find himself caught like Benjy in a narrow associative pattern.

Ultimately the net gain of seeing further than Jason, and of recognizing Miss Quentin as yet another mask for the little girl, is a return to the thematic impasse of soiled purity. Almost everything in The Sound and the Fury seems to point to Caddy, but her loss debilitates most levels of enquiry.

V

After three versions marked by various degrees of evasion, Faulkner takes up the enquiry himself. Caddy is scarcely mentioned; instead he introduces a non-sequitur who brings the novel to a satisfactory conclusion. If The Sound and the Fury is about Caddy, Shegog is unjustifiable. If it is about hiding her, a black preacher from no where, called St. Louis, is the perfect solution. Having read three memoirs that don't add up to much we are given "de comfort" of an "unburdenin" that satisfies. "The recollection and the blood of the Lamb" solves it all. Structural accounts of the novel speak of a shift from inwardness to straight narrative, and present the formal premise as one of accretion or revelation. The final section becomes variously the last "tonal movement" in a "polyphonic composition", or a poetic image harbouring summation.⁴¹ The plot as secretion requires a different account. Systematic misrepresentation can only be capped by a greater lie, so with impeccable logic The Sound and the Fury ends with the biggest and best available lie about the end - an apocalypse. Having started and stopped three times, the reader is provided with an end that mirrors and resolves the structure of what he has read so far.

Shegog's sermon falls into three parts, each delivered in a different voice - white, negroid and incantatory. The arrangement reverses the sequence of the novel. The white voice is "level and cold" (p.260) paralleling Jason's legalism. The

negroid voice is an interim inflexion, as odd as its adjective. Negroid means, characteristic of or resembling the Negro race. To describe a voice in these terms is to displace it; Quentin's monologue is similarly indeterminate. The voice "without words" (p.263) carries dialect towards a breathy exhalation which recalls Benjy's silence. Satisfaction at the level of a tripartite counter-structure, is a small and formal pleasure. It is very much the satisfaction that results from a well made sentence: any speaker is pleased to speak with grace - he does not then thank the grammatical rules that made grace possible. Likewise the sermon's organization offers a disguised pleasure. Its substantive gratifications are more obvious.

Shegog's text is the end of the world, or more specifically The Revelation of St. John, Ch.1, V.8. Dilsey locates the epigraph when she tells Frony that the visitor from St. Louis has enabled her at least to "see de first en de last" (p.264). The echo is plain, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending said the Lord". Textual exactitude is less important than the means used to get the congregation, "Heaven bound". God spoke to John of Ephesus with the voice of a trumpet; Shegog hears an alto horn and speaks it in a voice larger than himself. Like the tribe of Judah, transformed from "Lion" into "seven horned, seven eyed lamb", Shegog metamorphoses from monkey to crucifix. The lion had to become a lamb in Revelation Ch.5 before it could open The Holy Book: on April 8th 1928, a monkey becomes Christ to unfold an account of the last days. Account is a tame word - the congregation participate in a dramatization of Flood, Judgement and Second Coming. Above all they are told a story with a clear beginning (The Exodus), a clear middle (The Life of Christ) and a clear end (Judgement Day). In a



novel of false starts and loose ends it is a pleasure to encounter a plain narrative line. By giving the plot to God Shegog ensures that history has a narrative. Theodicy has a similar effect on The Sound and the Fury; the mere presence of a sermon draws diverse allusions into a system. Section by section inverted Christs, crucifixions and spoiled resurrections multiply. Small details collaborate in a symbolic plot whose outline remains obscure. It is difficult to know how seriously to take Luster's halo hat:

The hat seemed to isolate Luster's skull, in the beholder's eyes as a spot light would, in all its individual planes and angles. So peculiarly individual was its shape that at first glance the hat appeared to be on the head of someone standing immediately behind Luster. (p.256)

His companion is a thirty three year old, whose features were first modelled in a story called, "The Kingdom of God". The road is dusty and littered with detail that recalls, "What the Thunder Said": "who is the third who walks always behind you?", sounds like a less and less silly enquiry as a group approaches the weathered church and the Easter Sunday service. And yet, earlier that morning, the same black angel served a Hindu deity by collecting his incarnate kindling, "(Luster) went to the woodpile. When he blundered again at the door a moment later, again invisible and blind within and beyond his wooden avatar, Dilsey opened the door" (p.243). Faulkner would probably have described the halo and the "avatar" as useful tools or handy planks for the "chicken house" of his novel.⁴² Once Shegog has re-enacted his own death and resurrection, and located the performance in a more general eschaton,⁴³ the chicken house takes on aspects of a temple. A mythic plot coheres. Dates become significant. Carvel Collins has drawn up a scrupulous Passion Week Calendar⁴⁴ whose dating might have seemed merely

academic without Shegog. After the sermon the secular grows noisy with theology, and the smallest items are imminent with more than themselves. Jason warrants his own crucifixion and on a fairground in Mottson, "three canvas chairs" and some recently laundered garments do Calvary (p.273). At the station an eye starts from the typography, its pupil is electric, its purpose municipal advertising, but glossed by the Easter service exhalations it serves Divine purpose: a line drawing being without language, may be near to God. Charged by Shegog's voice signs regain their theological memory in apocalyptic form. Shegog presumably spoke of the Easter story during the early and unrecorded stages of his address, thereby giving himself more time to set the Passion Week in a millennialist plot. Once we are reminded that the times before the End, are times of breakdown, ruled over by a man of sin, haircuts and cellars resonate with Tribulation. The two "hooks" that curl "on either side of (Jason's) forehead" are Satanic rather than "stubborn" (p.248), and Luster's discords on the musical saw, rise from the Compson basement like the erosion of all foundations. Further elaboration of detail would serve little purpose. The introduction, through Shegog, of a systematic mythic model results in a sudden, comprehensive and excessive signification. Faulkner's language thickens as excluded alternatives hover round the chosen word prophesying doom. Mythic texts shadow the text, to make the point that History is at its end.

The road rose again, to a scene like a painted backdrop. Notched into a cut of red clay crowned with oaks the road appeared to stop short off, like a cut ribbon. Beside it a weathered church lifted its crazy steeple like a painted church, and the whole scene was as flat and without perspective as a painted cardboard set upon the ultimate edge of the flat earth, against the windy sunlight of space and April and a mid-morning filled with bells. (p.259)


Connotation has its own plot: "notched" implies wood and wounds rise from "cut ... red" to be specified by the absent phrase, "crowned with (thorns)". The narrative line hardens as verbal association turns the painted church into a child art - a ribbon cut short, is the way children draw roads  . Added to the oak trees, serving as crosses, the ribbon produces  . The sketch balances on a precipice identified by "The Waste Land". The Negro church, "set upon the ultimate edge of the flat earth" doubles with Chapel Perilous, "Ringed by the flat horizon only".⁴⁵ Times are right and atmosphere agreeing - April, noted for cruelty to lilacs, damp winds full of bells and backlots littered with trash, prevails.

And upside down in the air were towers
Tolling reminiscent bells that kept the hours
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells
(p.78)

Shegog provides a general caption, "Calvary wid de sacred trees" prelude to "De whelmin flood en de darkness" (p.263).

A child's painting shares its crudeness with the mythic method. Eliot's review of Ulysses explicates both:

In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him ... It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama and futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.⁴⁶

Ulysses and  depend upon their audience's willingness to import a coherence that is not inherent in the given materials. Without an imposed conviction the sketch is squiggles. Without "keys" "The Waste Land" and Ulysses are problematic. Even Shegog, who turns the Joycean trick, is delineated by a secondary text. Faulkner may have missed Eliot's review, but he plainly undertook some of the reading recommended by the Notes to "The Waste Land". In The Quest of the Holy Grail, Jessie Weston lists the sources of the Chalice: one paragraph suggests how

far the preacher from St. Louis is a composite of many stories about Divine intervention in human history. His rhetorical gifts, refined in pulpits throughout the S.W., derive from an antique parallel:

Thus while the Talisman is always known as the Grail the term may connote a mysterious and food providing object [The voice of God "fleshes its teeth" in Shegog and "consumes" him (p.261)]⁷, which comes and goes without visible agency [the monkey/Christ metamorphosis has no clear origin. Vocal change is arbitrary]⁷, a stone ["He was like a worn small rock" (p.261)]⁷ endowed with food and life giving properties, which from time to time assumed the role of an oracle [the sermon is oracular]⁷... a reliquary; the dish from which Our Lord and the disciples ate the Pascal Lamb [Shegog is "an emptied vessel" (p.261), miraculously filled with "de ricklickshun en de blood of de Lamb" (p.262). The memory that he offers his congregation is sacramental]⁷... the vessel in which Joseph of Aramathea received the blood which flowed from the wounds of the Redeemer [during the service Benjy "sat rapt ... Dilsey sat bolt upright beside, crying rigidly and quietly in the annealment and the blood of the remembered Lamb" (p.264). Her posture and tears recall the lance believed to stand in the grail and bleed]⁷; finally a mysterious combination of these two later forms with the chalice of the Eucharist. Even in this final, highly ecclestical shape the grail retains traces of its earlier origin, appearing and disappearing automatically and mysteriously [Shegog is in the pulpit, before the congregation see him enter. His presence in the novel is something of a mystery]⁷, and as one romance definitely states, being of no material substance whatever [the preacher and his sermon are insubstantial in body and content]⁷.⁴⁷

Highly wrought mythic comparison makes a grail of Shegog; his credentials for interrupting history and ending decay are suitably enhanced. Authors who use the method extract an antique plot and impose it on less coherent materials. The device is harmless enough as long as history and story telling are kept apart. Once narrative is read as a way of explaining history, the mythic method loses its innocence. If standard plot-faints and character-sets are devices of particular cultures and periods, their extraction and re-imposition misrepresents past and present alike. Homer's Ulysses, prior to inscription, was the means whereby a pre-literate culture stored and transferred history; as such it has little to do with Dublin. The

Grail legends served the institutions of a distinctive belief system; the relevance of those institutions to the modern mind should at least be considered. Joyce and Eliot systematize, "the futility and anarchy (of) contemporary history" from outside the facts of that history; the result is neatness, derived from an ahistorical aesthetic.

Faulkner takes from Eliot a methodology with a built-in and gratifying sense of loss. The mythic method is of necessity repetitive: it suggests that there is nothing new under the sun, and recommends that contemporary time look back to a more wholesome past. Implicit in this is the notion that time decays - itself a well beaten path around awkward contemporaneity. The combined idea that history declines through one or two patterns adapts readily to cyclical notions, described by E.H. Carr as, "the characteristic ideology of a society in decline". Jason provides abundant decay and Shegog takes up the theoretical strands, with the result that Faulkner finds it very easy to accept the sermon's millennialist invitation to a capitalized end.

The sermon systematically disposes of the troubles caused by Caddy. Despite her brothers, the little girl has been growing noticeably. A mature Caddy threatens Faulkner's Tyrrhenian vase - each visit to the swing strains the culturally iconic hymen. With so much at risk, Faulkner must answer the question, "Would you let your sister marry anyone?", negatively. Should Caddy fail too noisily, southern language and history will lose the perspective of a theological origin. Herbert Head, California, Nazi Germany and all points between must not outweigh the story of the little girl. Shegog invites us to forget Caddy, along with history: Faulkner may not believe theodicy, but it serves his purposes. Just as the sermon reverses the novel's narrative structure, so it inverts the book's thematic and unwilling

observation of decay.

The offending sexual love is replaced by spiritual love. Shegog provokes innocent ecstasy, while the lament for the lost girl is absorbed by his larger elegy. Christ is a greater loss than Caddy, yet he can come again to guarantee a second Eden. Parousia is experienced by the congregation as an inexplicable descent of love. Having recorded the breakdown of a family through love's abuse, the novel posits the family restored as a very different set of loving "breddren" and "sisteren". Contradictions continue: a register of deaths, filled with graveyards from which nothing has risen, is rewritten - Shegog, "a serene, tortured crucifix that transcended its shabbiness" (p.261) rises. None of the reversals are open to question since the sermon appeals to the "heart", as against the novel's appeal to the head. Moreover a black gathering is not particularly available, in 1931, for a white novelist's interior speculations. The important point is that after listening to Shegog most readers may want to believe his rewrite. Faulkner appeals to a typology built into the Judeo-Christian imagination; it functions smoothly to provide a pacifier. Shegog is the equivalent of Caddy's slipper - he is offered in the hope that we, like Benjamin, will be comforted. Indeed at the end of the sermon our position is akin to the idiot's.

The first three sections catalogue breakage and, from families to porch fronts, the culture collapses. April 8th extends the list, windows, tyres, wagons, cellars, cash boxes and even the air, fall apart or are declared "broken". Spoilure is revoked by Shegog's prophecy of a future which fits snugly into millennialist thought and resembles Benjy's ur-time:

Common to all true apocalyptic is a situation characterized by anomie, a loss of 'world', or erosion of structure psychic and cultural, with a consequent nakedness to being or immediacy to the mystery ... Since inherited structures and immediacies of a dependable order are forfeit, the only available dramatization of the crisis and of any projected 'failure' will necessarily have a pre cultural character.⁴⁸

Benjy's rule of silence is observed: the word "sister" is exemplary - it moves from a historical state (sister), through "sisteren" and "sistuhn", to join all language in the joyous and cancelling exhalation of pure air. J.R. May notes of millennialist history that, "cultural turmoil is reflected in the breakdown of the language tradition (and leads to) another linguistic expression of faith".⁴⁹ New history re-edits old material:

"Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm! Jesus! Little Jesus!" and another voice rising:

"I sees, O Jesus! Oh I sees!" and still another, without words, like bubbles rising in water. (p.263)

The idiot bellow is likened to the single phoneme of linguistic innocence, and Quentin's suicide is recalled as prologue to "de whelmin flood" and "resurrection". Beyond time and word. though not yet at the end of the novel, the reader has Benjy's choice. To believe in a temporal bliss and replot the novel, or to watch that bliss corroded by the continuing narrative - that is by the reassumption of history and language.

Of course Shegog is not The End, millennialist or fictional. April 8th, is just one more day and the novel goes on. Dilsey leaves the church strengthened; she mumbles a few words from Revelations and goes back to make biscuits. Her domestic heroism may be the last note that many readers carry away. Certainly by 1946 and the fifth attempt, it took priority in Faulkner's mind. The Appendix ends, "Dilsey./They endured" (p.22). Faulkner likes to turn the small acts of living into the last

acts of fiction. Cash makes a coffin and plays his graphophone. Lena Grove decides to get on the road and begins to enjoy it. In *The Trilogy* biscuit making, carpentry and going on holiday, by becoming anecdotal, are given a limited political and moral extension. For the most part, however, such actions serve the status quo. Dilsey's housework is heroic because it delays Jason; Benjy is not sent to Jackson; the Old Compson Place is not sold, and the family remains against all the odds a skeletal version of what it was. Dilsey, single handed, runs a memorial, and in 1946 her domestic chores seemed symbolic of a larger and necessary endurance. Untestable assumptions about blackness allowed Faulkner to model the memory of his Mammy Callie⁵⁰ into a racial type. Whether or not house servants were loyal to their employers during the late 20's is irrelevant; their service was the trait of a particular class and period, not a natural fact of race or religion. The Dilseys of 1931 and 46 are different only in emphasis, both serve a vanishing cultural integrity, which Faulkner's slide into typology preserves.

The processes of Dilsey's everyday life may be *The End*. If so they are a domestic extension of Shegog's supernatural logic. The Easter Day millenium sustains the possibility of a theological account of history, in that it points to a time out of time and to the unwarranted persistence of innocence. Shegog and Caddy are therefore facets of the same claim. Likewise Dilsey, who serves innocence by encouraging historical naiveté.

Possibly some readers are too busy pursuing Jason, to hear the various blandishments to gullibility. As Shegog preaches, other events are taking his sermon apart. The all consuming Grail voice receives bleak inflexion as Jason talks to the

sheriff, "his sense of injury and impotence feeding upon its own sound". (p.268) Point by point the preacher's words are disproved. The slaughter of the innocents is replayed: Shegog saw the centurions among the children as part of God's plot to save the Christ-child and establish still greater innocence; Jason pursues a child with murderous intent to redeem money. While Shegog puts God in his Heaven, Jason imagines himself, "dragging Omnipotence down from His throne" (p.271). Theodicy presumes that God has his eye on the world. A large and significantly blind eye is set in a Mottson billboard. The advertisement has more to do with Dr. T.J. Eckleburg and Fitzgerald's valley of ashes than with John's all-seeing apocalyptic God. Within sight of the electric pupil, Jason suffers crucifixion at the hand of a crazy old man with an axe - there is no blood, no death and predictably no resurrection. Meanwhile on a backlot in Oxford, Shegog promises that the dead will rise because Christ bled.

The problem with the counter-case is that it has almost no impact on the sermon. If the reader has observed the horns under the curls, its detail will be grist to the millennialist mill, more evidence of AntiChrist at play during the last days. Granted that few see the horns and still fewer (Faulkner among them) are convinced - it remains true that occurrences in Oxford are more significant than occurrences in Mottson. Readers who take the end of The Sound and the Fury to signify nothing, fail to measure the resilience of the Fundamentalist tradition to which Shegog appeals. J.V. Hagopian makes a careful case for the novel's nihilism.⁵¹ Moral affirmation is balanced against existential denial in an article of admirable symmetry and considerable inappropriateness. The existentialist critic cannot

understand how time flows in the South; he therefore misses the way in which the narrative emphasises selected events. Sartre and Hagopian see time as man made; their time stands on the edge of nihilism because, if each moment is equally manufactured, each is equally artificial. Only by his own effort will man avoid this reduction: part of his labour must be to set past, present and future in equal relation, thereby escaping reliance on an "essence" locked in the past. However, in the South, history is not exclusively human history. Divine intervention, whether actual or remembered, upsets the equality of Southern moments, so that the past carries a heavy load which is far from "absurd".⁵² "Was" is not an imprisoning obsession, Quentin proves that, but it does contain the essence of a theological account which can be used in different ways. The weight of Genesis means that "was" is not the same as "is", while Revelations ensures the dissimilarity of "will be". Because God - absent or present, denied or believed - has an original place in Yoknapatawpha-time, Shegog's appeal carries great weight. His voice over-rides other voices and re-shuffles the closing events of The Sound and the Fury.

On paper the novel ends as it began, with Benjy. Had Shegog not appealed to the old story, the sound of the idiot's furious bellow might conceivably have added up to nothing. For Hagopian nothing is the sum:

Moving in the direction of Death (i.e. the cemetery) Benjy's eyes are as empty as those of the statue of the Confederate soldier, until his purely meaningless sense of order is violated when Luster swings the horse to the left of the monument. Then "Bellow on bellow" Benjy's voice mounts, until Jason leaps on the surrey, strikes both Luster and Benjy, and whips the horse into a plunging gallop homeward. "Benjy, for God sake!" shouts Luster, invoking the deity for the first time - and in vain. Finally "His [Ben's] eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and facade flowed smoothly one more from left to right; post and tree, window and doorway, and sign board, each in its ordered place ..."

The terms of closure are neither Christian nor socio-economic [i.e. Jason's motives]; they are nihilistic. It is the reducto absurdum of the experience of Easter Sunday and the Easter week-end. (p.53).

I quote at length to show the neatness and the appeal of the negative account. However, the Faulknerian idiot is not a grotesque. The bellow that he makes is more than "mere sound". His eyes are "empty" and "serene": their serenity derives from a Fundamentalist reading of the Genesis story, in which Adam alone is Adam in bliss. Without knowledge (language) and Eve (sex), he is truly in Eden. Idiocy, silence and emasculation are contradictory signs of the bliss that underpins the last image. Even without theology, Benjy's eyes are not simply "empty"; first seen in "The Kingdom of God" they contain what lies beyond the "crack of doom" and is missing from the Mottson billboard. Benjy sees what Shegog saw - a time beyond time. Dilsey served the sermon's purposes and Benjy illustrates its message.

Undoubtedly he is looking at Caddy, Caddy as a little girl. Whether or not we share his uncluttered vision is a moot point. The fact that the idea of innocence persists, linking each of the novel's endings, suggests its resilience for Faulkner's imagination. The child fills Benjy's eyes and translates the negative, implicit in the titular use of a line from Macbeth, into a positive. But is the idiot to be trusted? Faulkner must have chosen his title, knowing that it would beg the question of significance. "Nothing" is the obvious textual answer, and at a very practical level The Sound and the Fury does indeed signify, "nothing": it is about a little girl who is for the most part left out. Omission preserves her from time and thought, so that she is for author, brother and reader alike, primarily a little girl whose innocence stays perversely central

to the novel. Virginity is a negative virtue in Yoknapatawpha,⁵³ in other words it is "nothing" renamed "something". Each of the endings, like the monologues, defends this negative value: each transforms Caddy and offers one aspect of her innocence. Shegog proposes cosmic purity. Dilsey sustains an historical anachronism. Benjy returns the little girl who started it all. Everyone knows that Caddy has gone, but her departure is so monumental that it memorializes the value of what it subtracts. The iconic hymen is more substantial, lost, than ever it was in its place.

1. The references are to the following, "An Introduction to The Sound and the Fury," ed. James B. Meriwether, Southern Review, Vol. 8 (Oct. 1972), pp.705-10); Lion in the Garden, ed. James B. Meriwether & Michael Millgate (Random House, New York, 1968), p.245; Lion in the Garden, p.147; Faulkner in the University, ed. Frederick L. Gwynn & Joseph L. Blotner (Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1959), p.1.
2. William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying (Random House, Modern Library Editions, New York, 1946), p.12. Subsequent, Appendix-references will be to this edition.
3. Faulkner in the University, ed. Frederick L. Gwynn & Joseph L. Blotner, p.1.
4. Jean-Paul Sartre, "On The Sound and the Fury": Time in the work of Faulkner," Literary & Philosophical Essays, trans. Annette Michelson (Rider & Co., London, 1955), p.79.
5. Walter J. Ong, S.J., "Voice as Summons for Belief," The Barbarian Within (MacMillan, New York, 1962), pp.52 & 56.
6. Lion in the Garden, ed. James B. Meriwether & M. Millgate, p.245.
7. William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970), p.263. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.

8. Quoted by C.S. Johnson in Growing Up in the Black Belt (Schocken Books, New York, 1946), p.148.
9. Faulkner adopts the term on p.19 of the Appendix.
10. "He was an animal", William Faulkner to Jean Stein (Lion in the Garden, p.240).
11. These phrases occur in Faulkner's unpublished introduction to the projected 1933 Random House edition. Reprinted in A Faulkner Miscellany, ed. James B. Meriwether (Mississippi UP, Jackson, 1974), p.160.
12. H. Jackson, quoted by Roman Jakobson & Morris Halle in Fundamentals of Language (Mouton & Comp, S'Gravenhage, 1956), p.71.
13. Irena Kaluza, The Functioning of Sentence Structure in The Stream of Consciousness Technique of William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (Nakladem Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego, Krakow, 1967), p.48. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
14. Lois Gordon, "Meaning and Myth in The Sound and the Fury and The Waste Land," collected in The Twenties, ed. Warren French (Everett Edwards Inc., Deland, Florida, 1975), p.272.
15. Irving Howe, William Faulkner: A Critical Study (Vintage Books, New York, 1952), p.158.

16. Edmond L. Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner (Thames & Hudson, London, 1964), p.90.
17. Wolfgang Iser, The Implied Reader (Johns Hopkins UP, London, 1974), p.140.
18. Mark Spilka, "Quentin Compson's Universal Grief," Contemporary Literature, August 1970, Vol XI, No.4, p.455.
19. The cultural imprint is strong enough to make Benjy switch from Caddy's wedding to Damuddy's death, without recognizing any shift:

"I skeered I going to holler." T.P. said. "Git on the box and see is they started." - (refers to 1910)
"They haven't started because the band hasn't come yet." Caddy said (refers to 1898) (p.41)

The normal typographic sign is absent in this case, because Benjy sees marriage and death as synonymous.
20. Benjy tries to articulate clearly on only one other occasion. He escapes through the garden gate and "tries to say" to a school girl whom he has reinvented as Caddy. His effort is interpreted sexually and he is castrated. Loss, words and sex ~~once~~ again gather in the same constellation.
21. The Appendix has it that Caddy vanishes in Paris during the German occupation of 1940. At this point she was 48. Her birth occurred in 1892, which would make her 14 in 1906 and date her wedding as 1910.
22. Stanza 1. Prologue, The Marble Faun in The Marble Faun and A Green Bough (Random House, New York, 1960), p.11.

23. See James B. Meriwether, "The Textual History of The Sound and the Fury," collected in The Merrill Studies in The Sound and the Fury, ed. James B. Meriwether (Merrill Pub. Co. Columbus, 1970), particularly pp.9-13.
24. Arnold Goldman was largely responsible for my discovering my mistake.
25. "Frony said, 'Is they started the funeral yet?'" (p.36)
26. The allusions, in order of appearance, derive from the following: Irving Howe, William Faulkner: A Critical Study, p.167; R.M. Slabey, "Quentin as Romantic," collected in Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Sound and the Fury, ed. Michael H. Cowan (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, 1968), p.81; R.P. Adams, William Faulkner: Myth and Motion (Princetown UP, 1968), p.23; Carvel Collins, "The Interior Monologues of The Sound and the Fury," collected in The Merrill Studies in The Sound and the Fury, p.73; Melvin Backman, Faulkner: The Major Years (Indiana UP, London, 1960), p.23.
27. William Faulkner, "An Introduction to The Sound and the Fury," ed. James B. Meriwether, Southern Review, No.4, (Oct. 1972), pp.705-10.
28. Ernst Jones, Sigmund Freud: Life and Work Vol. 2: Years of Maturity (Hogarth Press, London, 1955), p.64.
29. "Hugo Munsterberg: (1897-1916) Harvard University. At the beginning of the century there was little application of psychological knowledge to practical affairs: the advocacy

of applied psychology, combined with his involvement in psychic research, made Munsterberg a public figure. He not only showed people outside psychology how psychology can work for them; he also convinced a small number of psychologists that applied psychology was a legitimate enterprise." Leonard Zusne, Names in the History of

Psychology (Hemisphere Pub. Co. Washington, D.C. 1975), p.242.

30. Quoted by Elizabeth Sprigge in Gertrude Stein: Her Life and Work (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1959), p.29.
31. If so his humour will have stood him in good stead. Quentin has a nice sense of parody. His account of Mrs. Bland on the subject of her son's love life, is sharper than anything of Jason's:
- Gerald went down and bit the gun in two and handed it back and wiped his hands on a silk handkerchief threw the handkerchief on the stove I've only heard that one twice (p.99).
- Unlike Jason he can turn laughter against himself, as when he complains of his massacre at the hands of Bland, "I'm sorry I didn't bleed on him a little at least" (p.150). A lighter touch is at times necessary, to counter the pretentiousness into which his scarcely assimilated reading carries his thoughts.
32. Quoted by Mario Praz in The Romantic Agony (Oxford UP, London, 1970), p.118.
33. Irving Howe, William Faulkner: A Critical Study, p.170.
34. I owe the talking bone to Stephen M. Ross's article, "The 'Loud World' of Quentin Compson," Studies in the Novel, Vol. 8, No.2. (Summer 1975), pp.245-57.

35. The illustration referred to is "The Woman in the Moon", Oscar Wilde, Salomé (Elkin Mathews & John Lane, London, 1894), frontispiece.
36. Francis Newman's dictum about Georgia ladies, quoted by Anne Firor Scott in The Southern Lady (University of Chicago Press, London, 1970), p.219.
37. Panthea Reid Broughton, William Faulkner: The Abstract and the Actual (Louisiana State UP, Baton Rouge, 1974), p.206.
38. Quoted by E.H. Carr in What is History? (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967), p.44.
39. Question: Did Quentin ... actually have that conversation with his father about sleeping with his sister?
Answer: He never did ... He just said, Suppose I say this to my father, would it help me, would it clarify, would I see clearer what it is I anguish over? (Faulkner in the University, ed. F.L. Gwynn & J.L. Blotner, p.262).
- Faulkner's public remarks about his fiction are not trustworthy; however, in this case the text bears him out.
- Quentin has already spoken of inventing his father ([17] am my fathers Progenitive p.113). Had he not done so, it would still be difficult to accept that a phrase like "now were getting at it" belongs to a father being told of his son's impending suicide. The clarity and excitement is Quentin's.
40. William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973), p.136.

41. The music derives from Melvin Backman, William Faulkner: The Major Years, pp.13-14; the poetry is offered by Beverley Gross, "Form and Fulfilment in The Sound and the Fury," Modern Language Quarterly, Vol. 28, (Dec. 1968), pp.439-449.
42. Faulkner in the University, ed. F.L. Gwynn & J.L. Blotner, pp.17 & 68.
43. Numerous analogies for Shegog pack one or two pages, and rapidly construct an Easter plot. The climax is the resurrection of the "Serene tortured crucifix" on the "single soprano" note, "Jesus, Jesus!" (p.262). The oral pyrotechnics work because supported by a detailed build up which includes winding sheets and a vacant cave: "his monkey body reft of all motion as a mummy or an emptied vessel" (p.261). (My emphases).
44. Carvel Collins, "The Pairing of The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying," Princeton University Library Chronicle, Vol. 18 (Spring 1957), pp.115-23.
45. T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land: What the Thunder Said", Collected Poems, 1909-1962 (MacMillan, London, 1963), pp.78-9. Subsequent pagination refers to this edition.
46. T.S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order and Myth," The Dial, Vol. 75 (Nov. 1923), p.483.
47. Jessie Weston, The Quest of the Holy Grail (Bell & Son, London, 1913), p.1.

48. Amos N. Wilder, "The Rhetoric of Ancient and Modern Apocalyptic". Paper read before The American Academy of Religion, 1970, pp.4-5. Quoted by John R. May in Toward a New Earth: Apocalypse in the American Novel (University of Notre Dame Press, London, 1972), pp.19-20.
49. John R. May, Toward a New Earth, p.20.
50. See Joseph Blotner, Faulkner: A Biography Vol.1. (Random House, New York, 1974), pp.76-78.
51. J.V. Hagopian, "Nihilism in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury," Modern Fiction Studies, Vol.13, No.1. (Spring 1967), pp.45-55.
52. In "On The Sound and the Fury: Time in the Work of Faulkner", Sartre speaks of an obsessive Faulknerian past. He concludes, "I am afraid that the absurdity that Faulkner finds in human life is one that he himself has put there" (p.87). What Sartre fails to understand is that Faulkner inherits from the South a theologically motivated story about time. His inheritance does not make time rigid; it does however prevent the easy existential assumption that time is flexible and transparent.
53. Faulkner allows even Henry Sutpen the fleeting suspicion that his sister's virginity is precious only in so far as it is there to be taken:

Henry was the provincial, the clown almost, given to instinctive and violent action rather than to thinking who may have been conscious that his fierce provincial's pride in his sister's virginity was a false quantity which must incorporate in itself an inability to endure

in order to be precious, to exist, and so must depend
upon its loss, absence, to have existed at all.
Absalom, Absalom! (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973),
p.79/

Conclusion

Faulkner once described The Sound and the Fury as "last year's maidenhead"; he was right. Despite the combined voicelessness of Shegog, Dilsey and Benjy, its last innocent protest (in triplicate) is unconvincing. Perhaps Faulkner was tired of defending a museum-piece, or maybe he recognized that the upkeep of the iconic hymen was too expensive. A Tyrrhenian vase entitled "Virginity: Regional Emblem" can only be displayed away from other exhibits: its fragile oddity requires that, ideally, it stand in an empty room. Much in Yoknapatawpha admires such exclusiveness. The county has a tradition of sealed houses, familial bonds, spiritual thresholds and territorial lines. All these constraints, focussed in the constraint of virginity, are served by the curious congress of Decadence and Southern culture in Faulkner's imagination. Put tersely - the man and his region were private and self-reflexive. Decadence, as a manner and as a literary technique, guaranteed that privacy.

However, La Belle Dame and all her works promote a fictionally debilitating ideology. "Innocence", set in a mythic zone, preserved by sexual cruelty and tended by silence, is a source both of value and narrowness. Faulkner's major work rests on the problematic relation between these elements. Constriction and meaning are so interdependent that their relation is difficult to define. I am tempted to fall back on a simple opposition, formulated as various antitheses - Decadent/oral; closed linguistic system/collaborative language; abstract/actual; stasis/motion. Extending the list would make little difference since the inter-relation is not cut and dried. Its force can best be seen through specific examples. Benjy Compson and Rosa Coldfield take as their subjects virginity and the preservation

of a pure place. It might be fairer to say that their subjects take them since their monologues are narrow and obsessive; and yet the same monologues are notes towards major fictions. Effectively, each offers the first draft of his novel. To translate a bellow and an almost unreadable diatribe, Faulkner introduces other voices - collected and edited by Quentin. However, the apprentice writer falls silent. In The Sound and the Fury, having seen through the values to the narrowness, he kills himself: Absalom, Absalom! is a confused stage in this process of disenchantment. Arguably, my choice of novels leans towards the obsessive. Cash Bundren, Byron Bunch and Ratliff would seem to be a different group of listeners, whose values are plainly public, oral and collaborative; whose concerns are with the materials of their region. And yet, despite their occasional and influential alliances with more literary voices, they too lapse into silence. Cash plays quietly with his graphophone. Lena takes Byron along the road a piece, but will, presumably (in her own good time) marry him back into some timber yard. Ratliff ceases to exchange very many "mouth words".

It would seem that at all points in the Faulkner canon those who perceive value in constriction and release it, do so briefly and to no lasting point. Generative energy does not suffer release because constriction, in Yoknapatawpha, is value; and where narrowness guarantees power any oppositional formulation is naive. It is a commonplace of Faulkner criticism that the "postage stamp of native soil" yields universal values. Large truths are held to rise from small lives. I agree, but believe that this should be acknowledged as a function of narrowness. Trained in hermeticism by the Decadence, Faulkner possesses, through his region's

constricted truths, the means to a semantic force missing from the work of his contemporaries. Language and character, in Yoknapatawpha, is charged with impacted energy, and virginity (even last year's virginity) stays tiresomely central to its drive. I am prepared to put up with the narrowness for the power, but sense that any power balanced on obsession (whether Decadent, regional or both) is power at risk.

Appendix A : Chapter 3. William Faulkner on James Joyce.

The devices whereby Faulkner writes himself small are varied; I have space only to indicate their broad outline. The voice that tells The Hamlet is not omniscient. The speaker moves among so many rhetorical and lexical variants that a tone does not form. The text is eclectic - it talks as Labove might think, approximates to the senses of an idiot and seems eager to surrender its responsibilities to Ratliff. Consequently, the voice which emerges belongs to a self-conscious community rather than to a novelist. Self-consciousness on the storefront tends to flaw anecdotes and implies the breakdown of oral cohesion. The Town's form reflects this as its monologues struggle to achieve dialogue. Despite the partial estrangement of the three spokesmen, Faulkner has no need to impose coherence since the stories they tell are full of previous tellers. As long as a reader hears the multi-accentuality of language in "Centaur in Brass", the notion "we"/Jefferson remains a moral reality and not just a pious hope. However, the world of The Mansion has grown - Chick has fought in the Pacific; Linda drove Spanish ambulances and even Ratliff has visited New York. Expansion threatens the stability of social relations between speakers. Faulkner continues to perform as though the threat were minimal, perceiving himself as a subjective presence and transferring authority from group to group. The omniscient sections are more frequent and more clearly marked than in The Hamlet: chapters and not random sections are involved. Nonetheless, authenticity still resides in voices rather than in an author's voice. The problem of accent as a political consideration is kept to the fore by Linda's speech lessons; her struggle to do more than quack makes the reader

listen to words as they transmit speakers and designate property rights.

However, the summons to dialogue begins to sound academic. Periodic exhortations to "guess" and "figger" do not disguise the fact that exchange is no longer possible. Charles comes back from the war with words and jokes that Stevens cannot use (p.177), and Ratliff continues the parody of his own voice begun at the close of The Town. Only performance reassures him that he has a part to play and a voice to pay it with (see first paragraphs Ch. 7., p.146). Even Faulkner grows uneasy, at times resurrecting "voice" as a metaphysical extract to be found buried in the land:

... the ground already full of the folks that had the trouble but were free now, ... the beautiful, the splendid, the proud and the brave, right on up to the very top itself among the shining phantoms and dreams which are the milestones of the long human recording - Helen and the bishops, the kings and the unhorned angels, the scornful and graceless seraphim. (The Mansion, p.399)

When the passage was first heard (The Hamlet, p.186), it was one element in the cow's story, and as such part of a vocal exercise. As a novel's last sentence it carries greater authority. The voices of Helen and unspecified royalty are not voices that Bookwright or Ratliff could even begin to imitate. They do not belong to Yoknapatawpha. Faulkner buries a forged resonance in the land because by 1959 the land, or at least the social organs that distribute and treat it, had lost their unanimity.

The last paragraph of The Mansion marks a return to manipulative omniscience, as the only way in which Faulkner can guarantee a community that can no longer speak for itself.

Bibliography

This Bibliography is divided into a number of sections:

1. Work by Faulkner (a) Fiction (b) Other Work
2. Works on Faulkner (a) Collections of Criticism Cited
(b) Books and Articles on Faulkner Cited and/or Used
3. Other Works Cited and/or Influencing the Argument

1. Works by Faulkner

In the list which follows reference is to the text consulted (and cited) in the writing of this study. I chose, where possible, to use the popular British edition: my decision was motivated both by a pleasure in working with my own (often cheap) texts, and by a belief that research ought to make gestures towards availability. In order to guard against inaccuracy, substantial quotations have been checked against the relevant authoritative text. In each case the second date is that of original publication.

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